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27 June 2022

**TO: All Priests, Deacons, Parish Pastoral Workers,
Chair of Parish Pastoral Councils, School Principals**

RE: New Policy for the Sacraments of Initiation 2022

Dear All,

I am writing to present the new Policy Statement for the Sacraments of Initiation in our Archdiocese. This new Policy Statement seeks to affirm, strengthen and develop the many years of consultation about the Sacraments of Initiation in the Archdiocese.

This process of consultation began in 2018 when the then Priests' Council felt that it was time to review our approach. This resulted in establishing the Sacraments Review Group in 2019, which developed an online Survey to connect with the experience of parents, parishes and schools. Eighteen hundred people responded, including eight hundred parents, one hundred priests and one hundred school principals. What emerged from this consultation was a clear desire for substantial change and innovation, coupled with the challenge of finding ways of responding to the complex reality of faith in family life.

Subsequently, a Sacraments Implementation Group was formed in 2020 to follow up on what a new approach in the Archdiocese would look like. This group met regularly throughout the pandemic and engaged further with parents, parishes and schools. In this deeper engagement it became clear that new patterns were emerging that could strengthen the partnership between family, parish and school. Foundational to these new patterns were direct registration of families with the parish for sacraments, smaller group celebrations and engagement with parents in a family friendly way.

There is now need for a new Policy Statement in light of these emerging new practices. This will enable these practices to develop in every parish of the Archdiocese. The key features of this are an emphasis on accompanying families towards the celebration of the Sacraments in a sustainable way, a stronger focus on Baptism as the beginning of a life long journey of faith, and clarity about the roles of family, parish, school and Archdiocese working in partnership.

I wish to thank all those who have contributed to this work and gave so generously of their time, especially the Priests' Council who began the project, members of the Sacraments Review Group and the Sacraments Implementation Group, as well as all those who took part in the online Survey and the further consultations of 2020 – 2021.

As our Statement of Mission makes clear 'we are called to develop new ways to accompany the people of our time. This will require a new thinking and a shift in mind-set in everyone.'

This Policy will take time to develop into local parish practice. It will, I pray, provide a supportive structure to accompany families.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,



+Dermot Farrell
Archbishop of Dublin