

Diocese of Ossory – St Mary's Cathedral Project – 'At-Mass Survey' Next Weekend

Next weekend we, along with *every parish in the Diocese of Ossory*, will be given an opportunity to share our opinion of the plans currently being considered by Bishop Freeman. These involve

1. **The restoration of St Mary's Cathedral**
2. **The development of the Cathedral surroundings that they may play an increased and higher profile role in strengthening faith in our diocese.**
3. **Consideration is also being given to the financial provision for our clergy in retirement.**

This will involve a one page survey and is part of a diocesan wide exercise which is gathering the opinions of clergy and lay members of our community.

We request and hope that each family will take the time allotted during Mass to participate in this survey.

To give you a little time to reflect and prepare for the survey next weekend, here is a preview of the issues on which the survey is based:

- This survey (***one survey sheet per family***) allows all Mass going Catholics to share their opinion as Bishop Freeman considers plans that we hope will help deepen our faith and ensure a stronger presence for the Catholic Church.

These plans centre on:

1. The restoration of St Mary's Cathedral in Kilkenny, our diocesan mother church. It is our hope that a fully restored and vibrant cathedral will play an increased role in pastoral life, deepening faith and acting as a beacon to the many Catholics who visit the region as well as tourists and those wanting to visit a sacred space for peace and reflection.
 2. We hope that work will continue on the cathedral grounds and that in time, this will provide a complex of buildings that will serve diocesan needs and provide space for youth and adult faith development initiatives.
 3. The diocese is also giving due and careful consideration to the pastoral care of retired clergy. The financial aid given to these lifelong servants of the Church will reach a critical point in 2016, after which there will be a projected shortfall of one hundred thousand euro per annum in the income we have versus outgoings.
- We need to develop the most effective fund raising plan that we can. This plan must be informed by as wide an audience as possible, one which gathers opinion from the clergy, as well as lay, civic and business interests from all across the diocese.
 - We are seeking your views, all of which are confidential, with only ***the external firm*** who will compile the results having access to the responses.

So, next weekend, please take the time to read the information about these plans, and then answer the ten questions. If you so wish, you can fill in your contact details, and know that all information given is confidential. Your views, and those of all the faithful who take the time to partake in this, will help inform the Bishop's plans at this critical time.

Thank you. (CCS – external firm conducting the survey)
