



## FOREWORD

The Kingdom of God is being built through the ages. This kingdom of love and peace is rooted in the belief that as the children of God we come from the Father and return to Him through the time we spend in his creation. Knowing this gives us a sense of purpose, serenity, solidarity and urgency.

The God in whose image we are made is depicted as a working God. At the dawn of creation the first human beings were invited by God to be his co-workers and the Spirit, through the biblical authors, has revealed to us what experience tells us, namely that work is a fundamental dimension of human existence. It builds up each individual and contributes to the welfare of society.

In his encyclical *Laborem Exercens* (1981), Pope John Paul II, wrote: "Work is a good thing for man and woman – a good thing for each person's humanity – because through work man and woman not only transforms nature, adapting it to their own needs, but they also achieve fulfilment as human beings and, indeed, in a sense become "more human beings" (#9).

Work also has a social dimension. In the same encyclical Pope John Paul II wrote: Man must work out of regard for others, especially his own family, but also for the society he belongs to, the country of which he is a child, and the whole human family of which he is a member, since he is the heir to the work of generations and at the same time a sharer in building the future of those who will come after him in the succession of history. (*Laborem Exercens* #16).

The Irish Catholic Bishops, in their pastoral letter, *Work is the Key* (1992) note that work is a process of basic self-expression and self-assertion by a person without which her or his very humanity remains only partially developed. This in turn gives all human work a claim on our attention.

I hope that all who work in the service of God's people in the parishes and agencies of the Diocese of Elphin will find their place of work a place where they experience this reality and contribute to the workplace being such for others.

The time each member of staff spends engaging in his or her work and related communication is greatly valued. Hopefully there will be many times when engagement in this work will also be experienced as personally enriching. There may also be occasions when it is not experienced in this way but nonetheless contributes significantly to the continuous and frequently silent work of the building up of God's kingdom.

+Kevin Doran  
Bishop of Elphin  
15<sup>th</sup> February 2019