

# VOCATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR THE DIOCESE OF LANCASTER



*Revised Version Effective: 4 April 2016*

## INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Priests of the Diocese of Lancaster make a radical choice to take up and follow Jesus' call to be His servant-leaders in the Church of today. Their lives of joyful sacrifice bring to the people of Lancashire - north of the Ribble - and all of Cumbria - the message of Jesus Christ that: 'I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live!' (*John 11:25*). A priest is thus empowered by Christ to help others overcome sin, death and despair with the message of life, forgiveness, and hope. This message is the core – and the joy - of the Gospel.
- ❖ Our priests find meaning and profound personal fulfilment in bringing the living presence of Jesus to God's people through the sacraments. In turn, people experience the power of Jesus through their priest's ministry. As 'father' of his parish family, the priest is called to be a visible witness of holiness in his commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. He offers his life for his people through his prayer, sacrifice and ministry.
- ❖ Mindful of the above convictions, Vocations Ministry must surely be a priority for us in the Diocese of Lancaster – according to this revised *Vocations Framework*. Consequently, two priests are now commissioned to lead the important work of communicating the joy of Priesthood through the positive and programmatic promotion, nurturing and accompaniment of priestly vocations in the Diocese of Lancaster.
- ❖ The Lancaster Diocesan Policy remains: **that suitable single men of 18 years and older may, in principle, apply to the Diocese with the Director of Vocations, Co-Director of Vocations and/or the Bishop's support for seminary formation.**

## **THE VOCATIONS DIRECTOR & CO-DIRECTOR OF VOCATIONS**

- The Vocations Director, (*DV*) and the Co-Director of Vocations, (*CDV*), will work together in the overall work of Vocations Promotion and Direction within the Diocese of Lancaster. Responsibility for our students in formation (seminarians) is **not** part of either of these priests' work and will rest, at this time, with the Bishop.
- While the *DV* will have care for nurturing a 'culture of baptismal vocation' around the Diocese, his main responsibility **will be promoting priestly vocations for the Diocese** through various means – chiefly: using the new media, producing attractive, engaging and pithy up-to-date literature, holding termly Vocations weekends/days, preaching and teaching in parishes and schools on Vocations, being visibly present at young peoples' events, and regularly meeting and personally accompanying boys and men who are interested in giving their lives to the Priesthood in our Diocese.
- The proactive promotions work and activity will be led by the *DV* – using other individuals and agencies (lay, religious and ordained) and working as collaboratively as possible.
- The *DV* and *CDV* will meet together every quarter so as to coordinate their common work. Once a year they should meet with the Bishop (each July) – to review the academic year's work.
- The *DV* holds the Vocations Budget from the Diocese for Vocations Promotion throughout the year working collaboratively with the Bishop and Diocesan Trustees and their officers.
- The accompaniment of enquirers/prospective candidates aged **15-20 years** is the responsibility of the *CDV*. The *CDV* will be responsible for recommending to the Bishop those individual prospective candidates of this age range for the formal application and interview process, and assisting them through this process. Any enquirers over the age of 20 must be referred to the *DV* for his accompaniment as soon as possible.
- The accompaniment of enquirers/prospective candidates aged **over 21 years** is the responsibility of the *DV*. The *DV* will be responsible for recommending to the Bishop those individual prospective candidates over 21's for the formal application and interview process, and assisting them through this process. Any enquirers under the age of 21 must be referred to the *CDV* for his accompaniment as soon as possible.
- The Bishop will form, call and arrange the Advisory Interview Board for prospective candidates for seminary. The papers are prepared by the *DV* or *CDV* respectively (depending on the age of the candidates for interview) and sent to members of the Board.
- The *DV* and/or *CDV* (depending on the age of the individual prospective candidate) will be responsible for preparing candidates for the interview process.

- The *DV* and/or *CDV* (depending on the age of the new seminarians) will be responsible for arranging with the seminary the practical admission of newly-accepted seminarians.
- The *DV and CDV* will once a year (not necessarily together), visit various seminaries to ascertain which are best for the needs of the Diocese of Lancaster. Following this annual visit they will discuss these findings in a meeting with the Bishop.

### **PROMOTING PRIESTLY VOCATIONS**

In the Church, the Holy Spirit is the ultimate Vocations Director who plants the grace of a vocation in a person's heart. "Christ wants you!" "The Church needs you!" "God's people need you!" Sometimes the Holy Spirit's promptings are very clear in a person's mind and heart; but more often than not, the Holy Spirit relies on the help of individuals to encourage people in discerning their vocation.

Promoting Priestly Vocations is very much the task of all the faithful, but primarily of those in leadership in every parish and school/college/university chaplaincy. In order that such leadership become a reality, the *DV* needs to help animate and encourage everyone in this task. In order to express this work of practical animation, I propose the following:

#### **PRAYER:**

- In the short term, the *DV* would invite every parish to hold a weekly Holy Hour for Priestly Vocations.
- As part of a planned 2015/2016 *Year of Priestly Vocations* the *DV* would hold a Diocesan-wide Novena for Priestly Vocations leading up to the Feast of Pentecost – but with **one** prayer card for Priestly Vocations.
- As part of a planned 2015/2016 *Year of Priestly Vocations* each Deanery would hold a *Deanery Vocations Mass* – involving schools and parishes within the Deanery – with the *DV* as the main celebrant and preacher - concluding with one *Diocesan Mass for Vocations* celebrated by the Bishop. (*DV & the Bishop*)

#### **ACTION:**

- As part of a planned 2015/2016 *Year of Priestly Vocations* the *DV* and *others* would deliver a high level programme of Year 11 assemblies on Vocations during this year in each and every Catholic secondary school of the Diocese. The *DV* is to work closely with the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma (responsible for the Diocesan Office for the New Evangelisation), to deliver these assemblies. The introductory letter for these assemblies would come from the Bishop to all Head Teachers & School Chaplains/Chaplaincy Coordinators. (*DV & the Bishop*)
- As part of a planned 2015/2016 *Year of Priestly Vocations* the programme of Vocations preaching already begun in parishes at weekends, should continue and be intensified. (*DV*)
- As part of a planned 2015/2016 *Year of Priestly Vocations* a new high quality Priestly Vocations poster and matching leaflet is to be designed and distributed widely to all parishes, schools and colleges in the Diocese. Preferably these will use

the same unifying images on the newly-refurbished Vocations Blog, Twitter and Facebook accounts. (DV)

- Some meaningful contact is to be maintained each month with those actively considering (based upon the two age-ranges specified in this *Framework* document) or showing an interest in the Priesthood. (DV & CDV)
- The DV should attend as many Diocesan (Castlerigg) & National Youth events (Faith Summer & Winter Sessions, Youth 2000 etc.) as possible to promote Vocations. (DV)
- The DV should attend the *Invocation* festivals and organise a diocesan group of young people to attend. (DV)
- There should be Termly Vocations Days and at least two Weekends in the year for both age ranges. It is the sole responsibility of the CDV to organise these and similar gatherings for **15-20 year olds** and the DV to organise these and similar gatherings for **over 21 year olds**. (CDV & DV)
- Attention will also be needed to encourage 'Late Vocations'. The DV is currently responsible for this area (DV)
- The Bishop will continue to mention 'from the altar' the need for Priestly Vocations at Parish Visitations and Confirmations. (*The Bishop*)

### **VOCATIONS BLOG, FACEBOOK & TWITTER ACCOUNTS**

Although the use of the 'new media' does not replace personal accompaniment, it is useful for creating a high-profile *online* presence as well as an awareness of the importance of Vocations Ministry within the Diocese.

Consequently, this *Vocations Framework* mandates:

#### ***Vocations Blog***

- That the strategic direction of the Vocations Blog is based closely upon this *Vocations Framework* and is updated regularly. (DV)
- That these updates should include contributions from the Seminarians themselves, with regard to events in their seminary and some words from them about how their journey is going. To include also all the activities carried out by the Vocations Team. (DV & Seminarians)
- That every parish with a website be asked to have the Vocations Blog link on their front page. (*Parish Priests & Parish Web Administrators & DV*)
- That a short message (with photograph) of encouragement from the Bishop goes on the Vocations Blog. (*The Bishop & DV*)

#### ***Vocations Twitter Account***

- That this account should find its strategic direction from this *Vocations Framework* and that it should link to the Vocations Blog, vocations news items from the wider Church, and other interesting items on the Lancaster Diocesan website. (DV)

- That this account be active each day. *(DV)*
- That there be a good level of interaction between followers and those who are being followed and regularly follows new people/accounts. *(DV)*
- That this account continues to be linked with the Diocesan Vocations Facebook Account. *(DV)*

#### ***Vocations Facebook Account***

- That this account finds its strategic direction from this *Vocations Framework* and that it highlights items on the Vocations Blog, vocations news in the wider Church and other interesting items on the Diocesan website. *(DV)*
- That this account be updated each day. *(DV)*
- That this account continues to be linked with the Diocesan Vocations Twitter Account. *(DV)*

#### **CARE OF CURRENT SEMINARIANS**

The Diocese has a duty of care in supporting our Seminarians through the whole of their discernment and formation towards Priesthood. To ensure this happens this revised *Vocations Framework* establishes:

- That the Bishop assumes the role of the Seminary Liaison Officer *(The Bishop)*
- That the Bishop maintains sound, direct and regular lines of communication between the Diocese and the Seminarians. *(The Bishop)*
- That the Bishop maintains regular lines of communication between the Diocese and the Rector/Staff of the various seminaries regarding the progress of Seminarians. *(The Bishop)*
- That Financial/material concerns for the seminarians be dealt with by the Diocesan Financial Administrator in collaboration with the Bishop or his delegate. *(The Bishop)*
- That the Bishop visits the Seminarians at least once a year in their seminary. A second visit *may* be combined with attending ministries/diaconal ordinations. *(The Bishop)*
- That the Bishop visits the Seminarians while they are on pastoral placement in the Diocese. *(The Bishop)*
- That the Bishop - along with the Vocations Director and Vocations Co-Director - reviews the seminaries that the Diocese currently uses in priestly formation work. *(The Bishop, DV & CDV)*
- That the Bishop holds and maintains the current confidential Seminarian files. *(The Bishop)*

- That the Seminarians play a full part in the Annual Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes – including care for the sick and with several meetings with - and led by - the Bishop. (*Seminarians & the Bishop*)

With regard to Seminarian's pastoral placements:

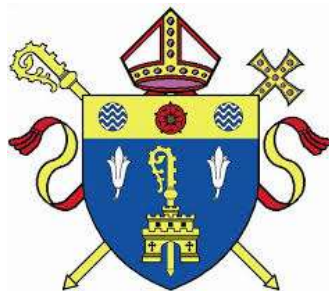
- The Bishop decides upon the details of the pastoral placements of Seminarians in this Diocese. (*The Bishop*)
- That once the Bishop has decided on the placement (usual minimum of 4 weeks required by the Diocese), the Bishop would meet with the priest who will be supervising the Seminarian to discuss the placement and the involvement in the parish. (*The Bishop*)
- That half-way through the placement, the Bishop will visit the Seminarian and parish priest to ensure all is going well. (*The Bishop*)
- That the Bishop ensures that the pastoral placement report (the one approved by the Diocese unless one from the seminary is supplied) comes to himself and the Seminary concerned. (*The Bishop*)
- That the Seminarians meet with the Bishop before returning back to the Seminary after the summer period. (*The Bishop*)

**N.B.** If there is any subsequent doubt concerning any aspect of this document, the work or roles and responsibilities mentioned then clarification should be sought from me (the Bishop).

+ michael Campbell OSA

✠ Michael G Campbell OSA  
Bishop of Lancaster

Revised: 4 April 2016



The Catholic Diocese of Lancaster