



CALLED TO BE a people of

HOPE



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Pope John Paul II wrote in 1988 that *'since the Church's task in our day is so great, its accomplishment cannot be left to the parish alone'*. These words of the late Pope have been taken very seriously, and indeed in many ways underpin 'Called to be People of Hope'. In the rationale for why Pastoral Guidelines are necessary it is stated *"the reason for pastoral guidelines at this time is so that we do not work in isolation. Parishes have always worked together at local and deanery level but the changing nature of the church means that we have to find new ways of doing so"*.

The local Church of Clifton has a mission to be a people of hope in a world crying out for just such hope. There is a very clear need for evangelization in the broadest sense of the word. To do this effectively we have to make the best use of our resources which inevitably means increased **sharing** of those resources. We recognise that these sharing arrangements are probably best established at the local level where, in many cases, sharing already does take place very effectively. Much more however has to be done as regards co-operation so that we, as a church, are ready for the future - the statistics on clergy numbers in our Diocese (included) speak for themselves. We also have religious priests providing an invaluable ministry and it is fervently hoped that they will remain with us, however they are not included in these diocesan statistics.

It is to be sincerely hoped that when the 'Key Questions' on the Consultation Document are considered **there will be as wide a range of consultation within your parish or community as possible**. This is essential to ensure that local communities feel that they have ownership of the process and a real stake in the outcome of this consultation. The more local involvement there is and the more decisions are taken at a local level, the greater the chances are that solutions will be found that are best suited to the needs of each faith community.

Please also remember to **pray** about how best the necessary goal of cooperation and sharing can be achieved and also that each individual and community will respond in generosity and love to the challenges that face the Church and the inevitable sacrifices that will need to be made.

All this should be done in the light of Bishop Declan's words in the introduction to 'Called to be People of Hope':

"Is what we do deepening prayer, enabling communion and strengthening mission"





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FACTORS TO CONSIDER

It is envisaged that a group of parishes or communities working together will, at a later stage and after this process of consultation, come to a local pastoral arrangement which will best utilise resources and talents. One of the ways in which this might be done, and this is only *one* of many ways that co-operation can be envisaged, is to rearrange Sunday Mass times so that a group of parishes can celebrate the Sunday Eucharist, the very core of our sacramental life, **with at least one less priest** in the group than would currently be the case.

Factors you may wish to take into account when looking at which parishes would most fruitfully form areas of co-operation are:

- Are there plans for, or the likelihood of, large new housing developments in your parish?
- Do you have a hospital A&E or other institution in your parish or area that needs to be provided for?
- Is there a permanent deacon or deacons in your parish?
- How many Catholic schools are in your area?
- How far are the other parishes in your possible group and perhaps more importantly, what is the travelling time?
- What are road links and public transport like in your area?
- Is the presbytery in your parish suitable for subdivision? For example, could it accommodate a flat for a retired priest?
- What size and seating capacity exists in the church buildings that are in your area?
- Are there church/parish halls that could be shared?
- Is your parish already in a sharing/co-operative arrangement? Some parishes in our Diocese are already involved in fruitful and suitable sharing arrangements. These need not be disrupted.
- Is there a compelling reason why you believe your parish would be unsuitable to work in close co-operation with another community or communities?
- Does your parish or ones nearby already have an area of strength which could fruitfully be used in co-operation with other communities so that there is no duplication of effort?

This list of considerations is by no means exhaustive and other issues that are relevant at a local level should also be considered.



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CURRENT STATISTICS AND PROJECTIONS FOR ACTIVE DIOCESAN PRIESTS

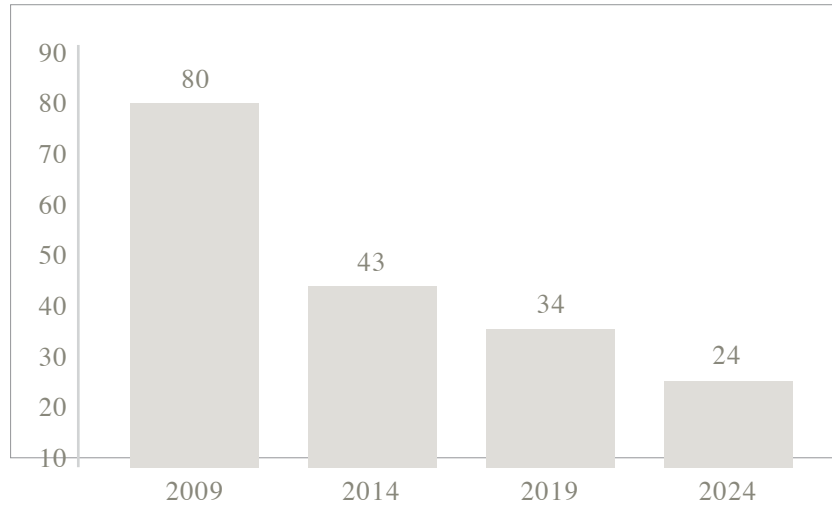


Figure 1: Worst-case scenario: all priests retire at 65 and no ordinations

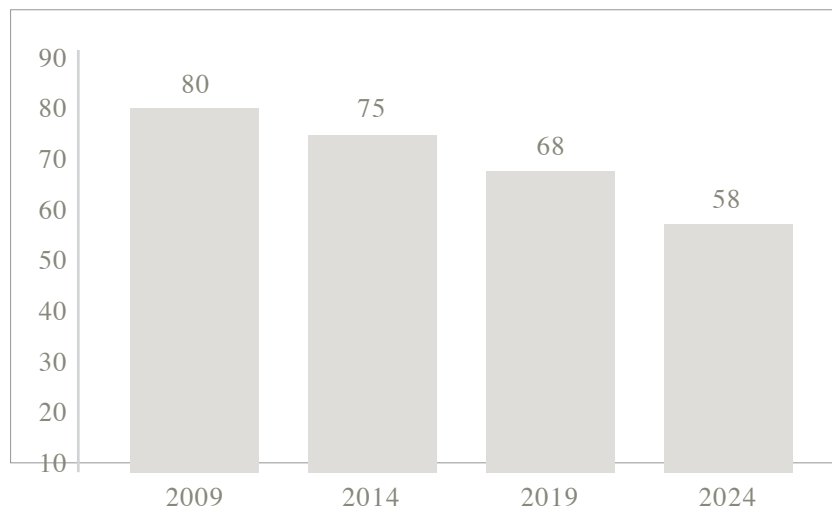


Figure 2: Best-case scenario: all priests retire at 75 and one ordination every year

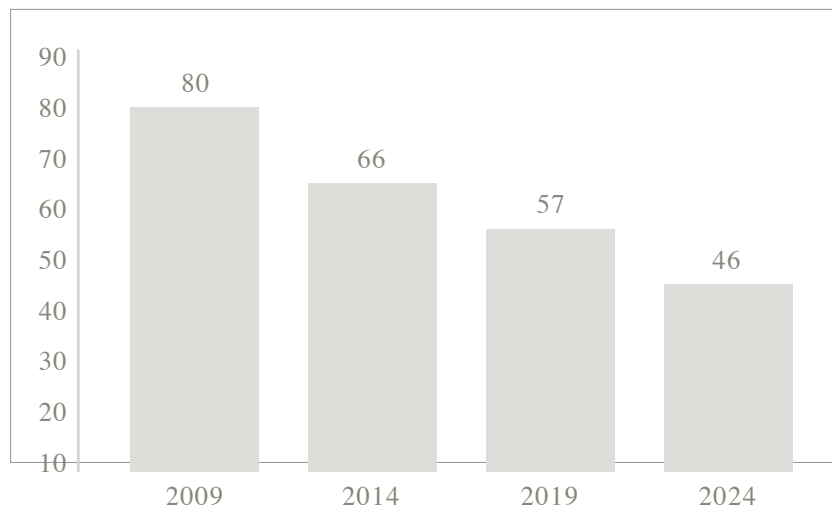


Figure 3: Median-case: ³/₄ of 65-75 year olds remain active. One ordination every two years