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# HOPE



*This booklet is  
to support priests  
in their ministry  
in our diocese.*

# HANDBOOK FOR PRIESTS



[cliftondiocese.com](http://cliftondiocese.com)

## DIOCESAN PRAYER

/// GOD OUR FATHER  
*open the horizons  
of our minds and hearts  
so that we can see  
what hope your call holds for us.*

*Pour out the overflowing gifts  
of your Spirit  
so that we, your Church,  
may become a people  
of hope for our world.*

*We ask you this,  
through Jesus Christ Our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God for ever and ever.*

OUR LADY  
*Woman of Hope, pray for us*

ST PETER  
*Rock of Hope, pray for us*

ST PAUL  
*Apostle of Hope, pray for us ///*

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## INTRODUCTION

When I visit parishes within our diocese, one of the questions I frequently ask is: what are the strengths and joys of this community? Usually it does not take long before somebody names the Parish Priest and Assistant Priest if there is one. There is then often a clap or a sound of assent. Thank God that people recognise and appreciate the gift of priesthood for the wellbeing and flourishing of the Christian community. They appreciate us, the clergy, in a loving and supportive way.

But it is not to ourselves that we give the glory. We are called to be servants of Christ, proclaiming God's word, celebrating the sacraments, gathering the eucharistic community and caring for it after the example of Christ, the Good Shepherd, who laid down his life for his sheep.

This year, Pope Benedict XVI has invited the whole Church to reflect upon and celebrate the gift of priesthood. One of the things we are reminded about is that the priest belongs to the presbyterate of a diocese. For us, the diocese is Clifton.

We are called to support one another in the living out of our vocation as priests of the diocese. In our vocation we are seeking the face of Christ in order to be a people of hope and enable others to be so.

This handbook, which I commend to you, provides practical information about what it means to be a priest in our diocese. I would like to thank Father Christopher Whitehead for compiling it and I hope you find it useful.

1 John 10:15

RIGHT REVEREND DECLAN LANG, BISHOP OF CLIFTON

+ Declan



## THE PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

It may seem that these guidelines and this Handbook have been a long time coming! It is not always easy to know what should be included and what should be left out. My hope is that the fruit of a lot of peoples' work will be both useful and worthwhile to the priests of our diocese. I think it is important to look at the Handbook as a work in progress and, inevitably, there are things that will change as soon as we go to print and things that will need updating on a regular basis. There will always be things that could have been put in but haven't. I hope the Handbook will be an edition that will grow over the years as we feel there should be other 'chapters' that will need to be included.

This Handbook has been produced as part of 'Called to be a People of Hope:' – the fruit of a diocesan wide consultation that has been taking place over the last two years – as well as building on the Handbook that was produced for priests of our diocese some years ago.

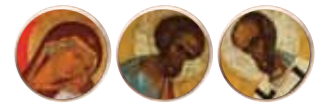
Why do we need a Handbook? When we were ordained we came out of the seminary knowing a certain 'everything'. As newly ordained priests it is always handy to have that little 'local' guide to practical things and to how things are done on a 'local level'. It would be too easy, though, to say that this Handbook is just for the recently ordained or newly arrived to our diocese. This publication has been produced to enable us to share some sort of common understanding and common practice in the simple ways that we exercise our priesthood. Whilst most of the content of the Handbook is not meant to be legislative, it is there to offer us useful, helpful information – sometimes basic answers to basic questions of how we operate and how we do things. Whilst Canon Law defines how we operate in many of the substantial circumstances of our priestly lives, this little Handbook offers us a guide to some of the more practical implications of being a priest in our diocese. The Handbook seeks to remind us, in a gentle way, that we are a fraternity of priests working together with our Bishop to build up the Kingdom of God and to preach and teach the Gospel that has been entrusted to us. It is important that this Handbook is read alongside the Parish Administration Handbook.

I am grateful to those who have contributed to producing this Handbook – those who have written particular parts of it, those who have edited and compiled it, those who have proof read it, and those who have brought it to publication. It is the work of many hands and minds, and I appreciate the hard work of those who began the Handbook and those who have brought it to fruition.

We are called to a life of service and a life of love... but not one in isolation. I feel this Handbook has been produced for the priests of our diocese to support them in all they do for the people of Clifton. It is a way of trying to support them and encourage them in the ministry they enter into so willingly and with such dedication. It reminds us that we are not on our own... there are always people we can turn to for help, for encouragement and support when we need simple answers to simple questions.

FATHER CHRISTOPHER WHITEHEAD  
DIRECTOR OF ONGOING FORMATION FOR PRIESTS

Christopher Whitehead



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## THE PRIEST

One of the great riches of priesthood lies in our diversity; the incredible variety of gifts and talents that we have and the distinctiveness of the ways in which we exercise our ministry. Yet at the heart of this diversity is a profound unity in Christ, a unity that springs from the call we received to follow Him in discipleship and then as apostles, bringing the Good News to our world. Over time, it is easy to lose touch with the joy of that initial call and be tempted to become slightly cynical and world weary. At these moments, it is good to come back to the source of our vocation. In our current situation, with its changes and uncertainties, it is perhaps more important than ever to root our priestly identity, not primarily in our function and activity, but in what we are as priests, to return to the heart of what priesthood is.

In doing so, I find it very enriching to turn to the text of the Rite of Ordination. One of the parts that touches me most profoundly comes when the new priest is presented with the gifts of bread and wine that will be offered during the Mass with the words "Accept from the holy people of God the gifts to be offered to him. Know what you are doing and imitate the mystery you celebrate: model your life on the mystery of the Lord's cross".

The first part of this invitation reminds us of how much we receive from the people of God, the holy people who sanctify and strengthen us through their prayer and life. It then tells us that we are called to offer their gifts to God, and in doing so to draw them more deeply to him. The preface of priesthood reminds us of our call to "lead your holy people in love, nourish them by your word, and strengthen them through the sacraments."

The second part of the invitation asks us to model our lives on the mystery of the Lord's cross. It is this mystery of the Lord's cross that lies at the heart of our priestly identity and mission. On the cross Jesus gives himself over entirely, laying down his life for the sheep "so that they may have life and have it more abundantly".<sup>2</sup> As priests we repeat over and over again Jesus' words "This is my body which will be given up for you", and in doing so we enter ever more fully into our call to share in Jesus' gift of himself. There is an incredible fruitfulness that springs from Jesus' gift of himself on the cross. It is on the cross that blood and water flow from his side, the blood and water that are to give life to the Church, that are to give us our new life and identity as children of the Father in our Baptism.

It is perhaps in his final hours that we see Jesus at his most fragile and vulnerable and at the same time that his glory and radiance are most powerfully revealed. This too, is perhaps part of our call to model our lives on the mystery of the Lord's cross. Part of this mystery is that we remain so fragile and human. It is in times of greatest struggle and difficulty that I find I am most powerfully drawn to prayer, that I most realise my dependence on God in my life and ministry, that His glory and radiance shine most fully through my human weakness.

Pope Benedict XVI entitles his book on priesthood 'Ministers of Your Joy', basing himself on St Paul's invitation to us to be servants of that joy. In an ordination homily he told those to be ordained that "to proclaim and to witness joy" would be the "central core" of their mission. This joy that we are called to be ministers of is one that is so much more than a superficial happiness, a joy that is present even in suffering. It is a joy that springs from a profound and living relationship with God. It is by returning constantly to the source of our life and fullness that we are given this joy, a joy that is not just for ourselves, but a joy that attracts and gives hope to those searching for a meaning to life. In our situation today, in our call to a new evangelisation, what will draw people to an encounter with Christ is the radiance of his beauty, seen in the joy of his servants. May we always share that joy with all we encounter.

<sup>2</sup> John 10:10



## I ONGOING FORMATION OF PRIESTS

*“Ongoing formation is a requirement of the gift and sacramental ministry received; and it proves necessary in every age. It is particularly urgent today not only because of rapid changes in the social and cultural conditions of individuals and peoples among whom priestly ministry is exercised, but also because of that ‘new evangelisation’ which constitutes the essential and pressing task of the Church.”<sup>3</sup>*

### WHAT IS ONGOING FORMATION AND WHY SHOULD I BE INTERESTED IN IT?

If you can think back to your days in seminary, when you were generally young and enthusiastic about learning more about the Church, you will recall that some of the subjects you studied were interesting and some have proved to be of great benefit to you in your ministry. Well, we all know that as the years progress things change, we change and new ideas and challenges keep coming along.

The *raison d'être* of ongoing formation is to help keep you updated in ideas and information on some of the key elements we have to deal with in the priesthood. So we have held days on preaching, pastoral initiatives, catechesis, finance, schools, and on a wide range of other topics. Some of these have been run with other diocesan departments, some run with lay people, some with deacons and religious, and many have been run just for priests.

The ongoing formation (OGF) team is also responsible for the annual diocesan priests' retreat and any other specific formation and training that the Bishop feels is needed in our diocese. Finally, the OGF team is always looking for ideas from you as to what you would find helpful in assisting you in your ministry, as together we work in the present and try to plan for the future.

### RETREATS

Just as Jesus drew his disciples away from the busy-ness of ministering to the crowds to find a lonely place to rest,<sup>4</sup> so there is a real encouragement for us, as priests, to ensure that space is found within our own busy lives for that lonely time spent with the Lord. It is by being nourished spiritually ourselves that we grow in our ability to feed and nourish others spiritually. We, as priests, have an obligation to seek holiness of life in our own lives so that we might better serve the people in our care.<sup>5</sup>

Diocesan priests have a serious obligation to make a spiritual retreat at least once every two years. A diocesan retreat is organised annually. If any priest decides to make different arrangements he should inform the Bishop personally. The cost of an annual retreat is a legitimate charge on the parish and is not a taxable benefit. Any priest working in non-parochial ministry, or who have resigned from pastoral responsibility, or experiencing difficulties in meeting the cost, should contact the Bishop.

Within the annual programme of ongoing formation, days of prayer are arranged for the first Tuesday of Advent and Lent for the priests of our diocese.



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<sup>3</sup> Pastores Dabo Vobis No. 70

<sup>4</sup> Mark 6: 30-33

<sup>5</sup> Canon 276 §1

## SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

All priests are encouraged to have a Spiritual Director to support and encourage them in their life of prayer. Recommendations and help in finding a suitable person for this may be obtained by contacting the Director of Ongoing Formation.

There is an ancient tradition that says a person without a Spiritual Director is like a body without a head or, as St Bernard remarks, a person who directs himself is directed by a fool.

## HOLIDAYS

Priests are encouraged to take a regular holiday and a weekly day off.

The current allowance for holidays is three Sundays per year in summertime and one Sunday after Christmas and Easter. The Bishop must be informed beforehand of extended absence from the parish of more than three successive Sundays.

Unless there is grave reason to the contrary, the parish priest may be absent on holiday from his parish for a period not exceeding one month, continuous or otherwise, in one year. The days the priest spends on an annual retreat are not part of his holiday allowance. For an absence from the parish of more than a month, however, the parish priest is bound to advise the Bishop.

There are no separate financial allowances for holidays.

## FORMATION PROGRAMME

*“Clerics are to continue their sacred studies even after ordination to the priesthood... Priests are to attend courses arranged for them after their ordination, in accordance with the provisions of particular law. At times determined by the same law, they are to attend other courses, theological meetings or conferences, which offer them an occasion to acquire further knowledge of the sacred sciences and of pastoral methods...”*<sup>10</sup>

At a diocesan level, study days are arranged on matters of personal, pastoral and theological interest. The Ministry to Priests' Support Group programme offer personal support to their members. Any priest wishing to undertake other forms of further education or in-service training should be encouraged but would need to seek the initial permission of the Bishop before any commitment is made. Approved and reasonable in-service training costs are not a taxable benefit. It is envisaged that deanery meetings will also provide priests with an opportunity for continuing their formation. Discussion papers will be produced periodically by the OGF team to facilitate discussion and formation at a more local level within the diocese.

The OGF team is part of our Department for Adult Education and Evangelisation. This team ensures there is a range of study days to meet the varied needs of priests. A broad range of topics will be covered. The department will endeavour to attract recognised national and international speakers.

Father Christopher Whitehead Director of Ongoing Formation for Priests, Fathers Tom Dubois, Tom Finnegan and Tom Smith. Mrs Ronnie Mitchinson provides administrative support for the team.

10 Canon 279

## SABBATICALS

*“Certainly there are also purely human reasons which call for the priest to engage in ongoing formation. This formation is demanded by his own continuing personal growth. Every life is a constant path towards maturity... It is also demanded by the priestly ministry seen ... as a service directed to others. There is no profession, job or work which does not require constant updating if it is to remain current and effective.”*<sup>11</sup>

The diocese has a policy of sabbatical leave for priests. The sabbatical normally takes place after ten years of ordination. Details of sabbatical programmes can be obtained from the Director of Ongoing Formation.

Preliminary discussions as to proposed dates, suitability of course, length of sabbatical and future ministry take place in the first instance with the Bishop who ultimately gives permission. Sabbaticals are normally funded on the basis of one third by the individual, one third by the parish, one third by the diocese.

**Father Christopher Whitehead**  
**Director of Ongoing Formation for Priests**  
**St Bernadette's Presbytery**  
**731 Wells Road**  
**Whitchurch**  
**Bristol**  
**BS14 9HU**  
**01275 833699**  
**christopherwhitehead@hotmail.com**



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11 Pastores Dabo Vobis No. 70

## II SUPPORT FOR PRIESTS

*“Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yolk and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yolk is easy and my burden light.”<sup>12</sup>*

If a priest finds his ministry is making demands on him that appear greater than his personal resources will allow, he should take appropriate action to alleviate the situation. This is particularly important if he envisages that the situation will endure for some time. Amongst possible courses of action, the priest should:

### ACTIONS

- **Ensure that you take your day off**
- **Discuss the matter with another priest, the Dean, the Bishop, or someone else in authority**
- **Consider seeking assistance with your ministry perhaps by involving members of the laity or employing an administrative assistant. This should be done after liaison with our Finance Office**
- **Attempt to identify areas of your activity that you could delegate to others**
- **Consider if there are outside commitments which you could relinquish**
- **From time to time consider saying no**
- **Consider writing into your diary some time each day that is personal time - and adhere to it. This should include both time for relaxation and time for prayer<sup>13</sup>**

Your spiritual director, along with your deanery colleagues, Ministry to Priests Groups, the Amici Cleri or one of the Safety Net contacts should be able to provide you with the support that you need.

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 11:28-30

<sup>13</sup> This section is based upon the Clergy Handbook of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. It is used with permission and gratitude is given for allowing it to be used.

## MINISTRY TO PRIESTS GROUPS

Ministry to priests groups were set up in the 1980s in our diocese for priests to support brother priests. Meeting regularly means there is an opportunity for priests to meet and share with each other, in a relaxed atmosphere, away from the stresses of parish life. All priests are encouraged to consider joining one of these groups.

### SKILLS GROUP

The members of this group come from every age and ministry in our diocese. There is a wide cross section of priests which always makes for a lively gettogether! The group is about ten in number and meet every month at 'Our Lady's Homestead' at Nympsfield, on or near the first Tuesday. We begin with Evening Prayer in the chapel at 6.00pm. This is followed by dinner at 6.30pm. At about 7.30pm we adjourn to the lounge where we usually have an invited speaker to share with us some skills relating to our ministry. Over the years we have had speakers from many walks of life. The topics covered vary from management to drama.

The purpose of this group is to nurture skills and offer support of each other as brother priests.

*Father John Reville*

**Father John Reville**  
**8 Folkestone Road**  
**Swindon**  
**SN1 3NH**  
**01793 526933**



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## JESUS CARITAS MINISTRY TO PRIESTS GROUP

This group is based on the spirituality of Charles de Foucauld.

We meet once a month at 'Our Lady's Homestead,' Nympsfield, always with an overnight stay. We begin with a Holy Hour at 6.00pm, supper is at 7.00pm, and Evening Prayer is at 8.30pm. This is followed by reviews until about 10.00pm. The morning session begins at about 8.30am with breakfast. Morning Prayer is at 9.30am which is followed by more reviews. We try, time permitting, to have a gospel enquiry where we look at the following Sunday's gospel. Lunch is at 12.30pm after which we depart.

I joined the group in 1991 and very rarely miss it. Our group has 10 regular members who all see it as a high priority. There is a great deal of support in the group and I can highly recommend it to any priest who wishes to join. Why not give us a try?

Our reviews come under four main headings which relate to aspects of Brother Charles' spirituality - presence, word, poverty and hospitality.

This is not adhered to slavishly, but provides a useful framework. We also try to make a 'Desert Day' once a month, a quiet day with the Lord.

Presence - is mainly about prayer, and will include reference to a 'Desert Day', and the 'Hour', covering the whole area of the quality of my presence to God, to my work, to my brother and sister.

Word - can be a book or article which has challenged or inspired me. It may be events and experiences which have taught me something or made me more aware of something. It may be a phrase or a passage of scripture which has had a special meaning for me at this time.

Poverty - can be agonising over buying a new car, or coping with setbacks, ups and downs of life, illnesses, accidents and burglaries.

Hospitality includes that which has been given and that which has been received.

Sometimes, the different headings are quite distinct, but at other times they seem to merge into one another. At times a brother may choose to concentrate on one aspect of life which is of particular concern at present. However, generally it provides a common framework which helps to maintain some order and structure to the reviews given at our meetings.

*Father Vincent Curtis*

**Father Vincent Curtis**  
**St Dominic's Presbytery**  
**Jubilee Road**  
**Dursley**  
**GL11 4ES**  
**01453 542039**

## WALKING GROUP

Once I organised a sponsored walk in Northern Ireland of about 120 miles and appealed for sponsors in one of the local churches.

After Mass a lady came to me and said: "My prayers will go with you... but not my feet!" Don't worry, our walking group does nothing as ambitious as 120 miles, more like five miles! Sometimes a bit longer. A gentle walk every two months beginning with a pub lunch and ending in a presbytery for a meal can't be bad. Good exercise, good company, good craic. Why not join us with your feet and your prayers? You would be very welcome.

*Canon Kevin Mortimer*

**Canon Kevin Mortimer**  
**Sacred Heart Presbytery**  
**Grange Court Road**  
**Westbury-on-Trym**  
**Bristol**  
**BS9 4DR**  
**0117 983 3926**

## SCRIPTURE AND THEOLOGY GROUP

The purpose is to keep up to date with modern scripture scholarship and theology. Participants recognise the need to add to their understanding of subjects covered in the seminary.

The group meets once a month on a Wednesday for an overnight stay in 'Our Lady's Homestead', Nympsfield. Evening Prayer is recited together. A meal follows and then an open discussion begins raising points of pastoral interest and concern. Around 9.30pm some members adjourn to the local pub. On Thursday after breakfast we have Morning Prayer. One member presents a paper on an agreed theme which leads to discussion. Discussion ends with a 10 to 15 minute meditation on the gospel of the day. Mass is celebrated. Lunch follows and members depart around 1.00pm.

*Father Tom Gunning*

**Father Tom Gunning**  
**St John's Presbytery**  
**South Parade**  
**Bath**  
**BA2 4AF**  
**01225 464471**



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## AMICI CLERI

The Bishop has appointed four priests in the diocese to be available as 'Friends of the Clergy'. These four priests are available to any priest working in the Diocese who wish to have a compassionate, listening ear with whom he can discuss any concerns he might have. These concerns may be of a sensitive nature, on matters of faith, or matters concerning ministerial difficulties. Above all, the conversations will be totally confidential. At present, the priests who have been appointed are:

**Father Louis Beasley-Suffolk**  
SS Luke & Teresa Presbytery  
South Street  
Wincanton  
BA9 9DH  
01963 34408

**Father Patrick Eastman**  
30 North Wall  
Cricklade  
Swindon  
SN6 6DU  
01793 750452

**Canon Alan Finley**  
Clifton Cathedral  
Clifton Park  
Bristol  
BS8 3BX  
0117 973 8411

**Father Barnabas Page**  
4 High Nash  
Coleford  
GL16 8HN  
01594 833173

## SAFETY NET FOR PRIESTS

Priests might also like to contact the following healthcare professionals who are available in a confidential capacity to support our priests in whatever way appropriate.

**Doctor David Hogg**  
General Practitioner

Maryes Cottage  
Bath Road  
Devizes  
SN10 2BB  
01380 724531

**Mr Derek Indoe**  
Consultant Clinical Psychologist

24 Van Deimens Lane  
Bath  
BA1 5TW  
01225 33370

## III MENTORING

*The newly ordained or the newly appointed*

A priest mentor is a diocesan priest who has been ordained at least seven years and is in at least his second parish appointment. He is someone you think you would be comfortable talking with about parish ministry and the experience of being a priest. A good choice is someone you admire for the exercise of his priestly ministry and priestly character. He is not your Spiritual Director nor is he to be considered an immediate 'supervisor'. The relationship is more fraternal. The priest who becomes your mentor is an older brother in the priesthood who willingly listens and encourages his brother priest. Conversations, therefore, should be respected and held in confidence.

Mentors provide newly ordained or newly appointed priests a forum for talking about experiences. They also provide a chance to raise questions outside of the normal living and working environment, and a forum that is not necessarily Spiritual Direction.

The Bishop is responsible for approving the choice of an official priest-mentor if a mentor is thought to be necessary. Otherwise, it is down to the individual priest to find a priest of his choice for informal mentoring. It is, however, the responsibility of the newly ordained or newly appointed priest to arrange the meetings with his mentor. The frequency of these meetings should be at least once every two months during the first two years.

## IV REGISTRATION FOR MARRIAGE

The parish priest is normally the authorised person for the registration of marriages that are to take place in his church building. He may appoint additional authorised persons to assist him in this responsibility. These may be lay people or religious. The application forms are obtainable from the Registrar General and are countersigned by the Bishop and one trustee in their capacity as trustees.

The priest is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate quarterly returns are made to the Register Office.



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## V CELEBRET & TESTIMONIALS

When you are going to be away from the diocese and you wish to celebrate Mass, you should apply for a Celebret from the Bishop. This is your 'priestly passport' and will identify you as a priest of the Clifton Diocese in good standing. A Celebret is usually valid for the time you are away from the diocese.

If you wish to exercise priestly ministry in a parish outside the diocese, you will be expected to complete a Testimonial of Suitability as required by safeguarding policy. It is your responsibility to obtain the appropriate form for completion by the Bishop. This will be sent to you to be forwarded to the Bishop of the diocese where you wish to exercise your priestly ministry. You should also apply for a Celebret at the same time.

It is also important that priests coming into the diocese from outside of the UK who seek to work within our parishes or communities, albeit on a supply basis and regardless of length of stay, will need to ensure that they have completed the same Testimonial of Suitability and have it signed by their own Bishop or Religious Superior and returned to the Chancellor of our diocese. No priest will be permitted to embark upon pastoral work within our diocese until this Testimonial of Suitability has been appropriately completed and received by the Chancellor. These forms - whether for you or for a priest seeking to work within the diocese - can be obtained from the Chancellor.

### Celebrets

**Bishop Declan Lang**

**St Ambrose  
North Road  
Leigh Woods  
Bristol  
BS8 3PW**

**0117 973 3072**

**declan.lang@cliftondiocese.com**

### Testimonials

**Father Robert King  
Chancellor**

**103 Queens Road  
Bristol  
BS8 1LL**

**0117 914 0003**

**robert.king@cliftondiocese.com**

## VI PRIESTS' RETIREMENT FUND

A priest tries to respond to the call of Jesus Christ to "leave all things and follow me". Priests commit themselves to a life without the security of a home of their own, or a large income. They do this gladly, and the kindness and support of the people they serve means that they are seldom if ever in need.

When a priest becomes ill or resigns from active ministry, he will rarely have large savings or a personal pension to fall back on. It is the responsibility of the diocese to provide a home and an allowance for him. Their needs vary. Some receive nursing care, some need support with living expenses, others live in properties provided by the diocese and need help with their day-to-day expenses.

### THE WELFARE OF SICK PRIESTS AND THOSE WHO HAVE RESIGNED FROM ACTIVE MINISTRY

Canon Alan Finley is responsible for the welfare and financial arrangements of all diocesan priests who have resigned from active ministry or priests who are unable to perform their ministry through sickness. His brief is:

to maintain contact with priests who are sick or who have resigned from active ministry

to liaise with the Bishop about their welfare

to develop and implement the policy for those who wish to resign from active ministry or who are required to submit their resignation to the Bishop at the age of 75.<sup>14</sup>

### ACCOMMODATION FOR PRIESTS WHO HAVE RESIGNED FROM ACTIVE MINISTRY

Many priests who resign from the administrative responsibility of a parish wish to continue some form of pastoral involvement as long as their health permits. This ministry is very important to the life of the diocese. When possible a suitable parish and presbytery is identified where the priest can fulfil his pastoral ministry without the burdens of administration.

The diocese has a few properties which are used by our priests who wish to live independently. These are in great demand.

Some priests own property or wish to purchase property, either in this country or overseas. Unless the priest has the personal funds to undertake such a purchase privately, negotiations for the purchase of a property must not be entered into without the prior consent of the Bishop.

Some priests need residential or nursing care in accommodation such as St Angela's, Bristol, St Joseph's, Bristol, and Nazareth House, Cheltenham. Unless the priest has substantial personal funds to meet the ongoing costs, arrangements to enter a residential establishment must not be made until the matter has been discussed with the Bishop.



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<sup>14</sup> Canon 538 §3

## VII CLERGY FUND & INFIRM PRIESTS SOCIETY

### CLERGY FUND

The Clergy Fund is provided by an annual 'premium' charged to each diocesan parish and covers the costs of private medical treatment for sick priests. It is also available in other cases of special need.

For priests working in parishes the contributions to the scheme are paid by the diocese. The parish pays the contribution for those priests working in parishes. The diocese pays the cost for those priests who have resigned from active ministry.

Unless priests have health insurance, or funds available to meet the costs, it will not be possible for them to obtain private health care at the expense of the diocese.

Priests may apply to the Clergy Fund for the cost of a medical examination.

There is no facility for convalescence in the diocese and priests' needs will vary. If financial help is needed for convalescence, contact the Clergy Fund Secretary.

Any priest who is contemplating private medical treatment or convalescence and is unsure of his entitlement to benefits or ability to meet the costs must discuss the matter with the Bishop before entering into any arrangement which will incur a financial liability.

**Clergy Fund**  
**Canon Bosco MacDonald**  
**St Gregory's Presbytery**  
**10 St James Square**  
**Cheltenham**  
**GL50 3PR**  
**01242 523737**  
**gregchurch.cheltenham@cliftondiocese.com**

**Infirm Priests Society**  
**Father Patrick Auger**  
**Our Lady of Lourdes Presbytery**  
**2 Court Road**  
**Kingswood**  
**Bristol**  
**BS15 9QB**  
**0117 949 8743**  
**olol@catholic.org**

## VIII PRIESTS' PERSONAL FINANCE

### INCOME & TAXATION

*The following information applies for the tax year beginning 6 April 2009*

#### WHAT CONSTITUTES A PRIEST'S ALLOWANCE?

A priest is entitled to personal allowance from the following sources:

Diocesan allowance fixed annually by the Bishop and trustees  
- £1800 for 2009.

Easter and Christmas offerings from the laity.

Mass offerings received.

Stole Fees for Marriages, Funerals, and Baptisms.

National Insurance Contributions are to be paid personally and then contributions reclaimed from the parish account. At present, the self employed, Class II, contribution is £2.40 per week. By paying these contributions directly from your personal bank account and then reclaiming them, it should ensure that when you move from a parish the contributions are not overlooked - an omission which would eventually affect pension rights.

Minimum allowance: For the current year 2009 a minimum of £6180 has been set by the Bishop and trustees. If a priest receives less than this amount in a year once all sources of allowance have been calculated, he is entitled to make up the shortfall from parish funds up to this minimum amount.

Priests who look after more than one parish are not entitled to take an annual diocesan allowance for each of those parishes - one priest, one allowance. The expenses for 'maintaining' and supporting a priest should, really, be shared between the parishes he looks after.



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## BENEFITS IN KIND

### *What constitutes a benefit in kind?*

For further information please refer to 'Tax Guidelines for Ministers of Religion' sent out by the Inland Revenue accompanying each tax return.

Every priest's tax affairs are his own responsibility. Please remember that you are legally bound to keep records of your allowances and expenditure. There is also a legal responsibility to make returns to the Inland Revenue and there are penalties for failure to do so. If in any doubt, please seek professional advice in good time.

## INCOME FROM OTHER SOURCES

A priest may have other sources of income. Bank and building society interest in addition to dividends from companies based in the UK are usually taxed at source and there is unlikely to be any further liability to tax. It is, however, possible that bank or building society interest is being paid gross (i.e. without tax being deducted). Similarly, some income from National Savings is also paid gross. Income from rented property or from overseas investments could also carry a liability to tax.

Priests with any other source of income which is not taxed at source should seek professional advice when completing their tax returns.

## EXPENSES

Apart from car expenses, certain other expenses incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in a priest's ministry can be taken into account when calculating income tax:

Purchase of books and journals or periodicals necessary for the office.

Replacement of vestments but not clerical suits or shirts.

Exceptional gifts and offerings given on special occasions, such as jubilees or as leaving presents under certain conditions.

## CAR AND TRAVEL EXPENSES

It will almost certainly be advantageous from a taxation point of view for a priest working in a parish to own his own car rather than it being parish owned. This may mean the priest will need a loan from the diocesan finance office. This must be £5000 or under and proof of purchase is required by the finance office. Priests are encouraged to consult the finance office if they have any queries about this. In the event of the parish owning the car the taxable benefit will be added to the salary and benefits in kind for tax purposes.

### 4.233 INLAND REVENUE STATUTORY MILEAGE RATE

Up to 10,000 business miles 40p per mile

Over 10,000 business miles 25p per mile

This applies to all engine sizes.

Payments of more than the statutory system are taxable.

It is essential that you keep accurate and contemporaneous records of the business mileage for which your car is used.

If claiming other travelling expenses, please be sure to maintain records of the purpose and nature of the travel and receipts for the expenditure.

## MASS OFFERINGS

Every priest is canonically bound to keep an accurate record of Mass offerings received and discharged<sup>15</sup>. This continues to apply even where a priest is not taking the offering from the Masses as personal to himself.

A priest should not retain more Masses than he can reasonably celebrate. Surplus Mass offerings should be sent to the Bishop.

Where a priest offers more than one Mass to which an offering is attached in the same day (except for Christmas Day), he must send the offering from such Masses to the Bishop.

### FOUNDATION MASSES

Foundation Masses are Masses of obligation which are funded by money left in trust to the diocese.

Parishes which have Foundation Masses receive an annual payment from the finance office in December of each year. The covering letter will give details of the intention and the requested date of celebration with a note of the offering attached to each Mass.

### SOCIETAS PRO CLERO DEFUNCTO: PACT

PACT came into existence in 1860. The aim of the Society is to pray and offer Mass for deceased members whose names appear on the Register. The dioceses of England and Wales are divided into four groupings. Each member of the Society is obliged to offer a Mass for deceased members of their particular diocesan grouping. The names of the deceased members for whom Mass should be offered are listed in the Ad Clerum. Membership of the Society is administered by our local diocesan registrar. Details can be obtained from Father Robert King.

**Father Robert King**  
**Registrar**  
**103 Queens Road**  
**Bristol**  
**BS8 1LL**  
**0117 914 0003**  
**robert.king@cliftondiocese.com**



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15 Canon 958 §1

## OFFERINGS FOR SUPPLY

The following figures are issued as guidelines as used by the Conference of Major Religious Superiors for payment to Religious supplying in parishes.

These may be helpful in deciding appropriate offerings when engaging supply priests in parishes. They are given as a guide.

A Sunday Mass and homily	£55 + travel
Weekday Mass	£30 + travel
Confessions	£40 per hour + travel
Funerals	£50 + travel
Weddings	£75 + travel

Offerings for funerals and weddings should only be given if, of course, there is no other offering coming from either undertakers or family.

These rates may need to be changed according to the needs of the particular supply priest and the financial resources of a particular parish.

It should be noted that:

Mass offerings go directly to the officiating priest.

Travel expenses cover fares by public transport over a reasonable distance within the UK.

Motor expenses can be claimed at the Inland Revenue Statutory mileage rates.

These arrangements do not apply to fraternal arrangements between parishes or within deaneries.

## WILLS

Every priest should make a will and should deposit a **certified copy of the original** with the Bishop. A letter giving any particular details of wishes regarding the funeral or other matters should be included if these are not clearly expressed within the will itself. It is suggested that one executor should be a priest.

## PENSION PROVISION

### PRIESTS' RETIREMENT FUND GRANTS

On resigning from pastoral responsibility, priests born before 1934 may apply to the Priests Retirement Fund for a grant to assist with living costs. This grant is entirely at the discretion of the Priests Retirement Committee who consider the personal circumstances of the applicant when reviewing requests. For example if a priest has a pension from external employment this will be taken into consideration. The grants are paid quarterly by the finance office.

It is helpful if priests can indicate their intentions to resign from pastoral responsibility to the Chairman of the Priests' Retirement Fund well in advance of your desire to resign. (This should, of course, be done having already discussed with the Bishop your desire to resign from pastoral responsibility).

### STANDARD LIFE PENSIONS

Most priests born after 1933 will have a Standard Life personal pension fund. The diocese contributes an amount to this fund which depends on the age of the priest when the contributions start. Contributions normally start in the April following ordination.

Priests will receive a statement of the fund balance annually. The diocesan contribution is reviewed periodically with the broad aim that the accumulated fund at age 70 should provide an annuity equivalent to the average Priests' Retirement Fund grant. Priests should keep Standard Life aware of any changes in address. When applying for the annuity priests are encouraged to 'shop around' and find the annuity which best suits their circumstances. There is no requirement to buy the annuity from Standard Life.

If a priest dies before the annuity is purchased the fund will form part of the deceased's estate and depending on personal circumstances could attract inheritance tax. This can be avoided by completing a form designating who the beneficiary of the fund should be. Priests are encouraged to consider designating the Priests' Retirement Fund as beneficiary on this form so as to augment resources to support retired priests.

For priests born between 1934 and 1940 the Standard Life annuity is unlikely to be equivalent to the Priests' Retirement Fund grant. Priests in this category may apply to the Priests' Retirement Fund for a grant and they will be asked to provide details of the annuity to enable the committee to assess the level of support required.

The finance office is happy to provide additional information.

**Ms Margaret Marshall**  
**Financial Administrator**

**Deacon Kevin Moloney**  
**Assistant Accountant**

**Finance Office**  
**Alexander House**  
**160 Pennywell Road**  
**Bristol**  
**BS5 0TX**

**0117 902 5591**  
**finance.office@cliftondiocese.com**



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## IX INCARDINATION

### INCARDINATION

Permission to work on a full time basis for more than a year or beyond a fixed term contract is reserved to the Bishop.

A distinction should be made between priests who work in the diocese on a temporary basis, such as holiday or weekend supply work or while pursuing a course of studies, and those who come on a full time basis.

### TACIT INCARDINATION

For “tacit” or “automatic incardination” the following conditions must be observed:

The cleric must express in writing his desire to be incardinated into the Clifton Diocese;

This declaration must be made to both the Bishop of Clifton and to his own Ordinary;

The cleric must have resided lawfully for five years in the Clifton Diocese;

Note: the law does not require that the same cleric must have fulfilled a pastoral ministry in Clifton. But the “residence” must be lawful, that is approved, at least, tacitly by both Ordinaries.

Such tacit incardination cannot take effect if either of the said Ordinaries express in writing his opposition to the intended incardination within four months of the date of the written petition made after the conclusion of the five years residence.

The cleric whose petition is opposed has the right to appeal against either Ordinary’s opposition.<sup>16</sup>

The procedure on the Enrolment or Incardination of priests can be found in the Code of Canon Law.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Canon 270

<sup>17</sup> Canon 265 – 272

## X SAFEGUARDING

The Diocesan Safeguarding Commission’s purpose is to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, as well as vulnerable adults, for whom the diocese is responsible. It does this by ensuring that the diocese complies with policies adopted by the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, as formulated by Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service (CSAS).

Priests must be familiar with the procedures as laid down in the Diocesan Guidelines for Safeguarding. If your parish does not have a copy of the guidelines and procedures, then they can be obtained from the Safeguarding Office at Alexander House. It is also important that every priest take part in the ongoing training organised by the Safeguarding Commission.

**Mrs Jane Dziadulewicz**  
**Safeguarding Coordinator**  
**Alexander House**  
**160 Pennywell Road**  
**Bristol**  
**BS5 0TX**  
**0117 954 0993**  
**ccdtrchildprot@yahoo.co.uk**



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## WHAT HAPPENS TO A PRIEST WHEN AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE IS MADE?

### A CANONICAL PERSPECTIVE

We should remember that it is not just offences against children and vulnerable adults that can lead to such measures as an investigation, "administrative leave"<sup>18</sup> and a possible penalty; others include abuses of the Sacraments (e.g. breach of the Sacramental seal) and other crimes that are internal to the Church and not punished in the civil sphere.

The right to a good reputation and the right to protect one's privacy is a basic right of every person. This is protected for all the faithful, including clergy. When a cleric is placed on administrative leave, any announcement should not include details of allegations, and the public should be warned not to jump to conclusions about it being a child protection issue. This may or may not be the case, but the presumption of innocence must remain, and with that the cleric's good reputation must be protected<sup>19</sup> until, or unless, the contrary is proven. Canon 1390 has different provisions which may be invoked if this is breached.

A cleric, as with the rest of the faithful, also enjoys the right to vindicate and defend his rights in the Church before a competent ecclesiastical forum. This specifies the right of defence and if this right is not afforded to the accused then any decision or penalty is irremediably invalid.<sup>20</sup> If an accused cleric waives his right of defence or absents himself from the process, he cannot, then, invoke this Canon's protection.

An accused cleric is urged to cooperate with his Bishop or Superior who must thoroughly investigate all complaints. This is a most onerous burden, but the needs of the victim, the accused and the good of the Church demand that all cooperate to reach the truth and a just outcome in every case.

This is in no way an exhaustive list of rights, hence the need for personal advice should such an occasion arise. It would be foolhardy for an accused to try to deal with this alone and an approach to a trained Canonist for advice is strongly urged. No admissions or agreements should be declared or signed without proper advice. It is best to make this contact via the Judicial Vicar at the Tribunal, but an accused cleric may directly approach a Canon Lawyer of his choice within or outside of the diocese. The accused should also seek similar help from a solicitor to assist him with any civil repercussions of an alleged offence.

*Father Richard Dwyer*

**Father Richard Dwyer VJ JCL**  
**St Joseph's Presbytery**  
**Chance Street**  
**Tewkesbury**  
**GL20 5RF**  
**01684 293273**

<sup>18</sup> It is an application of Canon 1722

<sup>19</sup> Canon 1717 especially §2

<sup>20</sup> Canon 1620 §7

## ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE

If a priest has to leave his parish, even temporarily, he is of course also leaving his home. This will lead to practical as well as emotional difficulties. The diocese will ensure that any priest who has to go on administrative leave will receive the following:

- Accommodation
  - Financial support
  - Legal advice
  - Emotional support from a named independent person
  - Spiritual support
  - Information about how the allegation is proceeding
- The Bishop or his delegate will be responsible for ensuring the provision of the support and help that are required.

## XI COMMUNICATIONS

The Diocesan Communications Officer is part of the Catholic Communications Network. [cliftondiocese.com](http://cliftondiocese.com) is the heart of our communications. It is there to reflect the life of the local Catholic Community. All contributions help in that purpose. The Communications Officer is there to guide and advise priests in their own interaction with the various media. Media training is always available and approach should be made to the Communications Officer to facilitate that.

**Mr Tom Bigwood**  
**Communications Officer**  
**St Ambrose**  
**North Road**  
**Leigh Woods**  
**Bristol**  
**BS8 3PW**  
**0117 973 3072**  
**[pressandmedia@cliftondiocese.com](mailto:pressandmedia@cliftondiocese.com)**



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# PREFACE OF THE PRIESTHOOD

CHRISM MASS

*“ Father, all-powerful and ever-living God,  
we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks.*

*By your Holy Spirit you anointed your only Son  
High Priest of the new and eternal covenant.  
With wisdom and love you have planned  
that this one priesthood  
should continue in the Church.*

*Christ gives the dignity of a royal priesthood  
to the people he has made his own.  
From these, with a brother's love,  
he chooses men to share his sacred ministry  
by the laying on of hands.*

*He appoints them to renew in his name  
the sacrifice of our redemption  
as they set before your family his paschal meal.*

*He calls them to lead your holy people in love,  
nourish them by your word,  
and strengthen them through the sacraments.*

*Father, they are to give their lives in your service  
and for the salvation of your people  
as they strive to grow in likeness of Christ  
and honour you by their courageous witness  
of faith and love. ”*

AMEN

