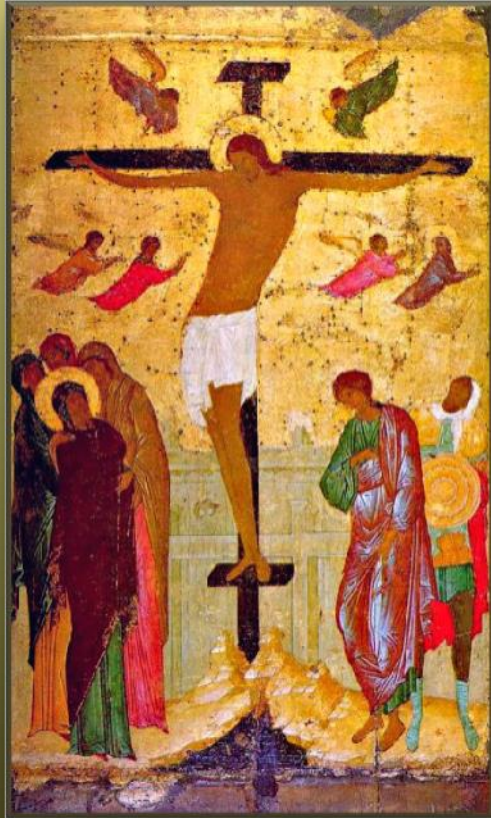


Pastoring the Pastors



The Diocese of Coventry

Trinity 2010

The icon on the front cover, painted by Dionisii, reminds us that Jesus, the 'Good Pastor', cares for the leaders of his embryonic Church, symbolised by Mary his mother and the beloved disciple, by entrusting each to the other's care (John 19.26-27).

Introduction

This is a document about the *pastoral care of the clergy*. It is a pastoral document for pastors and for those who support them. It is about how those who care for ('pastor') others may themselves be cared for ('pastored'). It has three parts to it. First, it considers our own care of ourselves as clergy including some guidance on how we might do that. Second, it describes the care that the Bishop seeks to give and to ensure is in place from colleagues and diocesan support systems. Third, it suggests the care that clergy might reasonably expect from lay leaders in the Church.

1 'Keep watch over yourselves'¹: Pastoral care of ourselves

The call to 'love your neighbour as yourself' implies that we take care of ourselves. Why? Because as God says to us, 'I have called you by name, you are mine. Because you are precious in my sight and honoured and I love you.' (Isaiah 43.1,4)

Valuing your Vocation

To honour God's call in our lives, we need to ensure, as far as is humanly possible, that we are healthy in body, mind and spirit. If we are to be, and to remain, resourced and energized for ministry, it is essential to make time for study, rest and recreation. The most important vocation is to be and to become the one God has called us to be.

But we all have several vocations. Our lives are lived in the context of a variety of God-given relationships that need to be honoured and nurtured. For many this will include spouses and children. For all there will be significant personal relationships.

It is tempting to allow our calling to ordained ministry to eclipse our calling as spouses or parents or children, or to other significant relationships. Being a good minister of the Gospel also involves taking

¹ Acts 20: 28 – from Paul's farewell address to the Ephesian elders.

care of ourselves and our families, and not to become driven to succeed or victims of obsessive or destructive patterns of work. It is particularly easy to drift into these when living 'over the shop', as most parochial clergy do, including, for all practical purposes, many self-supporting clergy. It is sometimes difficult to assess what is 'work' and what is not and, for clergy, things that are done only or mainly in an official capacity should be counted as active ministry, or 'work'. But it is worth remembering that regularly working over 50 hours a week is said to lead to workaholic tendencies. Self-supporting ministers who are also in secular employment will also need to balance their paid work with their exercise of ministry so that both spheres of their lives and service are sustainable. It is better for us to work well, rather than more, and sharper, rather than harder.

Regular Time Off

It is essential to have at least one full day off each week. Ideally, this should include the evening before. Given that our hours are often long and we are frequently engaged in ministry for three-parts of the day (*ie*, morning, afternoon and evening), we should try to have two days off together at least once a month. It is good to aim to preach no more than five Sundays out of six.

Holidays

Holidays are vital for spiritual, physical, mental and emotional replenishment and clergy should take their full holiday entitlement. For those in full-time ministry this is 30 working days a year plus 8 statutory days (bank holidays) which can be transferred and, in the case of Christmas Day and Good Friday must be! This totals six working weeks and two days.²

Again, self-supporting clergy in secular employment will need to watch that their holidays are protected and that their exercise of parochial ministry does not erode their holiday time detrimentally.

² A 'working week' for clergy in full-time ministry is determined as 6 days, hence 6 weeks holiday equals 36 days, leaving 2 extra days. The expectation is that no more than 6 Sundays are taken as holiday.

Prayer and Retreat

Time and space for spiritual refreshment is essential for spiritual leadership. Daily prayer is vital and the life-blood of godly ministry. It is also important for clergy to make space for longer periods of prayer, reflection and spiritual refreshment and to do this away from home and parish or other context of ministry. It is expected that clergy will make time for an annual retreat in addition to holiday entitlement.

Sabbaticals

It is hoped that clergy will be able to have the opportunity for sabbatical leave every 7 to 10 years. For clergy considering a sabbatical, see 'Sabbatical Guidelines and Procedures in Coventry Diocese' available on the Diocesan Website (www.dioceseofcoventry.org) or directly from Richard Cooke, 024 7652 1332 or 07952 544820 or email Richard.Cooke@CovCofE.org.

Finance

The Diocese has access to some funds to assist clergy in financial difficulty. Clergy facing financial hardship are encouraged to contact their Rural or Area Dean, the Bishop or a member of the Bishop's Core Staff (see the end of the document for contact details).

Living in the place of work

The clergy house is also the clergy *home* even though, for many of us, it is a base for ministry. It is important to ensure that clergy families do not feel marginalized by too regular and frequent church meetings happening in their own home, and it will often be appropriate to install an ex-directory family telephone in addition to the parish line.

In order to protect the personal and family life of clergy, the policy of the Diocese is that there should be no expectation by the parish that the Parish Office will be located in the Parsonage house or its grounds, even if, historically, this has been the previous practice of the parish.

Some Practical Things to Think About

- Be attentive to what energizes you in ministry and what drains you. While for most of us the latter are unavoidable, try to make sure you have a workable balance between the two.
- Discern what God is calling you to do *in particular*.
- Recognise that 24/7 availability will undermine your approachability and sap your energy; learn to say 'no' and to remember that the kingdom is *God's*.
- Engage in activities that refresh you. Take time out to play. You are a *child* of God as well as a servant of God.
- Be discerning about friends who replenish you and which relationships deplete you.
- Make a conscious effort to slow down especially when you notice signs of stress and overwork, and take time out as you need it.
- Be ready to seek out help at an early point.
- Read Bishop Stephen Cottrell's *Hit the Ground Kneeling: seeing leadership differently* (Church House Publishing: 2009).
- Read the Ordinal on the anniversary of your ordination(s).

2 **'Bishops are ordained to be shepherds of Christ's flock'³: Pastoral Care of the clergy by the Bishop as *Pastor Pastorum***

As 'chief pastors', pastoral care – exercising the 'Shepherd's love'⁴ - undergirds all episcopal ministry. Pastoral care of the clergy by the Bishop is expressed not only through his own personal ministry but also through those with whom he shares that care. Bishop Christopher and Bishop John are committed to spending time with and supporting clergy across the Diocese. Together with other members of the Bishop's Core Staff they will have contact with clergy on a number of occasions, both formal and informal, in the course of a year. The Bishop's Core Staff will also be active in offering pastoral support in other ways and, together with Rural or Area Deans as part of the Bishop's Extended Staff, will always seek to ensure appropriate support and care for clergy in times of particular need.

Clergy are expected to play a full part in the life of the Deanery Chapter which itself should provide a context for mutual support, encouragement and challenge. Some Deaneries offer cluster cell groups for clergy which can provide a more discreet and confidential setting for 'bearing one another's burdens' (Galatians 6.2), mutual encouragement and prayer. Clergy are encouraged to belong to some such 'cell group' or equivalent in or outside the diocese.

The effectiveness of the care offered by the Bishop and his Staff Team will often rely on clergy being ready to ask for support and communicating matters of concern or for prayer. In normal circumstances, the first port of pastoral call is one's Rural or Area Dean but clergy should feel *entirely free* to contact Bishop Christopher, Bishop John, or other members of the Bishop's Core Staff.

Spiritual Direction

It is important that clergy are both resourced and challenged in their spiritual life. Clergy are encouraged to have a spiritual director. To be put in touch with an appropriate spiritual director, please contact Richard Cooke, 024 7652 1332, Richard.Cooke@CovCofE.org.

³ From the 'Ordination of a Bishop', Common Worship Ordination Services

⁴ From the 'Ordination of a Bishop', Common Worship Ordination Services

Mentoring

Many clergy already have a work mentor. As a Diocese we are working on developing this resource for clergy in the light of our Diocesan priorities in mission and ministry. For enquiries on mentoring, please contact Richard Cooke, 024 7652 1332 or 07952 544820 or email Richard.Cooke@CovCofE.org.

Health Checks

All clergy are encouraged to undertake regular health checks. Increasingly, these are available from the NHS in GPs' surgeries. More detailed health checks are available from specialist providers. A fee is charged for these and the Diocese is able to make a substantial contribution towards their cost. Further information is available from the Director of Operations, Stephen Davenport, on 024 7652 1346 or Stephen.Davenport@CovCofE.org.

Information about facilities still provided by St Luke's Hospital for the Clergy is available through the Archdeacon Pastor.

Professional Counselling

Professional counselling is available to licensed clergy. The cost is heavily subsidised by the Diocese for up to ten sessions initially. Further financial assistance may be available beyond that point. This service is entirely confidential and the Diocese is invoiced without any names being disclosed. For contact details please see the Diocesan Website (www.dioceseofcoventry.org)

Bishop's Visitors

Bishop's Visitors are available to ensure that appropriate pastoral, spiritual and practical help is made available to clergy spouses whose marriage has broken down. Their work is entirely confidential. The Bishop's Visitors are:

- Canon David Pettifor, 01926 498736, davidpettifor@yahoo.co.uk
- Mrs Mary Pettifor, 01926 498736, marypettifor@yahoo.co.uk
- Mrs Tina Lamb, 01789 842060, tinalamb82@gmail.com

3 Will you uphold them in their ministry?’⁵: Pastoral care of the clergy by lay people and leaders

Lay people and leaders have a particular and significant role in the pastoral care of the clergy. To function effectively and creatively, clergy need pastoral, prayerful and practical support in their own local context.

The officers of the parish, especially the churchwardens, should work with their clergy to ensure that they have:

- a safe environment in which to live and minister
- sufficient time off for rest, recreation and proper holidays
- an annual opportunity to make a retreat of at least a week’s duration in addition to holidays
- adequate administrative assistance
- reimbursement in full of ministerial expenses (see <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/lifeevents/ministry/workofmin/div/dracsc/parochialexpenses/2006expenses.pdf>)
- appropriate release for extra-parochial ministry
- prayer and pastoral support from those who work most closely with them.

Conclusion

Paul’s words to the all the Ephesian elders (*presbuteroi*) to ‘keep watch over yourselves’ in Acts 20.28 are applied and amplified in his personal advice to one minister of the gospel in 1 Timothy 4.11-16.

⁵ From the ‘Ordination of Deacons, Priests and Bishops’: Common Worship Ordination Services

. . set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. . . give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. *Pay close attention to yourself* and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.

‘Keeping watch over ourselves’ and ‘paying close attention to ourselves’ includes every aspect of ourselves – spiritual, physical, mental, emotional *etc.* It is how we keep ourselves fit for the Lord’s service.

Contact details for Bishop Christopher and Bishop’s Staff

- Bishop Christopher: Tel: 024 7667 2244 or bishcov@btconnect.com
- Bishop John: Tel: 01926 427 465 or Bishop.Warwick@CovcofE.org
- Archdeacon Pastor: Tel: 024 7652 1337 or Sue.Field@CovCofE.org
- Archdeacon Missioner: Tel: 024 7652 1337 or Morris.Rodham@CovCofE.org
- Dean: Tel: 024 7652 1227 or John.Witcombe@CoventryCathedral.org.uk
- Dean of Women’s Ministry: Tel: 024 7637 2089 or revkatemasse@gmail.com
- Dean of Self-Supporting Ministry: Tel: 01295 680 663 or revjill.tucker@tiscali.co.uk
- Diocesan Secretary: Tel: 024 7652 1307 or Ruth.Marlow@CovCofE.org