

PASTORAL SUPERVISION

SHAUN CONLON



Role and Clergy Background

I'm Shaun Conlon, currently Priest-in-Charge of St Mary the Virgin, Prestwich and Mission Community leader of the Prestwich & Kersal Mission Community. I'm currently a member of Diocesan Synod, as I have been in all but one of my previous dioceses. Since being ordained in 1993 I've served in parishes in four other dioceses before moving to Manchester two years ago. I'm a trained spiritual director with over 20 years' experience of accompanying directees and in those previous dioceses I have been involved in many diverse areas, such as encouraging vocations, pre-BAP support, chair of a Diocesan Environment Forum; and was lucky to be a part of a very helpful, facilitated Clergy Support Group.

My Supervision

My own experience of Pastoral Supervision has connected with the more creative and reflective aspects of my character to open up avenues for support in ways which are rather different to anything I've ever experienced before. 'Reflecting on the past, in the present, for the sake of the future' (as the 'mantra' goes) in Supervision sessions has been rather like the experience

of revisiting issues, incidents and events in glorious technicolour and 3D. A bit like finding oneself in a pop-up story book and being able to wander with wonder and explore. Doing this has helped me refocus and interpret the core of my vocation to priesthood, how that connects with both my role(s) in the parish and beyond and the context in which I live and minister.

My Approach

I've always valued my gifts of empathy and humour and being able to be open and vulnerable in a way which allows for truth to be named and explored. Being a Pastoral Supervisor inevitably benefits from these qualities as they connect helpfully with the range of different approaches and interventions that can be made in a supervision session, as people explore and reflect upon the work issues, problems and situations they bring. To know that supervision is not just therapy or 'self-help' and that sessions are rooted in Christ gives Pastoral Supervision an important edge in clergy support. It is the precious gift of Christian Calling & Ministry and the revealing of God's Kingdom, that are at the heart of the things laid open for reflection and consideration. This helps me make sense of why and how Pastoral Supervision is so useful a discipline and tool for undergirding ministry.

Other Interests

Alongside all the things of faith in my life lies a bulging sandwich of interests stuffed with photography, reading and writing poetry, visits to the theatre, cookery, travel around Europe, novels, singing and music, gardening, quizzes and games, all sandwiched between thick slices of Doctor Who (and other Sci-Fi) and Kate Bush (stemming back to the 1970s and not just *Stranger Things*).