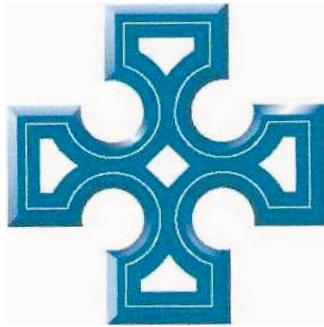


Church of Ireland



House of Bishops

Ordained Local Ministry (‘OLM’)

Introduction

This protocol sets out the understanding of, and approach to Ordained Local Ministry (OLM) within the Church of Ireland, of the House of Bishops of the Church of Ireland. In particular it sets out the process for the discernment of vocation in place and among the people of God in relation to OLM, and the process of application, selection, training, ordination, and the deployment of OLM within the Church of Ireland.

God's Call

God's call is at the heart of vocation. All ministry in and through the Church begins with God's call.

All of us who have been baptized are entrusted by God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit with ministry. Every member of the Body of Christ is called to serve. God the Holy Spirit equips us and sends us out as bearers of the good news and as witnesses into the world.

Those in ordained ministry are called to a ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Selection for ordination training to serve in the OLM is a recognition of this call which can be further tested during training.

I.. First Steps

Discernment of the vocation and appropriateness of a place, or locale within a diocese, is the first element in the OLM process. If a place warrants the deployment of an OLM the question arises, 'is God calling someone to the OLM in that place?'

This process of discernment can never be easily compartmentalised and, in practice, the first steps may be initiated by different people in a particular place:

- An incumbent or bishop may discern the need for an OLM in a particular parish or locality.
- The people in a particular place (parish, deanery or diocese) may identify someone who, as an OLM, would fruitfully serve in that place.

- A person may feel called to be an OLM in a particular place, and that sense of call may be affirmed by the people in that place and the Church through the discernment and selection process.

In the first instance the incumbent, priest-in-charge, of a parish, or group of priests working in a part of the Diocese should discuss the initial motivation and idea with the bishop.

II - Review:

The bishop will instigate a review, by the diocesan director of ordinands (DDO), (or another suitable person of his/her choosing) of ministry in the parish or locality being considered for the ministry of an OLM.

- An official diocesan review follows of the needs of the area identified as the local area to be served. The review seeks to evaluate the following: the current ministry team and nature of collaborative ministry already operating, the parish's or locale's ownership of the possibility of having an OLM and the level of awareness of the role and task envisaged For an OLM within the parish.

The reviewer reports to the bishop (copies to the Incumbent and DDO). Based on this, the bishop gives permission (or not) to the DDO and the parish to proceed.

If the diocesan review is positive, and if it is thought that the candidate meets the criteria, the DDO meets the candidate (if s/he has not done so already) and begins or continues the process of discernment of the individual's suitability and sense of vocation in relation to the context for which s/he is being recommended.

If the DDO is satisfied, then the candidate meets the Bishop who may sponsor the candidate for selection.

III - Criteria

All candidates must:

- Be a communicant member of the Church of Ireland
- Be at least 21 years of age. An OLM must be 23 years in order to be ordained to the diaconate, and 24 to be ordained to the priesthood.
- Meet the criteria for selection as set out in Appendix A
- Have been nominated by his/her Incumbent or priest-in-charge to the bishop. (In some dioceses this will be done through the bishop's representative, such as the DDO).

IV - Selection Process

Psychological Assessment

If the Bishop agrees to sponsor the candidate, s/he will undergo a psychological assessment.

Application

The candidate will make formal application using the 'Central Church Form for Application for Ordination' or, alternatively, the diocese may decide to ask a candidate to use its own application form. The candidate will be asked to provide the names of at least two referees

Local Selection Panel

Selection takes place in each diocese.

The local selection panel will include:

- An archdeacon from the diocese
- A clergyperson from the diocese
- Two lay people from the diocese with appropriate expertise
- Two external representatives of the Church of Ireland from outside the particular diocese (one ordained person and one lay person), chosen from a panel approved by the House of Bishops.

The criteria for selection are set out in Appendix A.

Report of the Local Selection Panel to the Bishop

The Local Selection Panel will make a report to the bishop and give its advice. Along with a report the advice usually falls under three headings: recommended for training, not recommended for training or a conditional recommendation.

The bishop then reflects on the report and communicates his or her decision.

Checks

If recommended by the bishop, the candidate will be subject to NVB/AccessNI vetting which will be overseen locally in each diocese by the bishop or by the person to whom the bishop has delegated such responsibility.

V - Training

The names of those selected and recommended for training by the bishop must be submitted by him/her to the central coordinator by 30th August for inclusion the following January.

The programme of study for OLM in the Church of Ireland consists of two parts. In the first part, OLM students will undertake the Certificate in Christian Theology and Practice (CCTP) course alongside those exploring selection for full or part-time Ordination Training, prospective Diocesan Readers and others interested in Faith Formation. The second part will commence the following January. Part 2 will consist of a further 18 months learning in a context based educational programme with 6 modules relevant to ministry. Towards the end of each course a reflective session will be arranged.

Each year the CCTP course will be preceded in November by a "Fit for the Purpose" weekend which provides a personal and biblical exploration of various matters to do with vocation.

The academic standard required is GCSE / A Levels / Leaving Certificate or equivalent professional experience, Alternatively, candidates can undertake an interview and demonstrate their ability to benefit from and complete this course. Evidence of academic qualifications needs to be uploaded when applications are made.

No credits are available in respect of the CCTP course for prior courses undertaken. Candidates who have completed the (old) Foundation course or the Maynooth accredited reader course may go directly into Part 2 without completing the CCTP course.

During the year as a deacon, further training may be determined by the bishop.

VI - Ordination

Ordination

An OLM will be ordained deacon in the calendar year after commencement of study, subject to the completion of the CCTP course plus two modules of Part 2 of OLM training and the bishop's satisfaction of the candidate's suitability.

An OLM will be ordained to the priesthood a year later subject to the completion of all modules of Part 2 of OLM training and the bishop's satisfaction of the candidate's suitability. Further interviews may take place.

Prior to ordination, a candidate OLM shall make and subscribe the Declaration for Subscription set out in the Schedule to Chapter IV of *The Constitution of the Church of Ireland*.

VII - Licensing and Deployment

All ministry as an OLM is limited to a particular parish or locality. This will be specified on the license issued by the bishop. No OLM may, at any stage, exercise ministry or assume ministerial responsibility beyond the parish or locale specified on the license.

Prior to licensing at any stage, an OLM shall make and subscribe the Declaration for Subscription set out in the Schedule to Chapter IV of *The Constitution of the Church of Ireland*.

The bishop will license the candidate for one year after ordination as a deacon. At the end of the diaconate year, and subject to the bishop's satisfaction, the OLM will be ordained priest.

The bishop's license is time limited and will not exceed five years. A license may be renewed by the bishop.

An OLM, who is subject at all times to the superintendence of the bishop, shall be supervised, mentored and supported by a stipendiary priest, and mentored also by two lay assistants, all of whom in turn are answerable to the bishop.

An OLM shall at all times be supplied with appropriate resources and travel expenses connected to his/her ministry in the particular parish or locality.

An OLM should not be encumbered with parochial or diocesan administration, and shall not ordinarily chair Select Vestry meetings.

An OLM may contribute to the decision making bodies of the diocese and central church as a member of the clergy.

VIII - Change of Locality or Diocese

An OLM may be invited by the bishop to minister, under a new licence, in another parish or locality. The terms, as above, will apply. Should an OLM move to another diocese, the bishop of that diocese may licence the OLM in a particular parish or locality but is under no obligation to do so.

IX - Non-Transferability

OLMs may not transfer to other forms of ordained ministry (whether remunerated or otherwise): including whole-time ministry, the auxiliary ministry (as provided for in Canon 20.c), or to other types of deployment in ministry, including, part-time stipendiary, contracts for services, or light duty parishes (within the meaning of Part XV of Chapter IV of the *Constitution of the Church of Ireland*).

Selection for the one does not imply selection for the other; they are distinct ministries.

OLMs who discern a call to stipendiary or auxiliary ministry are required to commence the separate selection process for training for those ministries.

X - Cessation of Ministry as an OLM

Stipendiary and non-stipendiary clergy must return their license to their bishop on reaching 75 years of age.

In the same way, an OLM will be expected to do likewise, but may then, at the discretion of the bishop, be granted 'Permission to Officiate' by the bishop.

Appendix A

Criteria for Selection for OLM in The Church of Ireland [approved by the House of Bishops]

Purpose

These criteria are intended for

- the guidance of the Selection Panel
- the information of enquirers, and
- greater clarity and openness in the selection process.

The purpose of these criteria is to assist a panel of selectors in a diocese in their task of discerning the suitability of a candidate for training for ordination as an OLM in a diocese within the Church of Ireland.

Such discernment will lead to one of three categories of advice being given to the sponsoring bishop

- a recommendation
- not recommended
- a conditional recommendation

for a course of training.

The criteria are to be taken as a whole unit. Throughout the entire process they are to be exercised in the context of prayer and a seeking of God's will for the future of the candidate and the well being of the Church, local and national. The selectors are looking for potential in the areas identified in these criteria as well as actual ability.

Criteria

- **Vocation:** A top priority is that the candidate is sensing a vocation to ordained ministry, and, specifically, to Ordained Local Ministry within a locality within a diocese of the Church of Ireland. Vocation to OLM may come essentially from the calling out of the local church and perhaps in response to a specific need for that church or group of churches. So the candidate may have been, *in the first instance* identified by others. The calling out of a vocation to meet a specific need in a particular context does not make the calling any less authentic, but it does need to be met with an understanding by the candidate that he or she has not only been identified by others but that they have *come to accept it as their own*. There should be ample evidence of this in the supporting paperwork and in interview the candidate will need to show that the vocation first suggested by others has become an inner reality.
- **The Church of Ireland:** Candidates should be baptized and confirmed, and also be members of the Church of Ireland (or a Church in full communion with the Church of Ireland) and be familiar with the teachings, traditions, emphases and characteristic spirit of the Church of Ireland and the Anglican Communion. They should feel that the Church of Ireland is their spiritual home and be ready to work within it. They should express a preparedness to accept the will of the Church.

- **Locality:** An OLM will be deployed locally but what is meant by local may vary from diocese to diocese. It is increasingly coming to mean within a group of churches and often a rural deanery, but it is still the case (particularly within more urban dioceses) that it means one parish. In sparsely populated rural dioceses it may encompass up to two rural deaneries or a number of adjacent parishes. Given their local deployment, OLM candidates would not be expected to have an extensive knowledge of ministry throughout the Church of Ireland in a wide range of settings, but they would be expected to be fully conversant with the practice of ministry in the context in which they will serve.
- **Personal commitment** to Christ and sincere belief in a triune God is essential. The candidate should possess a basic understanding of the Gospel and a desire to communicate it.
- **Spirituality:** The candidate should participate regularly in corporate worship, in Holy Communion, and display a discipline in their personal devotional life of prayer and Bible study. Such spirituality should be foundational in their life and in determining their lifestyle, and manifested in a life of service to others. It should be a source of strength and inspiration.
- **Character:** Integrity of character, mental stability and a growing emotional and spiritual maturity are to be in evidence. How the individual responds to fulfilling responsibility, coping with change, and dealing with pressure are important indicators of balance and stamina.
- **People:** A compassion for people and an ability to relate to people are vital in an effective pastoral ministry. Therefore the ability to make and sustain relationships should be noted. Openness to others, a stable family life and the willing support of their spouse (if the candidate is married) are to be looked for.
- **Leadership:** An OLM will not be an incumbent but will nevertheless have to exercise some leadership role within the local congregation, and possibly, to some extent, within the local community. OLM clergy are often described by their local communities as 'one of us' and are seen by many as the face of stability and continuity in a contrasting and changing world of ministry. They may take a lead in periods of vacancy and will need the kinds of skills and insights that will allow others to take a responsible role in the day to day running of the local church, and model the partnership that has existed between local church community and candidate from the first moment of vocational awakening. It is important that this relationship is not lost the moment ordination arrives. In that sense it is always a leading from the 'grassroots'.
- **Flexibility:** OLM candidates at interview will need to show the desire to be flexible in their working practices and able to work under the authority of the incumbent of the time. As an incumbent may change several times in the ministerial life of an OLM they will need to display a willingness and Flexibility to work with quite different incumbents, some of whom may be younger, and perhaps less experienced, than themselves. The ability to work alone in certain situations and to make some difficult decisions is occasionally necessary even when the emphasis is on a collaborative form of ministry.
- **Quality of mind:** Some candidates for OLM have a good deal of life experience but may well have grown up in an environment with few educational opportunities. Others, equally may have enjoyed the benefits of Higher Education some years

previously but may be feeling somewhat nervous about the prospect of re-entering the world of adult education and theological study. While it is important that such candidates demonstrate the quality of mind for a course of study, they should demonstrate perhaps more so their passion to want to engage in such a course and be prepared to find support within them.

Appendix B

Courses

OLM Part 1 Courses (CCTP)

1. Encountering the Old Testament
2. Introduction to The Creeds
3. Preparing to Lead Public Worship
4. Encountering the New Testament
5. Development of Theological Thinking
6. Spirituality & Self–Understanding

OLM Part 2 Courses

7. Liturgy
8. Developing Preaching
9. Pastoral Skills
10. Embracing Leadership
11. Mission
12. Collaborative Ministry

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