



The Diocese of Southwark

The Bishop of Southwark

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Feast of +Leo the Great, Teacher of the Faith, 2017

To Licensed clergy in the Diocese of Southwark

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are greatly blessed by the ministry of Readers across the Diocese, and I wish to build on this by increasing both the numbers and diversity of those offering themselves for this ministry. With this in view some changes to Reader training have now been introduced.

The key change is that the training period before licensing will now be only two years, followed by two further years of Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD). This should make Reader ministry accessible to a wider range of people, without diluting the quality and depth of training. Reader training will continue to be carried out in partnership with St Augustine's College of Theology.

The first phase of training will comprise two years training and formation with St Augustine's alongside supervised activities in the home parish, and in a secondary context with opportunities for an alternative experience of Church tradition or style of ministry. In year one the focus is personal discipleship and spirituality as well as biblical and theological literacy. The second year extends these and develops understanding and skills for Reader ministry. Completing these two years leads to a Certificate of Higher Education in Theology, Mission & Ministry (Durham University Common Awards).

The second phase of two years CMD is overseen by the Department of Discipleship & Ministry. This should help Readers to balance the demands of work, family and the development of their ministry. The aim is to prepare missional leaders for the diverse contexts of Reader ministry in Southwark, and to help Readers explore how their particular gifts can be used to serve the missional needs of their Church. After the CMD phase, optional further study could also lead to the award of a Diploma.

I commend this new pattern of Reader training to you and I am grateful to the Readers' Board and to the Revd Canon Dr Mandy Ford for drawing together the wisdom of all concerned to come up with these real improvements to what we do. In the coming months you will see publicity for Reader ministry that reflects these changes. Please use this material to encourage more people to consider this calling. The discernment and selection process for Readers is unchanged, and you can get information about it from the Vocations Department.

With my prayers and thanks for our partnership in the Gospel,

The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun
Bishop of Southwark