



The Diocese of  
**Southwark**

**Vocations**

# HANDBOOK

*for*

# VOCATIONS ADVISERS

April 2022



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# Introduction

## The role of a Vocations Adviser

Thank you for your invaluable involvement in the Diocesan Vocations Team as a Vocations Adviser. We hope that this handbook will be helpful in explaining your role as a Vocations Adviser, and the Diocesan vocational discernment process and your part within it, as well as providing you with templates and advice for interviews with enquirers, reporting, and dealing with difficult situations. The DDO, Assistant DDO and Co-ordinating Vocations Advisers are always happy to help with any questions or problems. Please feel very welcome to be in touch with one of us if you need any help. Contact details are on the previous page.

### What is a Vocations Adviser?

The principal role of the Vocations Adviser (VA) is one of discernment - to advise on the suitability of an enquirer for certain types of ministry in the Church. These types of ministry are:

- Licensed lay ministries
  - Reader
  - Licensed Lay Pioneer
  - Licensed Lay Minister (Youth and Children)
  - Licensed Lay Minister (Pastoral)
  - Church Army Evangelist
- Licensed ordained ministries
  - Incumbent status Priest (stipendiary and non-stipendiary)
  - Assistant status Priest (non-stipendiary)
  - Incumbent status Distinctive Deacon (non-stipendiary)
  - Assistant status Distinctive Deacon (non-stipendiary)
- Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary

Although all licensed lay ministries are non-stipendiary, a parish may choose to employ a lay minister. For example, a Licensed Lay Minister (Youth and Children) may be employed by their parish as a youth worker.

The majority of your enquirers will be on an ordained ministry pathway and so we will focus on that in this Handbook. If you are asked to work with someone on a lay pathway, suitable support will be given and, as with any enquirer, we hope you that you will ask for help if you are unsure about anything. This is important as it means we can keep the process as rigorous and clear for the enquirer as possible.

When working with enquirers, VAs are asked to:

- Assess the enquirer against a number of criteria, or as they are now known “qualities to be inhabited” these may be found at the back of this handbook.
- Write a report on the suitability of the enquirer for the type of ministry that they are exploring.

More information about reporting and some sample VA reports are provided further on.

As the VA, your role is primarily one of judgement and discernment, it is very important that discussions with enquirers are open and honest from the outset, and that enquirers’ expectations are carefully managed. Some enquirers will come to you with a strong sense of their calling, and it will be your task to test the authenticity and deliverability of that call with sensitivity and rigour; others may need more guidance about where their sense of vocation should be focused. Please be clear with enquirers that **all** Christian people have a calling, and that there are many ways faithfully to serve God in the Church - not just through exercising some form of formal ministry. The Diocesan website explains the whole range of vocational pathways within the Church, and it may be useful to talk through these with enquirers.

Vocational discernment is an essential part of every person's Christian discipleship, so it is the aim of our process to be engaging, rigorous and challenging, in order that each enquirer may tune into the call of God and the Church in pursuing the right vocational path for them. The following pages will describe in detail how this process progresses, and the things you should be looking for in your work with enquirers.

## Vocations Forums

It is expected that enquirers will have reflected on their inner sense of call for some time before entering the Diocesan discernment process. Incumbents and chaplains are asked to have worked for at least a year with an enquirer before commending them to the Diocesan process. The first stage of the formal process is the **Vocations Forum**. Forums take place regularly at Trinity House on a Saturday and are led and organized by one of the Co-ordinating Vocations Advisers (CVAs). At the Forum enquirers have an opportunity to talk and listen to others who also believe that God may be calling them; to reflect on what the Bible says about ministry; and to think about their own journey of faith so far.

The next section explains what happens at a Vocations Forum. VAs are asked to be available to attend two Forums per year to help lead individual sessions, and to facilitate the small groups work which takes place over the course of the day.

# Vocations Forums

## What happens and how am I expected to help?

This is a sample timetable for a Vocations Forum (timings may vary depending on numbers present):

Time	Session
9.00	Morning Prayer & Eucharist at the Cathedral
10.00	Coffee at Trinity House
10.15	Welcome and Introduction and brief ice-breaker
10.30	Our Way So Far: Life/Faith Journey
11.15	Responding to God's Call: Scripture & Vocation (3 Groups)
12.00	Plenary: Feedback from Scripture & Vocation Groups
12.30	Lunch
1.00	Vocational Discernment: Obedient, Realistic, Informed? (3 Groups)
1.45	Plenary: Report Back on Group Work
2.30	Time for Reflection
2.40	Coffee Break
2.50	The Discernment Process – What Happens Next? Questions & Feedback
3.30	Final Worship and End (by 4.00pm)

It is a full and busy day, but one which enquirers and VAs alike find encouraging and energizing. The role of the VA at Vocations Forums is to help lead some of the plenary sessions, and to facilitate the breakout groups over the course of the day.

### Regarding the facilitation of small groups during the Vocations Forum:

The purpose of having a VA work with the small groups is as follows:

- to keep to time
- to clarify the task
- to stop any one person from dominating the discussion
- to keep focussed on the task.

VAs should not adopt the role of 'group leader', but rather enable the group to fulfil the task together. It is also useful if the VA has sufficient space to observe group dynamics, and individual participation within the group as appropriate.

### Before the Forum

VAs are asked to arrive at Southwark Cathedral by 8.40am to welcome and direct enquirers to the Quire for Morning Prayer. Morning Prayer is followed by the Eucharist (9.30am) usually in St Andrew's Chapel (in the Retrochoir). After this, all proceed to Trinity House where tea and coffee are available. Quite a bit of 'shepherding' is usually necessary, so please be prepared for this. The whole ground floor of Trinity House is booked for the Forum and lunch will be provided.

## Welcome & Introductions

The CVA welcomes all present and introduces the day. This welcome includes reading out a short letter from the Bishop of Southwark. Some ground rules of mutual respect and confidentiality are stated. It is also explained that facilitators/VAs will be observing during the day and taking some notes, in order to match enquirers to the most appropriate VA, should they want to proceed to working with a VA.

## Ice Breaker

The CVA continues the welcome with an ice breaker. Each participant is asked to:

- Introduce themselves (their name, parish/chaplaincy)
- Tell the group something good that has happened in the past few weeks
- Tell the group about an interest they have outside the Church

## Our Way So Far: Life/Faith Journey

Participants are divided into small groups (each facilitated by a VA) and are asked to describe their life/faith journey to each other, being sure to allow **ten** minutes for each person, based on the preparation they have done beforehand. It is useful to include a reminder of the ground rules of mutual respect and confidentiality in the introduction to this session. Please make a note if an enquirer has clearly not done the required preparation for this session. A copy of the preparation questions sent to enquirers may be found in the Appendix. Participants are gathered back together in plenary, but not to feedback on this session, which remains within the groups.

## Responding to God's Call: Scripture and Vocation

A VA introduces this session on reflecting on vocational narratives in scripture. The participants are divided into three groups, and asked to share their reflections about where they have found their own vocational story corresponding to the vocational stories of call in Scripture. Each group is facilitated by a VA. VAs should make clear that this is not a Bible study, and participants are asked to be generous in their listening to the experiences and stories of others, and to recognize the diversity of God's call as reflected in Scripture and each other's lives. Again, please make a note if an enquirer has clearly not done the required preparation for this session. The groups are invited to appoint a scribe and told they will need to report back at the end of the session.

## Plenary: Reporting Back on Responding to God's call: Scripture and Vocation

The plenary is facilitated by a VA: each 'scribe' brings back some themes or interesting points from their group - perhaps one passage from each group to give a flavour. The themes should be brought together by the facilitating VA: were there common themes emerging? Were some passages far more popular than others? What can we learn from this exercise?

At this point, it would be useful to have a final, brief reflection on the morning, gathering up where we have each come from, our sense of God's call in the present, and looking towards the afternoon and its focus on the next stage: vocational discernment. There then follows lunch - please ensure that participants are aware that the next session must start promptly.

## Vocational Discernment: Obedient, Realistic, Informed?

A VA leads this session, outlining the nature of discernment. The following may be useful for introducing this session:

Discernment could be described as “the act or process of exhibiting keen insight and good judgment”. In spiritual terms, this is essential because we are attempting to discern the will of God through the movement of the Holy Spirit. The way discernment works within this process is that, after a period of initial, prayerful, personal discernment, an individual will speak to their incumbent/chaplain about their sense of calling. After a further period of discernment with their incumbent/chaplain (and having spoken with family/friends/spiritual director), they may decide to offer themselves to the Church for a further period of more formal discernment.

At this point, **the individual offers, and the Church discerns**. This is an important distinction; there is a need to understand this, or it can be impossible to move on, and a source of great pain, if the Church says ‘no’. Introduce the concepts of ‘obedient, realistic, and informed’: how these form part of the Criteria/Qualities for Selection, and how they are integral to discernment. Mention the rigour and prayerfulness of the Church in discernment; how each person is taken seriously, that everyone is called; we are exploring a calling to a **distinctive ministry** at this point, not questioning whether someone has a vocation.

The participants are divided into three groups, which are different from the morning groups, and asked to discuss a case study and series of questions. There is a case study for each ‘word’: Simon (obedient), Maria (realistic), and Cathy (informed). Each group is facilitated by a VA. The groups are invited to appoint a scribe and told they will need to report back at the end of the session.

**Please note that groups can tend to spend too much time on the case study. Facilitators are asked to ensure that this is just a ‘springboard’ to alert enquirers to possible issues; the real aim of the exercise is for them to take on board the broader issues, and be able to relate them to themselves where appropriate.**

## Plenary Session - Reporting Back on Vocational Discernment

The plenary is facilitated by a VA. Adequate time should be allocated for this session: it is important that each group is given time to feed back about their ‘word’, so that **all participants gain a good understanding of each one**. It is best to take each word in turn: Group One gives their feedback/thoughts, then whole group is invited to contribute to further discussion of that word. Then move onto next group etc. Towards the end of session, draw together key points, emphasise the importance of discernment, and the need for careful self-examination, as self-awareness is key factor in assessing someone’s suitability. This then leads into the time of reflection.

**This is the point at which some people dash off and use the toilet/have a coffee. Please try and lead in to the period of quiet reflection in such a way that this does not happen. Make participants aware that this is not an opportunity to wander off, have a coffee, or write some notes: it is a time of prayerful meditation, so VAs will need to be clear about what is expected. Suggest that people stand up, stretch, and sit back down. Put down papers, pens, etc. and get comfortable and relaxed in their seats. This can then lead purposefully into the time of quiet.**



## Time for Reflection

One of the VAs introduces this time for individual reflection. Point out that much of the day has been spent engaging in groups, so this is a useful opportunity to take on board what has been learned or considered so far, and to revisit our life journey and sense of call in the light of this. This is a time to go inwards, to listen to what God might be saying, where he might be asking us to go, and what he might be asking us to learn. Consider how we have been encouraged, or caused to question where we are on our journey at this point.

Encourage everyone to get comfortable for a time of stillness. **Be clear about exactly how long this time of meditation will last (10 minutes) and one of the VAs should time this.** Lead the group into the silence at the beginning, and bring them out at the end.

## The Discernment Process - What Happens Next? Questions & Feedback

The CVA will explain in detail at this point what happens if an enquirer chooses to progress to working with a VA. In case you are asked questions individually, it is helpful to bear the following points in mind:

- Manage expectations: working with a VA will take about **four or five** months before an enquirer moves on to the next stage.
- What happens if the Church's answer is 'no'? There are specialists who are trained to work specifically with non-recommended candidates to guide them in discerning their Christian vocation. There is more information later in the handbook about this.
- Encourage retreats and spiritual direction as part of taking responsibility for their part in this process. There are also vocations fairs and regular vocations weekends, especially for BAME candidates, women, candidates under 32, and those considering self-supporting ministry.
- Candidates for lay ministry no longer go forward to working with a VA, but, if proceeding, would meet with the Deputy Diocesan Director of Discipleship and Lay Ministry.
- Diocesan age limitations for various ministries have been a thorny issue, so they are reproduced here for absolute clarity.
- Participants are invited to ask any questions arising from the day; and are then given Feedback Forms. At the end of the form, there is a question asking the enquirer whether they would like to proceed with working with a VA. **Please emphasize that it is a normal and perfectly acceptable part of discernment if they no longer wish to proceed at this time.**

### Diocesan Age Limits

#### Ordained Ministry

**Stipendiary Ministry:** Candidates must be below **57 years** at the point of entering training.

**Self-Supporting Ministry:** candidates must be below **62 years** at the point of entering training.

In order to manage expectations effectively, it needs to be made clear that the process can take between one to two *years*, so these age limits need to be borne in mind. However, it also needs to be made clear that, for some candidates, the process can take longer. If this proves to be the case, the above limits will still apply.

#### Licensed Lay Ministry

The age limit for Readers is **62 years**. Check with Revd Dr Raewynne Whiteley about the age limits for other licensed lay ministries ([raewynne.whiteley@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:raewynne.whiteley@southwark.anglican.org)).

#### Affirmed and Commissioned Ministries

Enquirers may discern that they are called to a ministry other than a licensed ministry. If that is the case check with Revd Dr Raewynne Whiteley about the age limits ([raewynne.whiteley@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:raewynne.whiteley@southwark.anglican.org)).

## **Final Worship & Close**

This should be brief and relatively informal: a meditation led by one of the VAs, ending with everyone saying the Grace, or a similar prayer. Alternatively, a 'closing liturgy' in the Celtic tradition is available from Sue Stewart.

## **After the Forum**

After the enquirers have left, the CVA and VAs remain behind for a brief meeting to reflect on the day, to give initial impressions of the enquirers, and to raise any issues observed in the small groups. Please note that Trinity House closes at 5.00pm.

At the end of the Vocations Forum, those who have indicated that they would like to work with a VA are allocated to one by the CVA. This normally takes about two weeks to finalize. There are two CVAs, each with a 'pool' of VAs; each CVA leads a Vocations Forum about every sixteen weeks, which means that each VA should have a period of about four months to work with an enquirer before they might be approached by their CVA to take on a new enquirer.

# Working with Enquirers

## What do I do once an enquirer is allocated to me?

Following a Forum, enquirers who have indicated that they would like to continue in discernment for licensed lay or ordained ministry are allocated to work with a VA. This one-to-one work typically takes four or five months for an enquirer on the ordained pathway (slightly less time for someone on the lay pathway), with one meeting each month. You then complete a formal report, using the template provided. A final meeting may be arranged to agree the report, which is then sent to the CVA.

The following pages relate to working with an enquirer on the ordained pathway and suggest a structure for the four or five meetings with an enquirer, together with some advice as to what to look for in interviews with enquirers. **It is important, if there is anything about which you feel unsure or uncomfortable arising from a meeting with an enquirer, that you are in contact immediately with the CVA.** It is much better to flag up a potential issue early on - even if it seems very minor - than for it to escalate in the course of the discernment process. The following sections also give examples of scenarios where you must seek the guidance of the CVA, DDO or ADDO straightaway.

There will obviously be cases where the number of meetings could be more or less than suggested and when, due to circumstances, the timescale may differ. In such cases, discuss the reasons for this carefully with the CVA. If a long delay is envisioned, or the enquirer's focus for ministry is changing, it may be better to draw the process to a close by mutual consent, to allow for further discernment, before re-entering the formal Diocesan process.

**All appropriate safeguarding guidelines must be adhered to when meeting an enquirer.** This is for your sake as well as theirs. Meetings with enquirers should not take place in their homes. You may wish to meet them in your own home if you are in the habit and feel safe doing so. This only applies if you have the appropriate facilities, such as a separate study. Otherwise, you might wish to meet in an appropriate place in your parish church. You are always welcome to book a meeting room at Trinity House - contact Odette Penwarden to do this. Meeting in a public place such as a café is rarely, if ever, appropriate as it may inhibit the enquirer from being candid.

### FIRST MEETING

This initial meeting is an opportunity for you to explain the discernment process in greater detail to the enquirer and their role within the process, and to set the boundaries and manage expectations. It is also important to use this meeting to get to know the candidate and his/her life journey, and to identify any potential issues or concerns. There is a lot to get through in the first meeting so you might want to set aside an hour and a half for it. These are the areas which should be covered:

- Explain that you will probably meet up to four times, with a fifth meeting to agree and sign off the report. There should be roughly four weeks between meetings. This allows you and the enquirer time to reflect and not rush through the process. Do not be pressured into meeting more frequently.
- Inform the enquirer that the whole process from Vocations Forum to starting training takes on average 18 to 24 months. There is no 'fast track' through the process no matter how certain or affirmed someone is in their calling or how inconvenient it would be to miss the next training intake. Submitting to and valuing the process is evidence of being obedient and realistic.
- Make clear that, unlike at the Vocations Forum, you are now assessing the enquirer, so that you can write a report judging their suitability for their intended focus of ministry at the end of this stage of the process, and that you hope the two of you will enjoy working together towards this. However, the enquirer should understand that your primary responsibility is not to them, rather it is to discern on behalf of the Church in general and the Bishop in particular, therefore you are not in a position to provide pastoral care. You should, however, check that appropriate pastoral support is in place from, for example, their incumbent, a spiritual director, friends and family, etc

- Explain that you cannot commit to keep any thing confidential between you and the enquirer alone. Rather, information is held confidentially and sensitively within the Vocations Team. This is, of course, subject to making necessary safeguarding and other legal disclosures.
- Explain that you will be giving the enquirer written exercises, reading and placements (where appropriate) to undertake in between the meetings. These are not optional! They, together with the meetings themselves, are there to ensure that the enquirer gets the most out of the process, and to help you with making recommendations for the next stage. Follow up by email after each meeting with details of the homework you are setting and the deadline by which you expect to receive it as well as confirmation of the date and time of your next meeting.
- Communication between meetings should be limited to practical issues such as confirming the date and time of the next meeting, the written work being set or placement details. Substantive issues and questions/discussions should be held until the next meeting.
- Review the enquirer's experience of the Vocations Forum. Ask what they found helpful and whether they felt that anything about the day had changed them. How did they respond to the realistic/obedient/informed session?
- Explore with the enquirer their life story and faith journey. Below are some suggested questions you may wish to use. **If, in the course of this discussion, there are disclosed by the enquirer any DBS or mental health issues, it is vital that you let the CVA know as soon as possible, so that they can advise about the next steps. Where other traumas or difficult life experiences are discussed, try to discern whether the enquirer has sufficiently resolved, and learnt from, these experiences.** Other 'potentially difficult matters' are on page 16 and should be clearly set out in your report.

- ❖ Tell me about yourself.
- ❖ Is there anything I should know at this stage?
- ❖ What were the significant and formative events of your childhood and adolescence?
- ❖ What have been your significant career shifts?
- ❖ What challenges have you faced in your life?
- ❖ Have you had to deal with any significant traumas or difficult life experiences?
- ❖ When did you first feel that you had a sense of call?
- ❖ How did your inner sense call begin; and what did it bring to fruition?
- ❖ Why are you entering the discernment process now?

- Ensure that candidates are clear about the **distinctiveness** of their intended ministry. This may also open up a useful conversation about how much the enquirer owns their sense of call; prepare for a deeper discussion at the next meeting, on the basis of their written work and further reflection.

**Homework:** Write a reflection on the role of a Priest/Deacon; and what you think you might bring to the role. It is helpful here to suggest particular books, perhaps two or three, that the enquirer might find useful in preparing this piece. A useful reading list is included in the Diocesan vocations booklet, *It's Your Call*. **Homework should be sent to the VA in advance of the next meeting.**

## SECOND MEETING

This meeting is an opportunity to explore further the enquirer's intended focus of ministry. These are the areas which should be covered:

- Explore the enquirer's understanding of their intended ministry: for example, does a potential ordinand understand the 'being' (sacramental) aspects of priesthood as well as the 'doing' (functional) aspects? What kinds of things might they do/offer in diaconal ministry?
- Explore the whole range of ministries with an enquirer - why do they particularly feel called to be a priest/deacon as opposed to one of the lay ministries?
  - If a potential ordinand does not have a sacramental view of priesthood/diaconal ministry, why ordination?
  - If the enquirer is asking about diaconal ministry, but has particular preaching gifts, why not Reader ministry? Conversely, if they have strong pastoral care gifts, why not SPA ministry?
  - If the enquirer has a passion for mission, rather than pastoral care, might another role, such as Church Army Evangelist, rather than priesthood be more appropriate?

What is it that makes them feel called to a particular ministry? Use the Exploring your Call pages on the Diocesan website as a resource.

- Look at how realistic, informed, and obedient the enquirer is in their approach to their intended focus of ministry? Probe particular areas where you sense that they may need further development: for example, if the enquirer has very limited experience of other traditions within the Church of England, how are they going to address this? If considering diaconal ministry, what aspects of the role do they feel more or less comfortable with? Are there any concerns about whether they could commit fully to the training? Does the enquirer have the necessary quality of mind for their intended ministry? Do encourage enquirers to enrol on the Bishop's Certificate course if this would be appropriate and speak to the ADDO if they need help with funding the course.
- Discuss the possibility of placements with an enquirer. If an enquirer's experience is limited to one particular church tradition, they should look at a church of a different church tradition; or if they have experience only of suburban or rural ministry, they might experience an urban or inner-city parish. VAs are at liberty to set up short placements (say, two weeks) or visits for enquirers. (Candidates for ordained ministry will normally undertake a placement of six to eight weeks if they go on to work with a Director of Ordinands.) Try to approach this with some nuance and subtlety. There is little value in sending someone from one tradition to the diametrically opposite tradition. Equally, be sensitive to sending someone into a context that might feel unsafe to them.

**Homework:** Look at the Qualities for Discernment for your intended ministry and spend time reflecting on your own strengths and weakness in relation to each of the Qualities within each of the Domains (24 in total). Identify those where you are particularly strong and particularly weak and write a few sentences on each.

*If the enquirer is going on placement ask them to write a reflection on that, which should focus more on their own thoughts, feelings and reflections rather than be a simple factual narrative of what happened. It would be helpful to know how the placement challenged them and if it affirmed them.*

## THIRD MEETING

The focus of this meeting is to establish the strengths and areas of development for an enquirer in terms of the Qualities for Discernment for their intended focus of ministry. These are the areas to cover:

- Look at the enquirer's homework. Are there any patterns, for example is the enquirer particularly strong or weak in one of the Qualities/Domains?

- Are there any issues emerging around being obedient, realistic and informed? Is the enquirer reflecting well on their (new) experiences of ministry through placements, reading etc? Can potential ordinands speak about the distinctiveness of ordained ministry in the Church of England? What is the enquirer's spirituality like? Does s/he have a spiritual director and take regular retreats?
- Reflect with the enquirer about placements or reading they have done. Did anything surprise them about the placement? What did he/she appreciate about it, and what did he/she find challenging?
- Look at sacramental/preaching/pastoral ministry: for example, what does sacramental ministry mean to an enquirer from a 'Low Church' tradition? Or what is preaching about for someone who has had limited experience of this? Those exploring the distinctive diaconate might wish to think about how this differs from priestly, or lay, ministry. Encourage enquirers to think through the issues from a different or wider point of view.

**Homework:** Write a reflection on your understanding of sacramental ministry/preaching/pastoral care as appropriate for the type of ministry (priestly or diaconal) that you are exploring.

#### FOURTH MEETING

The aim of this meeting is to bring together all the work that has been done with the enquirer, to share your judgements and recommendations with them, and to outline the next steps. There is a lot to cover in the first three meetings and some of that might end up being covered in this meeting. These are the areas to be covered:

- Reflect with the enquirer on the homework they have done. How have they been challenged by their reading or experiences since last time?
- Summarise the journey so far and way forward. Share your thoughts about what your assessment of the enquirer will be, so that nothing in the report comes as a shock. If you think there may be any issues in this regard, or you have any uncertainties, please contact your CVA. The next section of the handbook explains what to look for in making a judgement, and what you should do if you wish **not** to recommend the candidate for the next stage of the process.

#### FINAL MEETING

The final meeting is for the enquirer to agree and sign off the report. You should send them the report beforehand so that they have an opportunity to reflect on it and respond appropriately at the meeting.

Once the enquirer has included any comments they wish to add to the report, this should be sent to the CVA as soon as possible. Please include all written work completed during the VA process. Note that in some cases, perhaps when the report and its conclusions are straightforward, this meeting can be done by email or on Zoom and the report signed electronically.

The CVA will pass all reports to the Diocesan Director of Ordinands (copying in the Vocations Department Administrator). Where an enquirer is recommended to progress to the next stage, the DDO will allocate candidates to one of the Directors of Ordinands to continue the discernment process.

See the next section for information about candidates who are **not** recommended to proceed by the VA.

# The Process of Discernment

## What to look for - and how to say 'No'

Having outlined an interview structure for the four substantive meetings with enquirers, this section provides advice on elements to look out for in discerning whether an enquirer is suitable for a particular ministry, and the process for handling situations where you do **not** recommend an enquirer for their intended focus of ministry. It should be emphasized that, if you have concerns about an enquirer, please bring this to the attention of the CVA as soon as possible.

### Things to Observe at Meetings with Enquirers

The following are useful benchmarks in discerning whether an enquirer is suitable for the ministry that they are exploring:

- **Does the enquirer demonstrate an approach that is obedient, realistic and informed?** For example:
  - does an enquirer lack obedience in having their heart set on a particular vocational pathway, and cannot accept the possibility that the Church might say 'No'?
  - Does an enquirer's personal circumstances, health, or ability to train make their vocation realistic? (*Be very careful of your own biases and assumptions here.*)
  - Can they and their families commit to the demands of theological training and future ministry?
  - Does an enquirer show an interest in becoming better informed about their intended focus of ministry? Are they beginning to be able to articulate the distinctiveness of their calling?
  - Are they willing to have experience of different traditions within the Church of England?
- **Timekeeping:** Does the enquirer show a pattern of cancelling meetings or turning up late? Be careful not to exclude someone unreasonably whose timekeeping is poor because of child-care or work commitments, especially enquirers in low-paid jobs.
- **Homework:** Is this completed satisfactorily to the timescale required by the VA? Make sure you set clear written expectations as to the scope and deadline for the homework.
- **Receptiveness to criticism:** Is the enquirer able to change and develop in response to the tasks that are asked of them? How do they respond to constructive criticism? Are they easily upset or offended by suggestions or comments which they do not wish to hear? How receptive are they to your honest judgements and guidance?
- **Engagement with the process:** Does the enquirer engage properly with the tasks set, or are they treating the process as a series of hoops to jump through to achieve what they want?

In terms of these areas of discernment, it would be useful to look out for the following as responses which might lead you to have concerns about an enquirer:

- ❖ An uncertainty about their inner sense of vocation
- ❖ An inability to articulate a clear sense of calling to the intended focus of ministry
- ❖ A lack of knowledge about what the intended ministry involves
- ❖ Comments which do not link in with previous discussions, or which seem inconsistent
- ❖ An unwillingness to engage with the discernment process
- ❖ A clear sense of having one's own agenda
- ❖ A lack of understanding of the Church of England

## What to look for from placements

As part of the process of discernment at this stage, it may be helpful for the enquirer to have a short placement at a church with a different tradition from that of their home church. This will normally be arranged directly by you in conjunction as necessary with the CVA, the DDO and local colleagues. Please remember that, as well as parish placements, it may be useful to send an enquirer on placement at an academic, hospital or prison chaplaincy. The CVA or DDO/Assistant DDO will be very happy to help with the setting up of placements.

In particular, if an enquirer has had limited experience of different styles of worship or church tradition, it would be appropriate to ask them to attend, for two to three weeks, a church of a different tradition, so that they can experience the richness and diversity of the Church of England. It is rarely helpful to send someone on placement to a context that is diametrically opposite from their own experience, this is particularly true of enquirers from one end or the other of the spectrum within the Church. You should also be sensitive about sending someone into a context that might make them feel unsafe or uncomfortable, especially at this early stage of the process.

As part of the exercise, the enquirer should be asked to write a reflection on their experience of the placement and be prepared to discuss it with you. The enquirer's reflection should focus on how they felt about the placement, and what they learnt about themselves and their understanding of Church, rather than simply a narrative of what happened, or what they did. This is all valuable evidence for your report.

## The 'No' Process

One of the hardest aspects of the Vocations Adviser's role is when an enquirer cannot be recommended for the type of ministry that they are exploring; but, for the sake both of the enquirer and the Church, it is very important that a non-recommendation is given where discerned to be appropriate, and that this is done clearly and honestly. The following steps will help to ensure consistency and transparency where a non-recommendation needs to be made:

- a) When it begins to emerge that an enquirer is not suitable for their intended focus of ministry, and that you feel you may need to give a non-recommendation, it is an important first step to discuss the situation with the CVA. The CVA will help you to formulate some lines of questioning that could be pursued at the next meeting to press the issues further, so that you can make as informed a judgement as possible. The reasons for saying 'No', or the reasons for any cause for concern, should always be evidenced against the Qualities for Discernment (appendix B).
- b) If, after further exploration, you discern it right not to recommend an enquirer, you will need to inform the enquirer at your next meeting. The CVA will advise you as to best way of doing this, and also the evidence that you will need to provide. In some circumstances, the CVA may be able to be present with you, for example if you have genuine anxieties about how the enquirer may react. If the CVA cannot be present contact the ADDO. It can be a good idea in such situations to provide a witness to the conversation. In all cases of a non-recommendation, explain to the enquirer that you will be writing a report, detailing the reasons for the non-recommendation, and that the enquirer can add any comments before signing it off.
- c) You should also inform the enquirer of the appeals process: if an enquirer wishes to appeal against a non-recommendation, they may. This is done through their incumbent, who must be supportive of the appeal. The incumbent should contact the DDO, who will arrange a one-off appeal meeting. Once this meeting has taken place, a report will be written, and the decision of the appeal will be final. There is a separate leaflet available which explains this process but, briefly, an appeal is only successful where there has been some procedural irregularity. Your genuinely discerned conclusion is not able to be successfully appealed.
- d) Please also inform the enquirer that there are Advisers who are equipped to support those who have not been recommended to proceed in the Diocesan discernment process, and to help them discern where their Christian vocation may lie. The CVA can put the enquirer in touch with a



member of that team, if they would welcome this support. It is important that the enquirer does not view the chance to meet with such an Adviser as a shortcut back into the discernment process.

- e) Once your report has been signed off by the enquirer, please draw the process formally to a close by writing to the enquirer with a short summary of your reasons for not recommending that they should proceed, and a reminder of the appeals process and the offer of support from an Adviser for non-recommended candidates. This letter should be copied to the CVA, the DDO and the enquirer's incumbent.

### **Withdrawal from the Discernment Process**

There may be situations where an enquirer decides to withdraw from the discernment process, or where a VA comes to an agreement with the enquirer that they should withdraw from the process, before the usual course of meetings with the VA is completed. This could be due to changed family circumstances, illness, work commitments, or the need to spend longer discerning and exploring the particular focus for ministry to which the enquirer may be called. Withdrawal is different from a short pause in the process. A rule of thumb is that a pause of more than a couple of months would require a formal withdrawal.

Such an agreed withdrawal may be preferable to a non-recommendation, especially where you and enquirer are able to agree that the candidate is not ready or able to proceed in discernment.

It is important to stress in such cases, should the enquirer be open to re-entering the process in the future, this would be by attendance at another VF and recommencing the VA process with a different VA.

In these circumstances, you should write to the enquirer, confirming their withdrawal from the process and the reasons for this, and copy the letter to the enquirer's incumbent, the CVA and the DDO.

### **Communication, Support & Training**

The effectiveness of the Diocesan discernment process relies on transparency, openness and honesty at all levels. At the initial meeting with enquirers, it should be made clear that this process is an open one, and that you may liaise with the CVA, whom the enquirer would have met at the Forum, other members of the Vocations Team and their incumbent. The enquirer should also be encouraged to discuss their progress with their incumbent as the process continues and be advised that you may contact their incumbent to discuss the course of their vocational journey.

Similarly, it is equally important to work with the same transparency within the Vocations Team. Please keep the CVA informed of how your work with enquirers is progressing, and do not at any stage be afraid to ask the CVA, the DDO or Assistant DDO for help or support.

Once you have completed your report and passed it with supporting written work to the CVA, you should delete it from your computer (allowing a few weeks in case of queries). Keep written notes safely until such time as they can be disposed of. Any GDPR queries should be directed to the Vocations Department Administrator.

There are usually two occasions each year when the Diocesan Vocations Team meets together for training: a day event at Trinity House in May and a twenty-four hour residential event at Wychcroft in September or October. It is essential that you are available to attend these. Not only are these important occasions for training, but they are also opportunities for mutual support within the Vocations Team, to ask questions or raise issues, and to share best practice. The dates for these training events are usually advertised well in advance.

## Potentially difficult matters

It sometimes happens that one or more aspects of a candidate's situation raises potential challenges for their progression towards ordained ministry, or would mean that they might need additional support during future training and ministry. The following table summarizes the most frequently encountered challenges.

If any of the following with an asterisk (\*) applies to an enquirer you're working with, you **must** speak to your CVA (or the DDO/ADD0) as soon as possible after you become aware of it.

This is so that any necessary steps can be taken as promptly as possible and the candidate kept informed of any implications for their discernment.

<p><b>*Serious illness (mental or physical) or disability*</b></p>	<p>Please contact your CVA (having informed the candidate that you will be doing so) who will refer on for further advice if necessary. Please also mention the issue in your report if appropriate.</p>
<p><b>Trauma or difficult life experiences</b></p>	<p>Please explore these experiences during your meetings with the candidate and try to ascertain whether they have adequately resolved/moved on from them, and learned from them where appropriate. Whilst it is important to be sensitive, it is also appropriate that you seek to explore these issues with the enquirer. If they are not able/willing to do so, then it is possibly appropriate that they do not continue in the process.</p> <p>If the enquirer goes on to work with an ADO these experiences will be explored in much more depth and so the enquirer should be prepared for this. But it also means that you only need to ascertain whether the enquirer has dealt with these issues sufficiently to allow them to progress in the process.</p> <p>Please refer to any major issues in your report and feel free to contact your CVA if that would be helpful.</p>
<p><b>Age limits</b></p>	<p>These are detailed on page 7. If any candidate is close to the relevant limits, please ensure that they are fully aware of those limits, which apply at the point of <b>entering training</b>.</p> <p>The Bishop does have discretion in this area but it is used only in exceptional circumstances.</p>
<p><b>*Safeguarding issues*</b></p>	<p>If a candidate discloses any possible safeguarding issues during the course of your meetings, please contact your CVA <b>immediately</b> - these will need to be explored with the DDO/ADD0 and possibly also the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.</p>
<p><b>Sexuality, marriage and civil partnerships</b></p>	<p>All candidates for ordained ministry are expected to have read, understood and agreed to live within the guidelines in <i>Issues in Human Sexuality</i> ('IHS'). Those who are unmarried are expected to remain celibate. Those in civil partnerships will be expected to give assurances that their lives are in accordance with the principles of IHS. Candidates for ordained ministry must not be in a same-sex marriage.</p> <p>Any candidate intending to become engaged or married or enter into a civil partnership should discuss this as part of the discernment process.</p> <p>IHS does not apply to lay ministries.</p>

<p><b>The Five Guiding Principles/Mutual Flourishing</b></p>	<p>All candidates for ordained ministry must have read, understood and assented to the <i>Five Guiding Principles</i> on the ordination of women before they can proceed to a selection panel. This is usually dealt with by an ADO but if you are aware that an enquirer would have difficulty with this then you should flag it up to your CVA and put it in your report.</p> <p>A candidate who wishes to be ordained under the alternative episcopal oversight provisions, would nonetheless be sponsored by the Bishop of Southwark and will be expected to engage fully with the Diocesan vocations process and, in due course, the Diocesan curates' training programme.</p>
<p><b>*Conviction for a "great crime"*</b></p>	<p>If a candidate for ordained ministry has committed a "great crime" they must receive a dispensation from the Archbishop of Canterbury who exercises his sole discretion in the matter before they can be sponsored for a selection panel. The Diocese would apply for this dispensation on behalf of the candidate and meet the costs of this. There is a rigorous quasi-judicial process for obtaining such a dispensation and there is no guarantee it will be granted.</p> <p>A "great crime" includes: culpably killing someone; rape and serious sexual assault; sexual abuse of a child or vulnerable person; conviction of an offence where the penalty may be ten years or more in prison and where the person was actually sentenced to three or more years.</p> <p>Offences that don't fall into the category of being a "great crime" are still relevant to your discernment even though they do not require a dispensation. Any offences committed by a candidate should be considered carefully and appear in your report.</p>
<p><b>*Divorce and Canon C4*</b></p>	<p>A married candidate for ordained ministry who has a previous spouse currently living, or is married to a someone with a previous spouse currently living, must obtain a Faculty under Canon C4(4) from the Archbishop of Canterbury before they can be sponsored for selection. If the previous spouse has died either before or after the marriage, no C4 Faculty is required.</p> <p>The new marriage must be <b>at least three years old</b> before the Faculty application will be considered.</p> <p>Candidates who have been divorced or have a previous civil partnership dissolved and who are now in civil partnerships do not require a faculty.</p> <p>The Diocese applies for the Faculty on behalf of the candidate and meets the costs of this.</p> <p>Please ensure that any candidate affected is aware of the regulations from early on in your work with them and consult your CVA/DDO in case of any queries.</p> <p>Canon C4 does not apply to candidates for lay ministries.</p>
<p><b>*Immigration status*</b></p>	<p>All enquirers must have the right to live, work and study permanently in the UK or be on a clear trajectory to obtaining that right.</p> <p>If you are in any doubt with regards to an enquirer's immigration status you <b>must</b> speak to the ADDO as soon as possible.</p> <p>It is unfair to allow someone to progress in the process only for us to find out later that we cannot sponsor them simply because of their immigration status. The Diocese does not have the financial resources or expertise to assist enquirers with their immigration status.</p>

# Reporting

## Writing up the VA Report

Once you have completed your one-to-one work with an enquirer, you are asked to draft a formal report on the enquirer, with a recommendation or non-recommendation that they should progress to the next stage of the discernment process. Prior to sending the report your candidate, you should send a draft to your CVA who may suggest some amendments. Once you and your CVA are happy with the report, you should show it to the enquirer at your final meeting (you should email it in advance so they have time to read and digest it), which they sign and add comments if they wish. An electronic signature is acceptable.

The report is structured as a pro-forma with specific areas for comment. The report template is available electronically; and, in the following pages, you will find a report pro-forma with guidance for how each question should be completed. There is also a sample 'No' report to indicate the kind of evidence required where an enquirer has not been recommended, and a sample 'Yes' to show the sort of information which is worth including.

Please speak to the CVA if there are any aspects of report writing with which you would welcome further help or guidance.

## Following Enquirers' Progress

### What happens once a VA has finished working with an enquirer?

When an enquirer exploring ordained ministry has finished working with a VA, and is recommended to proceed in the Diocesan discernment process, the next stage will be to work with an Area Director of Ordinands (ADO), who will work through with them in greater detail the Qualities for Discernment for Ordained Ministry, with a view to discerning whether the Bishop of Southwark should be advised to sponsor the candidate for a Shared Discernment Panel (SDP). This work with a Director of Ordinands may include a substantial parish or chaplaincy placement, or some structured academic study, such as undertaking the Bishop's Certificate course.

An enquirer exploring lay ministry will be referred to Rev Dr Raewynne Whiteley who will continue to work with them before they are sent for selection for the ministry they are exploring.

Once an enquirer has progressed to the next stage, the VA's work with that enquirer comes to an end, so it is not appropriate to maintain any formal contact with the enquirer. You will, however, be sent copies of Diocesan correspondence with an enquirer with whom you have worked - such as a letter from the Bishop relaying a selection panel recommendation - so that VAs can follow the progress that their enquirers go on to make.



# Vocations Adviser Report (Confidential)

*Please ensure that this report is signed by both you as the VA and the Enquirer.  
Please submit to your CVA in draft before sending to the Enquirer.*

## To be completed by the Vocations Adviser:

Vocations Adviser:

Date first referred:

Date of initial meeting:

Total number of meetings:

If more than 5, please include a brief explanation below:

Name of CVA:

Name of Enquirer:

Date of Birth:

Age at VF:

Address:

Home Parish:

Phone:

Name of Incumbent/Chaplain:

Email:

Date of Baptism:

Date of Confirmation:

Form of Ministry explored: **Choose an item.**

Have you explored other forms of ministry with this enquirer? **Choose an item.**

If Yes, please give details in the 'Summary of work done' box on the next page.

Relationship status **Choose an item.**

Does this enquirer require a Canon C4 Faculty? **Choose an item.**

If Yes, is this because the enquirer or their spouse has remarried? **Choose an item.**

*Please give further relationship details if appropriate. This is necessary if the enquirer is divorced and re-married or (engaged to be re-married) and their first spouse is still alive, or if the same conditions apply to their current spouse/fiancé(e).*

Has the enquirer disclosed any possible safeguarding issues? **Choose an item.**

If Yes, have you reported these issues to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team? **Choose an item.**

Has the enquirer been convicted of a 'great crime'? **Choose an item.**

Does the enquirer have the permanent right to live, work and study in the UK? **Choose an item.**

Summary of vocational path to date. What has brought the enquirer to this point?

*Summarise the enquirer's vocational journey to this point, based on their own faith journey, including all key events and significant people.*

Summary of work done with enquirer by Vocations Adviser:

*Detail the individual meetings with the enquirer, highlighting the topics covered and discussed, and any written work submitted. This is important as it will provide information as to what has already been undertaken and avoid duplication at the next stage of the discernment process.*

*Whilst written work should be included in the papers forwarded, it is not to be considered as part of the formal report and should be referred to as evidence of the enquirer's thinking and reflection on the process.*

Summary of relevant secular experience, and of current ministries (formal and informal) within the Church and in wider community:

*Summarise the enquirer's relevant experience, both within the Church and in the wider community. In summarising their current ministries, please detail how long they have been exercising this ministry.*

*Give details of their current secular role(s) where applicable and appropriate.*

Is the enquirer's perceived vocational path realistic, obedient and informed? Why?

*Summarise the vocational path that the enquirer feels that God is calling them to follow and assess whether they are obedient, realistic and informed in relation to their perceived vocational path. In particular, assess their current work/home situations and the possible impact on their wider family if they were to be approved for training, and whether their qualities are sufficient for their intended focus of ministry.*

VA comments on vocational path (suitability, readiness, prerequisites):

*This should be an analysis of the enquirer's suitability based on the evidence provided and observed through the meetings, any written work submitted and, if applicable, placements undertaken.*

Strengths of the enquirer:

*Describe the strengths of the enquirer, with particular reference to their perceived focus of ministry.*

Areas for further exploration or attention, and development needs:

*Highlight areas that may need exploring further in respect of the specific qualities for the form of ministry they are exploring. Identify areas that will need to be addressed or where the enquirer would benefit from further study - e.g. undertaking the Bishop's Certificate course. This section should not be seen negatively, as the Church is not looking for the finished article, and there needs to be an honest appraisal of the enquirer.*

Recommended next step **Choose an item.**

VA's electronic signature (type in your name):

Date:

*Please submit to your CVA in draft before sending to your Enquirer who should then complete the next page before you submit the final report to your CVA.*

**To be completed by the Enquirer:**

After reading this report, do you have any comments you would like to add here? If so, please do so in the space below.

Enquirer's electronic signature (type in your name):

Date:

*Please return this form to your Vocations Adviser by email.*





# A SAMPLE RECOMMENDATION REPORT

## Vocations Adviser Report (Confidential)

*Please ensure that this report is signed by both you as the VA and the Enquirer.*

*Please submit to your CVA in draft before sending to the Enquirer.*

### To be completed by the Vocations Adviser:

Vocations Adviser: **Ola Musa**

Date first referred: **20 September 2021**

Date of initial meeting: **10 October 2021**

Total number of meetings: **6 (including final meeting to sign off report)**

If more than 5, please include a brief explanation below:

**Enquirer had a lot of questions in the first meeting so we held over talking about her 'story' until the next meeting so that we could do it justice.**

Name of CVA: **Catherine Dowland-Pillinger**

Name of Enquirer: **Veronique Martin**

Date of Birth: **8 January 1985**

Age at VF: **36**

Address: **10 Lock Lane, Croydon CR0 0AA**

Home Parish: **St Valentine, West Croydon**

Phone: **Don't know**

Name of Incumbent/Chaplain:

Email: **vmartin@gnail.com**

**Rev Sam McGregor**

Date of Baptism: **May 1986**

Date of Confirmation: **Not yet confirmed**

Form of Ministry explored: **Priest: Incumbent status and non-stipendiary**

Have you explored other forms of ministry with this enquirer? **Yes**

If Yes, please give details in the 'Summary of work done' box on the next page.

Relationship status **Single**

Does this enquirer require a Canon C4 Faculty? **No**

If Yes, is this because the enquirer or their spouse has remarried? **Choose an item.**

*Please give further relationship details if appropriate. This is necessary if the enquirer is divorced and re-married or (engaged to be re-married) and their first spouse is still alive, or if the same conditions apply to their current spouse/fiancé(e).*

Has the enquirer disclosed any possible safeguarding issues? **No**

If Yes, have you reported these issues to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team? **Not applicable**

Has the enquirer been convicted of a 'great crime'? **No**

Does the enquirer have the permanent right to live, work and study in the UK? **Yes**

Summary of vocational path to date. What has brought the enquirer to this point?

*Veronique was born in Paris to Roman Catholic parents. Growing up she attended mass regularly and received her first communion, but was not confirmed.*

*The family moved to London in the late 1990s so that her father could work for the BBC. Veronique's mother was killed in a tragic accident in 1999 when she was run over by a bus. This devastated the whole family, and her father became an alcoholic. Veronique felt responsible for her younger siblings and helped them with practical tasks and schoolwork. They joined a local Anglican church, which Veronique admits was 'more for the support of a friendly community than any spiritual reason'.*

*In 2003 Veronique went to study law at Manchester University, a 'daunting' time as she was anxious about leaving the family home. She became involved in the chaplaincy, and made new friends. God was becoming 'more real' and she began to accept that her mother's death was not God's fault, rather God had guided them to find a new community through it.*

*During her university years Veronique also accepted her identity as a lesbian, and met Raquel, another law student. They intended to become civil partners, but the relationship ended in 2008, when Raquel moved to Spain. 'I was relieved in a way' Veronique admits, 'as I wanted to throw myself into church and my career, not be tied to a relationship'.*

*Veronique returned to London and quickly established herself as a leading human rights lawyer. She joined St Valentine's church, a liberal catholic church based in her local community. Her professional skills meant she was able to read, intercede, join the PCC, and eventually become a churchwarden. She set up 'Lawyers with a Heart', a Christian charity offering legal assistance to disadvantaged people in her local area.*

*In 2020, in conversation with her vicar, it was suggested Veronique might like to consider ministry. Having always considered law to be her 'vocation', she was surprised, but through prayer came to realise it was right to offer her gifts in this way.*

*Wanting to continue in law, and recognising her gifts in supporting others, including friends and family, she feels called to the diaconate and attended a VF in late 2019, which she described as 'a revelation'.*

Summary of work done with enquirer by Vocations Adviser:

*We have met six times. At our first meeting Veronique had a lot of questions about the process and as that took up a fair amount of time I decided that it would be best to hold over talking about her personal history until we next met. At our next meeting she described her vocational journey. She became quite emotional talking about her mother's death and how this had affected the whole family. But ultimately she sees the adversity of this period as helping make her a tougher and more empathetic person. I asked Veronique to prepare some thoughts on the role of a priest and how her gifts might suit that ministry.*

*Veronique produced a very thoughtful piece of work which we discussed at our third meeting. We also discussed her prayer life - Veronique prays morning and evening prayer from the Daily Prayer app, and works with a spiritual director. She has communion weekly, and takes an annual retreat at Worth Abbey. She is particularly drawn to the writings of Rowan Williams and Richard Rohr. I asked her to reflect on the qualities for selection ahead of our next meeting, and to do a short placement at an open evangelical church in Reigate.*

*At our next meeting we discussed the visit, which Veronique had found very challenging. Growing up as a Catholic and now an Anglican she values stillness, ceremony and beauty in worship, none of which were present in her placement church. However, she did appreciate the focus on Bible teaching, and was welcomed warmly during the coffee time after the service. She has connected with another young woman at the church and intends to stay in touch by email and WhatsApp. We also looked at her written work on the qualities for selection. Veronique is growing in knowledge of the church, and has a focus on mission as demonstrated in her law project for the vulnerable which she spoke enthusiastically about. She is aware that her personality can be a little overbearing at times, and admits 'I don't suffer fools gladly'. However, she believes her continued work and prayer is helping her become a more generous and tolerant person. I asked her to prepare a reflection on the sacraments and the role of the deacon for our final meeting.*

*At our next meeting Veronique had produced a detailed study of the priest's role, with particular reference to the Eucharist. She expressed a desire to take this ministry further than the parish, and had spoken to a hospital chaplain at Croydon hospital, which she intends to visit soon. Veronique was delighted when I told her that I was happy for her to go on to work with an ADO. She thanked me for the VA process which has helped her 'know better who I am'.*

Summary of relevant secular experience, and of current ministries (formal and informal) within the Church and in wider community:

*Veronique is a human rights lawyer, and also runs a legal project in her parish. Her skills are analytic and perceptive, and she writes and speaks well, professionally and in church.*

*She has been a churchwarden, and is now the head server at St Valentine's. She leads a home group, and reads and intercedes, as well as writing for the parish magazine.*

*She also leads an LGBT fitness group in Croydon, who regularly take part in triathlons and 'iron man' events, and has set up social media and a website to support the group.*

*She volunteers with Croydon Samaritans, which she believes has helped her develop listening skills.*

Is the enquirer's perceived vocational path realistic, obedient and informed? Why?

*Veronique believes she is called to the priesthood. I believe this is obedient as she has been guided by her vicar, and shown an openness in the process. She has produced work on time, attended meetings, and done a placement. She has also taken initiative to broaden her horizons. Though she does not agree with it, she accepts she must live by 'Issues in human sexuality'. She is also challenged by the Five Guiding Principles but, again, recognises that she must accept them.*

*She is seeking incumbent status, although envisages her ministry being as a non-stipendiary assistant priest. She is realistic in this as she has the organisational skills, pastoral gifts and life circumstances which will enable her to train for and carry out this ministry.*

*She is informed, having read widely, had experience in various churches and considered carefully the role of the deacon. She does not have a background in theology, but was open to my suggestion that she should study on the Bishops Certificate course.*

VA comments on vocational path (suitability, readiness, prerequisites):

*I believe that it is suitable for Veronique to be on this path. There is, of course, work to be done in the rest of the discernment process, especially with broadening her experience of the Church of England and making sure that her self-described overbearing nature is consistent with being in ministry. She would benefit from reflecting on what is distinctive about Christian leadership. Although she is planning to enrol on the Bishop's Certificate, I do not see this as a prerequisite for her continuing in the process towards selection, if her ADO believes that is appropriate in due course.*

Strengths of the enquirer:

*Veronique is confident and honest about her sense of calling. She talks enthusiastically, and clearly is able to put into practice and follow through on her ideas. She has many friends and is well appreciated in her church. She is not afraid to try new things.*

Areas for further exploration or attention, and development needs:

*Veronique is less comfortable in evangelical settings, and would benefit from a longer placement. I have also recommended she study on the Bishops Certificate course. Her visit to the chaplaincy at Croydon hospital will also help her discern whether there might be a role for her in this setting.*

Recommended next step **Proceed to work with an ADO**

VA's electronic signature (type in your name):

Date:

**Please submit to your CVA in draft before sending to your Enquirer who should then complete the next page before you submit the final report to your CVA.**

## To be completed by the Enquirer:

After reading this report, do you have any comments you would like to add here? If so, please do so in the space below.

*I have enjoyed meeting with Ola and talking about my vocation with him. I am excited to be recommended to the next stage and pray that God will continue to lead me.*

Enquirer's electronic signature (type in your name):

Date:

***Please return this form to your Vocations Adviser by email.***



# **SAMPLE NON-RECOMMENDATION REPORT**

## **Vocations Adviser Report (Confidential)**

*Please ensure that this report is signed by both you as the VA and the Enquirer.*

*Please submit to your CVA in draft before sending to the Enquirer.*

### **To be completed by the Vocations Adviser:**

Vocations Adviser: **Joanna Bloggs**

Date first referred: **20 September 2021**

Date of initial meeting: **5 October 2021**

Total number of meetings: **4**

If more than 5, please include a brief explanation below:

Name of CVA: **Sallie Eden**

Name of Enquirer: **Zac Smith**

Date of Birth: **16 October 1975**

Age at VF: **45**

Address: **1 The Place, London SE1 1AA**

Home Parish: **St Sepulchre by the Shard**

Phone: **Don't know**

Name of Incumbent/Chaplain:

Email: **zsmith@gmail.com**

**Rev Leslie Adams**

Date of Baptism: **6 January 1976**

Date of Confirmation: **Not confirmed**

Form of Ministry explored: **Priest: Incumbent status and stipendiary**

Have you explored other forms of ministry with this enquirer? **No**

If Yes, please give details in the 'Summary of work done' box on the next page.

Relationship status **Married (opposite sex)**

Does this enquirer require a Canon C4 Faculty? **No**

If Yes, is this because the enquirer or their spouse has remarried? **Choose an item.**

*Please give further relationship details if appropriate. This is necessary if the enquirer is divorced and re-married or (engaged to be re-married) and their first spouse is still alive, or if the same conditions apply to their current spouse/fiancé(e).*

Has the enquirer disclosed any possible safeguarding issues? **No**

If Yes, have you reported these issues to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team? **Not applicable**

Has the enquirer been convicted of a 'great crime'? **No**

Does the enquirer have the permanent right to live, work and study in the UK? **Yes**

Summary of vocational path to date. What has brought the enquirer to this point?

*Zac grew up in the United States, attending the Roman Catholic Church where he was an altar boy and server. This was a formative experience for him: he remembers that from an early age, he wanted to become a Roman Catholic priest. However, this was not possible because when he was twelve his father died, and Zac as the eldest child had to take on responsibility for bringing up the family, a very difficult time for him.*

*As he entered his teenage years, Zac had many questions about faith and the Bible to which he felt he did not get much of an answer from his priest. He found that the Presbyterian Church answered his questions better, and was increasingly drawn in this direction. He got very involved, and, having completed a degree in mass communication, and then working in Nigeria as a journalist and in a bank, trained part time to be a pastor and became ordained as a minister in the Assemblies of God Church in his early twenties.*

*Zac was involved in missionary work in the Philippines until 2010, when he came to the UK to study theology through Middlesex University. As part of his course, he could do a placement in any Church, and he chose St Sepulchre's, because Anglicanism was not a denomination he had had experience of so far. He has stayed there ever since. He has a passion for mission in the Church, which has been growing. He feels he is non-denominational in the sense that he does not think any denomination is "right" or has all the correct answers, but he feels called to work in the Anglican Church because that is where he sees a great need for mission and senses he can best serve God.*

*His wife Angela only moved to the UK from Nigeria in 2013, but is fully supportive of Zac's call to ministry. They have three children, and since he completed his studies Zac has been very busy working first as a cleaner, then in a kitchen, and then going home to help look after the children. He has attended the Bishop's Certificate course, but due to the pressures of family life and working long hours to earn money did not complete any assignments in recent months.*

*Zac is clearly someone who has a strong knowledge of Christianity and Scripture, and brings much experience from his missionary years. He understands the diversity of the Church. I have found him articulate and full of ideas in our meetings, but it has been disappointing that he has not really engaged very much with the reading I suggested or been able to produce the written work I asked for until very recently.*

Summary of work done with enquirer by Vocations Adviser:

*We have met four times. Zac arrived to our first meeting 40 minutes late; however, we spoke for nearly two hours in which Zac told me about himself and his growing sense of calling. I was initially quite concerned that his calling to priestly ministry was only about mission (which was the focus of most of what he had to say) and evangelisation. But when I pressed him about the difference between being a priest and being a missionary, he had much to say about his sense of what a priest was, a pastor and healer, and linked this to the Eucharist, which is clearly an important part of his spirituality. He was able to reflect in an interesting way on what he appreciated about parish life at St Sepulchre's and, when asked, to think critically about the differences between Anglicanism and Presbyterianism.*

*Our second meeting in November had to be postponed on the day due to Zac's needing to pick his children up from school and attend to his family. When we did meet in December, it was clear that Zac had been going through a very difficult time with many things to contend with, such as looking after his children and new baby, suddenly having to leave his accommodation, and a new job. For this reason, although he had (partially) completed the Journey of Faith I asked him to write, we did not speak about it very much. I suggested delaying meeting again until Zac's situation had stabilised, but we agreed that before we met again he would pursue the reading of *The Christian Priest Today* I had lent him in the previous meeting and that he would write a piece reflecting on the theme "What is a Priest and what gifts do I bring to it". These would provide the focus for our discussion.*

*Our third meeting was in January, but Zac informed me the day before that he had not been able to complete any written work due to having many responsibilities looking after the baby, and working longer hours to meet financial obligations. During the meeting we talked more about priesthood, and Zac reflected very well about the role of the priest being to equip others for the task of evangelism and prayer, nourishing people at the altar and equipping them to live a Christian life of mission in the world. He showed some awareness of the challenges of priestly ministry. He spoke movingly about how the hardships he has endured in his life, recently and in the past, have helped him to know what others are going through and help them. I suggested Zac meet Revd Jones, an Anglican priest with a background in Presbyterianism, who may be able to help him with making the transition from Presbyterianism to Anglicanism, and emphasised the importance of doing some reading and reflection outside our meetings.*

*After this I did not hear from Zac for some time, and in March he informed me of some difficulties in his family life relating to the health of one of his children. For this reason he had still been unable to pursue any reading or written work. After I contacted him again in May, however, he indicated that he wished to remain in the process, and in June produced a short piece reflecting on "What is a priest" (and later, at my prompting, added his reflections on what gifts he brings to it) and summarising the first chapter of *The Christian Priest Today*, in preparation for our final meeting.*

Summary of relevant secular experience, and of current ministries (formal and informal) within the Church and in wider community:

*Zac has a background in missionary work in Africa and the Philippines. He trained as a pastor in Nigeria and engaged in further theological study in the UK.*

*He has been attending St Sepulchre's since he undertook a placement there as part of his theological studies and has been a regular committed member of the congregation. He reads the lesson, occasionally leads the intercessions, and is on the teas and coffees rota with his family.*



Is the enquirer's perceived vocational path realistic, obedient and informed? Why?

*Zac expressed a sense of calling to stipendiary ordained ministry.*

*In our meetings Zac has come across as personable and I enjoyed meeting him. He seemed very genuine in his sense of calling, and passionate and articulate about Christianity and his faith. But his inability to back this up with much evidence at all of reading or reflection outside our meetings, together with the lateness and initial incompleteness of both pieces of written work I asked him to do, raises serious questions for me about Zac's level of commitment, maturity and readiness to undertake theological training. His unreliability in terms of attendance and punctuality add to my worry as to how realistic or informed his sense of vocation is, given the demanding and responsible nature of a priest's work. I sense that his current situation, with the many demands made on him by family and work, lacks the stability necessary to enter theological training, and that now is not the right time to pursue this path.*

VA comments on vocational path (suitability, readiness, prerequisites):

*For the reason I have stated above, I do not believe that this path is suitable for Zac at this time. I do not believe he is ready for the commitment that it would take to engage with the process further.*

Strengths of the enquirer:

*Zac is personable, passionate about his faith, and genuine in his inner sense of call.*

Areas for further exploration or attention, and development needs:

*Zac's commitment to exploring his vocation and a more realistic and informed understanding of what priestly ministry in the Church of England might involve. He will also need to develop his ability to reflect theologically. Zac may wish to work with a spiritual director to develop his spiritual life.*

*I would recommend that Zac does not pursue ordination at this time, but that he concentrates on re-establishing himself in a church community and increasing his involvement as his personal situation progresses.*

Recommended next step **Not proceed in the process**

*Zac has indicated that he would wish to be referred to an Adviser who specialises in working with someone who has not been recommended.*

VA's electronic signature (type in your name):

Date:

**Please submit to your CVA in draft before sending to your Enquirer who should then complete the next page before you submit the final report to your CVA.**

## To be completed by the Enquirer:

After reading this report, do you have any comments you would like to add here? If so, please do so in the space below.

*This is the VA's report in relation to her observation of my situation at this time. But I want to observe that I did not ask for the situations to arise at this time and, I could have hoped for a little more sympathy from my VA. But I believe this report may be as a result of the qualities set out for the discernment process. Nonetheless I would want to meet with someone who specialises in meeting with people in my situation. I know there is an appeals process and I am seriously considering pursuing an appeal.*

Enquirer's electronic signature (type in your name):

Date:

***Please return this form to your Vocations Adviser by email.***

# Appendix A

## Papers for Vocations Forums

### Our Way So Far: Life and Faith Journey

To all enquirers: please complete this before attending the Vocations Forum; make sure you allow plenty of time to consider each question carefully. You will be asked to share some of this with other members of a small group, and you will each have ten minutes to describe your own 'journey'.

Which people and experiences have most influenced my own faith journey?

What are the milestones in my faith journey?

When did I first become aware of God in my life?

How has this awareness developed?

In what ways is Jesus Christ important to me?

How have I experienced the Holy Spirit in my life and what difference has this made?

How has my experience of God's call impacted my faith and life?

# Responding to God's Call: Scripture and Vocation

Below are some passages from Scripture where God calls someone to a particular task or way of life. Read and reflect on these passages, and, before the Vocations Forum, choose **two** from the list that you feel speak to you in some way about your own sense of being called. Make some notes and be prepared to share with some other members of the Forum why you chose this particular passage.

To help, here are some points to look for:

- who is being called here?
- does the call come directly from God, or through something or someone else?
- what is unexpected about this call?
- for whom may this call bring liberation?
- what personal weaknesses is God challenging, and how will he overcome them?
- does the person being called resist the vocation? How? Why?
- in what way does this passage speak to me? What might God be asking of me through this piece of Scripture?

The passages:

Genesis 12.1-9	The call of Abraham
Genesis 32.23-32	The call of Jacob
Exodus 3.1-14	The call of Moses
1 Samuel 3.1-10	The call of Samuel
1 Samuel 16.4-13	The call of David
Isaiah 6.1-8	The call of Isaiah
Jeremiah 1.4-9	The call of Jeremiah
Jonah 1-4	The call of Jonah
Luke 1.26-38	The call of Mary
Luke 19.1-10	The call of Zacchaeus
John 20.1-18	The call of Mary Magdalen
John 21.15-19	The call of Peter
Acts 1.15-26	The call of Matthias
Acts 8.26.39	The call of the African eunuch
Acts 9.1-22	The call of Paul
Acts 16.13-15	The call of Lydia

**Please bring a Bible with you**, so you can follow the passages chosen by other participants.

It is important that, while others relay how this passage speaks to them, we listen respectfully and engage with their story. Please be aware that others' reflections on Scripture and their vocation may differ from yours!

# Vocational Discernment: Obedient?

At the beginning of your group time, invite all the enquirers to read the case study and to draw out aspects relating to Informed, Realistic and Obedient. Then focus on the particular aspect that is pertinent to your study and discuss in more depth, using the suggested questions provided to you, in order to be able to feed back to the plenary the key issues around that particular aspect.

**Please note that the aim of the group time is not to specifically resolve the case study and arrive at an action plan for the named person.**

## Case study: Simon

Simon is 23 years old and enquiring about ordained ministry. He graduated from university two years ago and since leaving university he has lived at home with his parents. For the past year he has been employed by his church as a pastoral assistant. This involves some administration, involvement in the day to day running of the church, and participation in the sacramental and preaching ministry of the church. He really enjoys what he does, and, some months ago, approached his incumbent to discuss the possibility of exploring ordination.

He has several friends from his time at university who are either in the process of discernment or already in theological college, and he is keen to 'get on', like them, with this important ministry to which he feels called. He has done a lot of research, and spoken to many people, and has a great deal of information regarding what would be the best college, training pathway, and kind of curacy for him. He feels best suited to ministry in a liturgically-focussed, Anglo-Catholic church, and would like to use his gifts and experience to eventually lead a church in the diocese in which he grew up (and currently lives).

Simon has begun to work with a VA, but is impatient to get to the DDO. He feels unable to commit to a placement in a different kind of church from his own because he is extremely busy and has many commitments there. He feels increasingly anxious to move quickly, as – due to his extensive research – he realizes that he must go to a selection panel in the next few months in order to be eligible to begin training at his chosen college next September.

### **Some questions:**

**Is there anything in this case study that brings up issues around obedience?**

**What are the hallmarks of an obedient vocation?**

**What are counter-examples of an obedient vocation?**

**What sort of behaviours (perhaps not mentioned in the case study) might people exhibit that might flag up issues around obedience?**

**What would help foster this characteristic in you?**

### **For the facilitator:**

Things to watch out for:

- Do they want it all their own way, only happy if 'calling the shots'?
- Do they have very set ideas about training/curacy/type of church/deployment?
- Is there any difficulty with authority figures (Bishop, DDO, incumbent)?
- Do they focus more on being 'in charge' than exercising a servant ministry?
- Do they have an understanding of the sacrificial nature of ministry?

# Vocational Discernment: Realistic?

At the beginning of your group time, invite all the enquirers to read the case study and to draw out aspects relating to Informed, Realistic and Obedient. Then focus on the particular aspect that is pertinent to your study and discuss in more depth, using the suggested questions provided to you, in order to be able to feed back to the plenary the key issues around that particular aspect.

**Please note that the aim of the group time is not to specifically resolve the case study and arrive at an action plan for the named person.**

## Case study: Maria

Maria is a 61-year-old enquiring about Reader ministry. She left school at 16, married at 18 and began a family when she was around 20. After leaving school with 5 'O' Levels/School Certificate passes (including English Language, but not Maths), Maria did a series of general administrative and retail jobs to help support her family. Though she did in-service training to help her do her jobs, she never had any further formal academic education.

During the discernment process thus far, Maria has impressed everyone with her grounded common sense and ability to see to the heart of tricky relationship issues in her parish. However, she seems less comfortable in talking about her faith or matters of theology. She frequently repeats St Francis' dictum, 'Preach the gospel at all times; when necessary, use words'. Maria has described how her sense of call has been awakened in the past 2 or 3 years, when to her surprise, her Incumbent began to talk about her being a strong and encouraging presence to others in the parish. As time has gone by, she has done more in the parish and has been much encouraged and supported by both her Incumbent and the parish Reader. Having talked at some length with the Reader, who is a good friend, about what is involved Maria feels that she too might be called to Reader ministry.

Maria is now retired, and she has 3 adult children and 7 grandchildren. All live nearby to her and she spends much of her spare time babysitting, both during the week when her own children are at work (which enables them to work) and at the weekends when they go out. She often speaks about the significant priority she places on family life and values their love and support, particularly since she has some significant health issues which have caused concern in the recent past.

### Some questions:

**Is there anything in this case study that brings up issues around being realistic?**

**What are the hallmarks of a realistic vocation?**

**What are counter-examples of a realistic vocation?**

**What sort of behaviours (perhaps not mentioned in the case study) might people exhibit that might flag up issues around being realistic?**

**What would help foster this characteristic in you?**

### For the facilitator:

Things to watch out for:

- Do they have the necessary skills / capacity / robustness / support for the ministry being explored?
- Is their idea of ministry up-to-date?
- Do they have sufficient time to commit to this ministry?
- What does/do their partner / family / friends think about their pursuing this ministry?

# Vocational Discernment: Informed?

At the beginning of your group time, invite all the enquirers to read the case study and to draw out aspects relating to Informed, Realistic and Obedient. Then focus on the particular aspect that is pertinent to your study and discuss in more depth, using the suggested questions provided to you, in order to be able to feed back to the plenary the key issues around that particular aspect.

**Please note that the aim of the group time is not to specifically resolve the case study and arrive at an action plan for the named person.**

## Case study: Cathy

Cathy was baptized as a baby, and occasionally attended Sunday School as a child. She lost interest in church as an adolescent but since the birth of her own children has felt increasingly drawn to think about the 'bigger questions', and attended an Alpha course a year ago. During one of the sessions, she experienced a powerful sense of God's love for her and made a personal commitment to Christ. Since then she has felt on fire with enthusiasm for her faith, is eager to learn more and wishes nothing more than to share this Gospel with all those whom she meets. She has quickly become embedded in her local church community; she belongs to a house-group, helps out at 'Messy Church' each Sunday and organizes a weekly 'mums and toddlers' session in the church hall. She finds herself 'chatting' with God throughout the day and receives communion once a week.

In order to learn more about her faith, Cathy has recently enrolled on the Bishop's Certificate course and has joined a local Vocations Group, where people meet and talk about their sense of call from God. She is enthusiastic, gifted and has a way of making people feel valued; she has begun to wonder if God might be asking her to explore some kind of ministry in his church and has asked her Incumbent if he will support her in beginning this exploration in a more formal way.

### **Some questions:**

**Is there anything in this case study that brings up issues around being informed?**

**What are the hallmarks of an informed vocation?**

**What are counter-examples of an informed vocation?**

**What sort of behaviours (perhaps not mentioned in the case study) might people exhibit that might flag up issues around being informed?**

**What would help foster this characteristic in you?**

### **For the facilitator:**

Things to watch out for:

- Do they have a deep understanding of what is involved in the kind of ministry being explored?
- Is their idea of ministry up-to-date?
- Do they have a good knowledge of the current issues facing the church?
- Are they aware of the pressures / risks / sacrifices involved in ministry?

# Appendix B

## Qualities for Discernment for Priests and Distinctive Deacons

The former Criteria applying to those offering for ordained ministry have been replaced by a new set of Qualities and so only the new Qualities should be referred to. These are described as “qualities to be inhabited” and represent “a different way of exploring a person’s potential call to train for ordained ministry in the Church of England”.

The six qualities, grounded in the Church of England’s Ordinals, are:

- Love for God
- Call to Ministry
- Love for People
- Wisdom
- Fruitfulness
- Potential

Each of the qualities is explored with respect to a candidate’s relationship to: Christ, the Church, the World and the Self. These are called the four Domains.

The grids on the following two pages give further details of some of the signs which may indicate that a candidate is indeed inhabiting these qualities in these different areas and which are of particular relevance for priests and distinctive deacons respectively. (The grids used at selection contain further safeguarding-related qualities but you do not need to refer to these at this stage, safeguarding is explored in much more detail at the ADO stage.) Please try where possible to make reference to examples of where a enquirer inhabits these qualities in your report to support your recommendation and, where appropriate, to inform the next stage of work with the candidate.



## Qualities for Discernment: Priest

<b>Priest</b>	<b>Christ</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>World</b>	<b>Self</b>
<b>Love for God</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Is reliant on God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - and lives out an infectious, life-transforming faith	Is rooted in Scripture, the worship of the Church and the living traditions of faith	Whole-heartedly, generously and attractively engages with God's world	Is prayerful and studies the Bible
<b>Call to Ministry</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Responds to the call of Christ to be a disciple	Understands the distinctive nature of ordained priestly ministry	Is committed to being a public and representative person	Articulates an inner sense of call grounded in priestly service
<b>Love for People</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Welcomes Christ in others, listens, values and respects; cares for those in poverty and the marginalised	Builds relationships which are collaborative and enabling	Shows God's compassion for the world	Has empathy and is aware of how others receive them
<b>Wisdom</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Is inquisitive, curious and open to new learning	Shows leadership that enables thriving and healthy churches, handles conflict, and can lead in mission	Is robust and courageous and prepared to take risks	Is a mature and integrated person of stability and integrity
<b>Fruitfulness</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Embraces the different and enables others to be witnesses and servants	Shows the capacity to exercise sacramental, liturgical and an effective and enabling teaching ministry	Shares faith in Christ and can accompany others in their faith	Has resilience and stamina
<b>Potential</b> <i>The candidate has potential to...</i>	Grow in faith and be open to navigating the future in the company of Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit	Manage change, and see the big picture	See where God is working in the world and respond with missionary imagination	Be adaptable and agile

## Qualities for Discernment: Distinctive Deacon

<b>Distinctive Deacon</b>	<b>Christ</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>World</b>	<b>Self</b>
<b>Love for God</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Is reliant on God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - and lives out an infectious, life-transforming world-focussed faith	Is rooted in scripture, the worship of the Church and the living traditions of faith	Whole heartedly, generously and attractively engages with God's world	Is prayerful and studies the Bible
<b>Call to Ministry</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Responds to the call of Christ to be a disciple	Understands the distinctive nature of ordained diaconal ministry	Is committed to being a public and representative person of the Church in the forgotten corners of the world	Articulates an inner sense of call grounded in service
<b>Love for People</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Welcomes Christ in others, listens, values and respects and has a special care for those in poverty and the marginalised	Builds relationships which are collaborative and enabling	Shows God's compassion and care in the world in multifaceted contexts and with social agencies	Has empathy and is aware of how others receive them
<b>Wisdom</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Is inquisitive, curious and open to new learning that connects church and world	Shows instinctively collaborative leadership that enables healthy churches to be bridge-builders in their communities	Is robust and courageous in reflecting the world to the Church and the Church to the world	Is a mature and integrated person of stability and integrity
<b>Fruitfulness</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Embraces the different and animates others to be witnesses and servants	Shows the capacity to exercise diaconal sacramental and liturgical ministry and effective and enabling teaching ministry	Is a storyteller of God's love and agent of God's kingdom of justice	Has resilience and stamina
<b>Potential</b> <i>The candidate has potential to...</i>	Grow in faith and to be open to navigating the future in the company of Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit	See the big picture in their context and, within it, enable a Christian community to serve	See where God is working in the world and to read the signs of the times	Be adaptable and agile