



DIOCESE OF EAST ANGLIA

DIOCESAN PASTORAL PLAN

Mandatory Diocesan Policies

The Diocesan Pastoral Plan (2004) was formally adopted at a diocesan meeting of parish priests and members of the Council of Priests on 1st July 2004, and approved by Bishop Michael. It includes a wide range of strong recommendations and suggestions. Only the formal policies are listed below: along with other such policies promulgated in the past, these are now included in the 'customs of the diocese' in accordance with which, along with the requirements of the Code of Canon Law, each parish priest in particular and others in general are required to exercise their ministry in the Diocese of East Anglia. They are to be implemented across the diocese, in every parish and other community.

These formal policies are listed for convenience and for checking implementation. They should not be seen in isolation from the whole Diocesan Pastoral Plan, which is the official programme for the diocese over the coming years. Many important issues (such as the call to holiness) do not require such treatment as they should be taken for granted by every Catholic community.

Page references in this document are to the Diocesan Pastoral Plan (2004).

1. MAKING WELCOME (see DPP pp. 8-20)

Our diocesan policy is that the diocesan family and every parish community should be pro-actively welcoming to all. Every parish is asked to explore the very heart of the way in which it welcomes all. Hospitality must be our special care.

This includes pro-active welcoming of:

- **Newcomers** (DPP p. 11)
- **Less-active ('lapsed') Catholics** (DPP pp. 13-14)
- **People from other countries** (DPP p. 15)
- **People with disabilities** (DPP p. 16)
- **The elderly, sick & housebound** (DPP p. 17)
- **Children and young people** (DPP pp. 17-19)
- **Single people** (DPP p. 19)
- **The separated and divorced** (DPP pp. 19-20)

It is at Sunday Mass that our Catholic welcome must be most powerfully evident and experienced: before Mass, during Mass and after Mass.

2. CARING FOR THOSE IN NEED (see DPP pp. 22-23)

It is diocesan policy that every parish community should be involved in some practical way in care for the poor and needy of their locality.

3. WORKING FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE (see DPP pp. 24-25)

It is diocesan policy that every parish should be actively involved in some way in work for justice and peace. This could be co-ordinated by a group (e.g. Justice & Peace Group, Human Rights Group), but the whole parish should be involved as fully as possible.

4. COMMUNICATING THE GOOD NEWS (see DPP p. 25)

Every parish is to appoint a **Parish Communications Officer**. He or she will be responsible for pro-active contact with local media (especially local newspapers) in order to achieve coverage for 'good news' parish events. The Diocesan Communications Officer will organise training. When appropriate, a group of parishes may decide to share a Communications Officer.

5. ONE PARISH TOGETHER (see DPP pp. 9-10, 28)

A fundamental principle is that there are to be no 'priest-less' parishes in our diocese. However we organise our diocese in the future, developing lay leadership of local Catholic communities and enhancing the role played by permanent deacons, every community will be entrusted to the servant leadership of a priest appointed by the bishop as 'canonical pastor'.

Each parish is a network or 'cluster' of communities. Some parishes have more than one place of worship, and this will probably be the norm in the future with fewer priests. No matter how strong and distinctive those communities may be, each is a fully integral part of a single parish family served and led by its parish priest. No matter how many places of worship there are in a parish, the whole community should see the one parish church, after which the parish is called, as its centre. This understanding is reflected in the revised way of listing places of worship in the Diocesan Year Book (2005).

6. PARISHES WORKING TOGETHER (see DPP pp. 9, 26-27, 28-29, 63-64)

Our diocese is divided into parishes, each of which is a living cell of the body of the diocese. No parish can exist in self-sufficient isolation. Each is an integral part of the diocese, and needs to be open in welcome to other parishes. Collaboration among parishes is essential, not just because we need to but because it is part of what it means to be truly Catholic.

There is room for flexibility in the way we structure cooperation between parishes, and especially lay participation. In urban areas, the deanery will remain a valuable forum for lay people meeting and working together. In other areas, it may be better to focus on 'sub-deaneries' (clearly distinct areas of a deanery) or clusters of parishes. The best way forward needs to be decided locally. The deanery will remain a key structure for local coordination of both ordained and lay ministry (e.g. catechetics and youth work), led by the local Dean.

Within deaneries, and sometimes across deanery boundaries, two or more nearby parishes are 'clustered' to encourage the sharing of resources and closer collaboration, and to begin to prepare now for possible combination of such parishes in an imminent future with fewer priests.

Parishes in such 'clusters' are to examine how many Masses are really needed each weekend, and if possible to stagger Mass times so that neighbouring priests can 'supply' for each other when needed.

6. WORKING TOGETHER AS A DEANERY (see DPP pp. 27-28)

The deanery remains a key structure for strengthening the cooperation and 'communion' of local clergy and lay ministers.

The Dean is appointed by the bishop as his personal representative in an area of the diocese, and works closely with the bishop in coordinating the local ministry of priests, deacons and lay people. He has a key role in ensuring the gradual implementation of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, and especially of the formal policies contained in this document.

Clergy Deanery Meetings

In each deanery, there are regular meetings of the clergy, priests and deacons, both diocesan and religious, of that grouping of parishes. All are expected to attend meetings and participate as fully as possible in deanery life.

Deanery Coordinating Catechist,

Each deanery is to appoint a **Deanery Coordinating Catechist**, whose role is to support parish coordinating catechists and to contribute to the development of catechesis and adult formation in the diocese as a member of the **Commission for Evangelisation**.

Each deanery is also to appoint the following representatives to diocesan commissions:

- Both a clergy and a lay representative on the **Diocesan Youth Commission**. Their role is to help develop local youth work, and pro-actively to encourage and support parish involvement in diocesan youth events and activities.
- Both a clergy and a lay representative on the **Diocesan Commission for Dialogue and Unity**.
- A lay representative on the renewed **Diocesan Commission for Marriage and Family Life**.

There needs to be flexibility as to whether the deanery, 'sub-deanery' or parish cluster is the best setting for joint activities and events: e.g. adult formation and training, sacramental preparation (especially Confirmation & Marriage), youth work, sharing resources, days of recollection & retreats, social events.

The same flexibility is required in organising opportunities for lay participation in discussion and decision-making at deanery level. The Deanery Forum may work better in urban deaneries than rural ones. Elsewhere, such gatherings might better take place at 'sub-deanery' or cluster level. It is essential, however, that there be formal structures for such lay involvement within each deanery.

Each deanery is to organise an annual event with the presence of the Bishop.

7. DEVELOPING WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP (see DPP pp. 29-34)

It is diocesan policy that we develop different forms of lay leadership in every parish and across the diocese.

Every parish is to have a **Parish Coordinating Catechist**, working with the Deanery Coordinating Catechist to ensure the best possible catechesis, adult formation, sacramental preparation, etc.

8. INVOLVING LAY PEOPLE IN DECISION-MAKING (see DPP pp. 36-37)

Diocesan Council of Laity

A Diocesan Council of Laity has been established, with one lay representative from each canonical parish. Such a representative will usually be the lay chairperson of the Parish Pastoral Council or its equivalent, or that person's delegate. The Council meets twice a year with the Bishop to discuss, be consulted on and contribute to the planning of key aspects of the life and mission of the diocese.

Deanery Forum

There is to be a *forum* or *fora* for lay discussion and collaboration within every deanery. This could be (a) one *forum* for the whole deanery (especially in urban deaneries); (b) separate *fora* for parts of a deanery; (c) separate *fora* in more rural deaneries for clusters of parishes, although still feeding into a single deanery report of some kind on issues for discussion.

Parish Forum

It is diocesan policy that every parish have an established public *forum* of some kind to enable lay consultation and participation in parish pastoral life and planning. Parishes are left to organise what kind of arrangement is most appropriate, although this should be decided at an open meeting of the parish rather than by the clergy alone. The main options are an established Parish Pastoral Council and an open Parish-in-Council. This policy has now been laid out formally in our 'Diocesan Policy on Parish Structures for Lay Participation'.

9. RITE OF THE CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (see DPP p. 40)

It is diocesan policy that the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (sometimes called 'Journey in Faith') is the **normative process** for welcoming unbaptised adults as well as baptised adults seeking reception into full communion with the Catholic Church. The Rite allows for flexibility in special circumstances, but every parish or cluster of parishes should have an RCIA programme in place.

Unless there is a very strong pastoral reason why this should not be the case, initiation or reception should take place at the **Easter Vigil**.

Unless there are insuperable practical difficulties, all Catechumens and Candidates from across the diocese should attend the **Rite of Election** at St John's Cathedral on the afternoon of the First Sunday of Lent, with their priests, sponsors, families, friends and members of their parish communities

10. BAPTISING CHILDREN (see DPP pp. 41-43)

Welcome into the Church

Baptism always involves welcome into the community of the Church, and this communal aspect of baptism must always be celebrated in some way. Baptism can never be a private ritual simply for the family and friends of those being baptised.

Baptism Preparation

It is diocesan policy that every parish provide a full and adequate preparation programme for infant baptism, and that attendance be required for parents having their first child baptised, as well as for others when appropriate. Godparents should also attend when possible.

The canonical requirements should be fully respected which require for an infant to be baptised that there be 'a well-founded hope that the child will be brought up in the Catholic faith.' If such a hope is truly lacking, the baptism should be delayed until the parents are ready to take on the serious responsibilities involved in having their children baptised (Canon 868). This is why the proper preparation of parents for the baptism of their children is so essential.

Baptism in one's own parish community

'As a rule and unless a just reason suggests otherwise, an adult is to be baptised in his or her proper parish church, and an infant in the proper parish church of the parents' (Canon 857.2).

Godparents

The canonical requirements regarding the choice of godparents should be respected. A godparent represents the Catholic Church, and must therefore be a confirmed, practising Catholic aged 16 or above (Canon 874). Other committed Christians may be invited to be 'Christian Witnesses' at the baptism.

11. CONFIRMATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE (see DPP pp. 43-44)

It is diocesan policy that Confirmation will always be administered by the Bishop, except in danger of death, or when the faculty has been given to a priest to receive a person into Full Communion with the Catholic Church or to confirm for some other special reason.

Age for Confirmation

It is also diocesan policy that, except in the danger of death, Confirmation will be administered in secondary school Year 10 (the school year in which a young person reaches the age of 15) or above.

Confirmation Liturgy

All Confirmation Masses should be organised using the norms issued by the Bishop in July 2003. A copy is included in this folder.

12. THE EUCHARIST (see DPP pp. 44-50)

Number of Masses

Because of this community aspect of Sunday Mass, and our preparation for an imminent future with fewer priests, it is diocesan policy that there should only be as many places of worship and celebrations of Mass in each parish as are really needed rather than preferred. Priests need permission from the Bishop to say more than one Mass each day, and they may not celebrate more than three Masses on any day (with Sunday beginning on Saturday evening). See *Code of Canon Law*, canon 905.

Celebrations of the Word and Holy Communion

Only when the celebration of the Eucharist is impossible on a Sunday (either in the local church or somewhere reasonably near) can another form of celebration be used. In our diocese, with the current number of active and retired priests, a "Celebration of the Word and Holy Communion" should be used only in emergency (for example the sudden illness of the priest with no supply possible at such short notice). Permission must be sought first from either the Bishop or Vicar General. It should also be noted that Rome does not encourage the frequent use of such celebrations even on weekdays. The various ministries (leading the celebration, ministry of the Word, ministry of Holy Communion, etc) should be exercised by different people when coordinated by a lay person rather than a deacon.

First Holy Communion

It is diocesan policy that First Holy Communion should be received in primary school Year 3 (the school year in which a child reaches the age of 8) or above. A child's readiness for First Holy Communion will be decided by parents, child, priests and catechists together. It needs to be remembered that First Holy Communion is a rite of deeper initiation into the life and worship of the Church.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

In our diocese, anyone taking on such a ministry must be invited by their parish priest; attend both parish training and a diocesan commissioning day; and be commissioned by the Bishop (for one year, renewable on an annual basis by the parish priest). Anyone in School Year 10 and above who has been confirmed may be a minister.

13. ORDINATION (see DPP pp. 53-57)

Ordinations at the Cathedral

It is diocesan policy that all priestly and diaconal ordinations take place at the cathedral unless there is a very strong pastoral or personal reason for another venue. Any priest or deacon is ordained firstly for service of the diocese. A special celebration can later be held in the home parish of the person who has been ordained ('First Mass', etc).

Because of the essentially collegial nature of ordination, all the priests of the diocese are to be invited to every priestly ordination, and all deacons (and their wives) to every ordination to the permanent diaconate.

Ongoing renewal and formation of priests and deacons

All ordained ministers need ongoing spiritual renewal and formation throughout their time of service. This is not an optional extra, but a pastoral necessity (cf. Canon 279).

14. FINANCES (see DPP pp. 58-59)

It is diocesan policy that there be full openness and transparency about finances at every level (parish, diocese, etc).

Canon Law requires every parish to have a Finance Committee.

15. NEW CHURCHES (see DPP p. 61)

Any new or replacement churches to be built in the diocese will require the building to be large enough to accommodate the entire Mass attendance at a single Mass, with room for projected growth.

16. ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL (see DPP p. 9)

St John's Cathedral in Norwich is the Catholic cathedral for all of East Anglia, for every parish and every Catholic. It is our policy to develop throughout the diocese a sense of the cathedral being our Mother Church. More use will be made of the cathedral in diocesan life.

17. BUILDING BRIDGES (see DPP p. 25)

Our diocesan 'twinings' with the Apostolic Prefecture of Battambang in Cambodia, and the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, are integral to our diocesan life as we move 'Forward and Outward Together'. These links will be reviewed after five years in 2009.

18. PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST (see DPP pp. 3, 6, 20-26)

East Anglia is mission territory, and the Church of Christ is by nature missionary. Whatever else we do and develop in our diocese, our God-given mission to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to everyone in our region must remain our first priority.

It should not be presumed that the lack of a formal policy on a subject thereby indicates a lesser concern for that area of diocesan and parish life. This document is simply a bringing-together 'in brief' of the key policy statements included in the Diocesan Parish Plan. It may serve as a useful check-list for deans, parish priests, parish councils and other bodies.



Rt Rev Michael Evans
Bishop of East Anglia