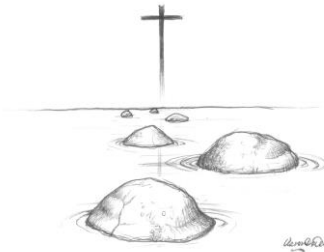


DIOCESAN LITURGY FORUM

Stepping Stones

A process of initial formation, discernment and ongoing support for those ministering with the dying and the bereaved in parishes.



'If one member suffers in the body of Christ which is the Church, all the members suffer with that member' (1 Corinthians 12:26). For this reason, those who are baptised into Christ and nourished at the same table of the Lord are responsible for one another. ... when a member of Christ's Body dies, the faithful are called to a ministry of consolation to those who have suffered the loss of one whom they love. Christian consolation is rooted in that hope that comes from faith in the saving death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christian hope faces the reality of death and the anguish of grief but trusts confidently that the power of sin and death has been vanquished by the risen Lord. The Church calls each member of Christ's Body – priest, deacon, lay-person – to participate in the ministry of consolation: to care for the dying, to pray for the dead, to comfort those who mourn.

Order of Christian Funerals a.8

Vision

A discernment journey into reflective ministry with the dying and the bereaved

Mission

The formation of lay ministers
through a process which invites and accompanies participants
in discerning their call to parish ministry with the dying and the bereaved
in the light of Catholic faith.

We Value

The dying and the bereaved ...

- the sacredness of all human life
- respect for the special needs of the dying and the bereaved

Reflective Ministry ...

- formation as an ongoing journey of encounter with the mystery of Christ in human experience
- discernment as an ongoing process of listening to God's call and responding, in conversation with the parish community and the *Stepping Stones* formation process and personnel
- relationships as a key dimension of formation for ministry:
 - between the parish community and those it invites to explore their call to ministry with the dying and the bereaved
 - between parish, participants and formation personnel

The missionary parish working together ...

- aware of the needs in its area
- calling and authorising its members to reach out to the dying and the bereaved
- collaborating through team ministry which builds on the strengths of different ministers
- sharing and celebrating faith around experiences of dying, death and bereavement

[cf. Theological principles of the DPP]

We understand ministry as

- Emerging from and grounded in relationship with Jesus
- Service – loving service of Christ and our brothers and sisters
- A response to a call and therefore different to volunteering
- Grounded in baptism and therefore not about 'helping Father'
- Exercised in response to a recognised need in the community
- Exercised in the name of the community
- A responsibility and accountability beyond those of all the baptised who are missionary disciples
- Always being discerned
- Transformative as one encounters Jesus in the people with whom one ministers
- Exercised collaboratively in the context of a team which together is graced with the wide variety of gifts and skills necessary for ministry with the dying and the bereaved

Ministry with the dying and the bereaved is a broad spectrum of ministries encompassing:

- Visiting/accompanying the dying
- praying with the dying: informally, taking Communion, Viaticum, Commendation of the dying
- prayers after death/ prayers for the dead: Prayers after Death, Gathering in the presence of the Body. Formally and informally
- ministry with/accompanying the bereaved: Initial contact; Liturgical Preparation – Vigil, Funeral (Liturgy or Mass), Committal.
- liturgical ministry: Lay Leadership; offering a reflection; liturgical ministries such as – setting up, assisting with the commendation, music, proclamation etc;
- post funeral visitation.
- memorial celebrations: individual; parish/regional.

We journey together

The *Stepping Stones* formation process has three main steps which unfold according to the needs and circumstances of the parish community.

Central to each step is both personal and communal discernment. Other opportunities can be incorporated into the process as may be helpful to the parish community and those discerning a call to ministry. Alternately some might be offered as part of ongoing formation for ministers.

Initial Formation Process

We Grieve

Focus	Grief
Aim	To assist participants in discerning their personal motivation and readiness for ministry with the dying and the bereaved through the telling of and reflection on their own story of grief.
Goals	<p>We <i>Grieve</i> seeks to support participants by inviting them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• explore and reflect on their own varied experiences of grief• develop their understanding of the nature of grief, loss and change.
Objectives	<p>Participants will be given the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore the relationship between change, loss, grief and behaviour• Use the metaphor of the seasons to reflect on change, loss and grief• Use a journal as a tool for reflection• Share ideas and thoughts with other group members• Reflect on grief reactions within the context of theoretical models including Worden's Key Tasks of Grieving• Reflect on change, loss and grief in the participant's own life• Reflect on change, loss and grief for others
Facilitator	Engaged by diocese through 'Good Grief'.
Structure and Delivery	<p>The <i>Seasons for Growth</i> program is used as the process for <i>We Grieve</i>. It involves two components.</p> <p>Component 1: A three-hour introductory session</p> <p>Component 2: organised to suit the community. Options include a two-day intensive or four shorter sessions.</p>
Dates and times	The date and time for each component is negotiated with the parish.
Venue	<p>The parish/regional community.</p> <p>Component 1 can function as a formation opportunity for all members of the community as well as those discerning their call to parish ministry with the dying and the bereaved. Some discerning that call may choose not to continue.</p> <p>Component 2 is only for those who are discerning their call to parish ministry with the dying and the bereaved.</p>
Resources and costs	Seasons for Growth Books. <i>We Grieve I</i> \$13. <i>We Grieve II</i> \$26. Facilitator costs split between parish/region with diocese. Promotional Flyers provided by Worship and Prayer Office

We Minister

Focus	Pastoral training and formation in the care of the dying and the bereaved
Aim	For the participants to develop their emerging identity and capacity as a pastoral visitor.
Goals	<p>We <i>Minister</i> seeks to support participants by inviting them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflect on their pastoral experiences of visiting the dying and the bereaved in their own parish• Develop a theology of ministry and pastoral care. (sickness, suffering and death)• Practice the skills of active listening, empathy, self-awareness and self-care
Objectives	<p>Participants will be given the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grow in knowledge and understanding of the pastoral role• Develop skills that will enable you to become a more effective pastoral carer• Deepen your awareness of each person's needs, hopes and resources• Become more aware of your values, attitudes and assumptions
Facilitator	Fr. Roger Zohrab/Elizabeth Lennan
Structure and Delivery	<p><i>Introductory Clinical Pastoral Education</i></p> <p>We <i>Minister</i> is completed by undertaking an <i>Introductory Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)</i> course run by the Hunter Centre for Clinical Pastoral Education and facilitated by its staff. This is a six-day program usually delivered over six weeks. The program is accredited and professionally recognised. It is an excellent foundation for all pastoral ministry and Christian life.</p> <p>The Introduction CPE will be followed by a Reflective Ministry Workshop which helps ground the CPE in parish ministry with the dying and the bereaved. (3 hours)</p>
Dates and times	Introductory CPE: as scheduled by the Hunter Centre for Clinical Pastoral Education or in some cases this can be organised specifically for parishes.
Venue	A suitable venue central to participating parishes
Costs	\$500 split between the parish/region and the Office of Worship and Prayer

We Pray Together

Focus	Prayer and liturgy in ministry with the dying and the bereaved as outlined in the <i>Order of Christian Funerals</i> .
Aim	To undertake a systematic exploration of the <i>Order of Christian Funerals</i> using a process of Mystagogical Reflection.
Goals	'We Pray Together' seeks to support participants by inviting them to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ through prayer, ritual, reflection and examination of the funeral rites• deepen their understanding of the Church's rites for the dying, deceased and the bereaved• begin to develop a theology of ministry and pastoral care. (sickness, suffering and death)• become familiar with the various liturgical ministries, especially that of the Lay Liturgical Leader• develop understandings central to working with families in the preparation of the Funeral Rites• discern their involvement in liturgical ministry in the light of their experience
Objectives	Participants will be given the opportunity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read and reflect on the General Introduction to the <i>Order of Christian Funerals</i> – theological, pastoral and liturgical vision.• Study:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Vigil and Related Rites and Prayers• The Funeral Liturgy• Rite of Committal• Discuss pastoral issues
Facilitator	Louise Gannon rsj and ...
Structure and Delivery	6 x 3.5 hours sessions. Process – Mystagogical reflection
Dates and times	Scheduled to suit participants
Venue	Suitable to participants and the process.
Resources	Order of Christian Funerals: probably a printed copy as the study edition is difficult to purchase.

Additional requirements

- Complete Diocesan Volunteer package
- Required Safeguarding Training
- Code of Conduct signed.
- Working With Children Check (WWCC)

Additional possibilities

- Parish workshop/conversation
- Site visits to a Funeral Home and Crematorium
- Conversation involving funeral director, clergy ...

Questions/issues

- Communication with and involvement of parish community.
- Formation and openness of the parish/regional community to their responsibility for this ministry
- Prayer for those discerning
- Relationship to existing parish teams
- Relationship to the parish/regional community
- Systems issues within the parish/region to support the ministry collaboratively
- Rites for the Pastoral Care of the Sick and the Dying
- Importance of ecclesial foundation in shaping and critiquing ministry
- ...