

ORDAINED LOCAL MINISTRY (‘OLM’)



INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

- **Locally appropriate**
- **Regionally based**
- **Nationally taught**



Criteria for Selection for OLM in The Church of Ireland

[approved by the House of Bishops]

PURPOSE

These criteria are intended for

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

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

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

- a recommendation
- not recommended
- a conditional recommendation

for a course of training.

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

CRITERIA

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

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

THE SELECTION PROCESS WILL TAKE THE FOLLOWING FORM

- First step:** This may be initiated by different people in a particular place:
- A person may feel called to be an OLM in a particular place.
 - The people in a particular place (parish, deanery or diocese) may identify someone who, as an OLM, would fruitfully serve in that place.
 - An incumbent or bishop may discern the need for an OLM in a particular parish or locality.

The **next step** is to discuss the initial motivation and idea with the bishop.

The bishop will then instigate a review, by the Diocesan Director of Ordinands (DDO), of ministry in the parish or locality being considered for the ministry of an OLM. This will be followed by a diocesan review.

If the diocesan review is positive, the candidate begins or continues the process of discernment of the individual's suitability and sense of vocation in relation to the context for which s/he is being recommended for training.

If the DDO is satisfied, then the candidate meets the Bishop who may sponsor the candidate for selection. This will be followed by a psychological assessment.

Selection takes place in each diocese and the local selection panel will include:

- An archdeacon from the diocese
- A clergyperson from the diocese
- Two lay people from the diocese with appropriate expertise
- Two external representatives

The Local Selection Panel will make a report to the bishop who will then reflect on the report and communicates his or her decision.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT
THE DIOCESAN DIRECTOR OF ORDINANDS**
