

THE MINISTRY OF CATECHIST: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHY IS THE DIOCESE OF KILLALOE PROMOTING THE MINISTRY OF CATECHIST?

We have come through a period in our churches whereby the teaching role of the church was conducted mainly by priests and teachers in our primary and secondary schools. While this may have been effective of its time, it was not how the Second Vatican Council imagined faith communities would be animated to grow in understanding of their faith. The Diocese of Killaloe is commissioning the Ministry of Catechist so that there will be trained people in our Christian Communities, with the necessary skills to break open the Word of God and help unfold the churches teaching on many facets of parish and pastoral area life. From the earliest times Jesus envisaged that we would work together, he even sent his disciples out in pairs. The diocese is promoting this ministry in an effort to reawaken the call we all received at baptism to engage the reality of us being “priest, prophet and king”. This ministry training programme is also a response to Pope Francis’ call for a Synodal Church and for his call for the development and reimagining of the role of catechist. We are all called to share in the task of spreading the Good News of the Gospel. All the baptised are mandated to be agents of this Good News for as Jesus reminded us to “*Go teach all nations...*”

WHO CAN APPLY FOR THE MINISTRY OF CATECHIST?

This Ministry is open to any adult member of the Christian Community who has a desire to help animate the faith lives of the people in a parish or pastoral area. While it maybe of particular interest to those already involved in a teaching, or instruction roles in their parish or pastoral area, it is also open to those are enquiring about their faith and would love to facilitate others on that same journey. This is not a ministry of having to know it all, but one of accompanying people in their search for greater understanding and knowledge of their faith.

WHAT DOES A CATECHIST DO?

The role of a diocesan catechist is to create opportunities for people to explore their faith and to assist various faith development programmes both at parish and pastoral area level. This is especially evident around moments of preparation for the Sacraments. It is envisaged that Catechists will be involved in some of the following areas:

- Baptismal Programmes: enabling parents into a greater understanding of their own faith and the commitments they make when they present their child for baptism.
- Sacramental preparation: enabling parent’s groups to be involved in the sacramental programmes being run in their parish or pastoral area.
- Programmes with young people post reception of the sacraments.
- Adult faith formation programmes: facilitating and organising such programmes.,
- Scripture programmes enabling people to a greater engagement with the Word of God.
- Teaching people how to pray.
- Faith formation Programmes – organising and delivery.
- Helping the diocese in the role out of different programmes or initiatives that require a teaching or facilitation component.
- Facilitating people to a deeper or new understanding of their faith in an ever-changing world.

HOW MIGHT I BE RECEIVED AS A CATECHIST?

From our experience to date, Catechists have been received very warmly. Given that you will be ministering as part of a wider team of ministers you will be supported. Your ministry will be answering real faith questions that people are grappling with, so any insight you can enable them to have will be warmly welcomed. Because this ministry is situated within the wider ministry of the diocese you will be supported by fellow Catechists, the Bishop and the Priest of the diocese.

WILL I BE WORKING ON MY OWN IF I TRAIN FOR THIS NEW MINISTRY?

As mentioned earlier nobody should be ministering alone. Within the structures of the diocese, you will be working as part of the Pastoral Ministry Team in your pastoral area. The Pastoral Ministry Team meets regularly to plan and support each other in their ministry. You will also have the help and support of your fellow catechists who meet regularly to reflect on their ministry, share ideas and to pray together.

WHEN IS THE TRAINING FOR THIS NEW MINISTRY BEGINNING?

Training for the Ministry of Catechist will begin in the Autumn. The first number of months will be a period of exploration, reflection and discernment. This is seen as an opportunity for both the person applying for the ministry and the Diocese to mutually discern if this ministry is a good fit. It is hoped that the academic component will commence in February 2025.

WHAT WILL I BE STUDYING AND REFLECTING ON?

In the course of this programme the following themes will be explored:

- Personal and faith Development.
- Prayer & Spirituality.
- Liturgy and leading people in prayer.
- Scripture.
- Theology for Ministry.
- Understanding Today's Cultural Context.
- Skills for the Ministry of Pastoral Care.
- Pastoral Placements.

WILL THE COURSE BE ACCREDITED?

The academic component of the programme is accredited by Mary Immaculate College Limerick as a Level 6 Certificate in Pastoral Ministry.

WHAT KIND OF COMMITMENT IS EXPECTED FROM MINISTERS OF PASTORAL

This is a volunteer role so expectations need to be managed carefully. On completion of this programme Catechists will be formally commissioned by the Bishop to a Pastoral Area to work alongside fellow Ministers of Pastoral Care and the priests in that Pastoral Area. Before you commence ministry, areas of responsibility which are feasible given persons availability, will be agreed. Catechists that are commissioned by the diocese will be invited to commit initially for a period of three to five years. While there will be interim reviews, at the end of your period of commitment, both the Catechist and the Diocese will reflect on their experience and on the possibility of extending the commitment for another period of time.

WHAT ABOUT COST?

All participants who are accepted onto the programme will have their course costs covered by both their sponsoring Pastoral Area and the Diocese of Killaloe.

IS THERE RENUMERATION FOR THIS MINISTRY

This is a voluntary role and as such you will not be remunerated.