

**REVIEW OF THE ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS FOR PASTORAL
ASSOCIATES AND LAY CHAPLAINS WITHIN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF
MELBOURNE**

OCTOBER 2011

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Executive Summary

This assessment of the accreditation and supervision of pastoral associates and lay chaplains comes at a point seven years after the establishment of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation. The review has been carried out within the context of the expected major growth of the population of the Greater Melbourne Area, the resultant growth in the number of Catholics within the Archdiocese of Melbourne and an increase in the already very large demands upon the Church's parish, educational, health and social welfare services.

Each Diocese in Australia was invited to provide material to inform this Review. All priests and pastoral associates were invited by Bishop T Costelloe SDB, Chair of the Advisory Board for the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation, to make a submission to the Review in response to four key questions, or on any other matter relevant to the focus of the Review. A range of individual interviews as well as group consultations were held, a wide range of both historical and theological material consulted, and a theological paper concerning lay ecclesial ministry was specifically prepared as part of the Review.

In the light of this evidence, the Review makes the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1

That the expected population growth in Melbourne in the next fifteen years will result not only in an increase in the Catholic population, but an increased call upon the Church's services in parishes. These developments point to the need in the Archdiocese for roles to assist parish priests under their supervision in a variety of parish configurations. There will continue to be the need for the role of *Pastoral Associate*. But as parishes expand, and the calls upon parishes grow, the Review recommends that the position of *Senior Pastoral Associate* be established, to replace the Pastoral Associate Grade 2 role as needed. Such a person would, under the supervision of the parish priest, and excluding those matters that are the exclusive domain of priests, act upon his behalf when he is not present.

Recommendation 2

That a program for the selection of *Pastoral Associates* be developed within the Archdiocese. This program should involve aspirants in several months of mentorship under an experienced Pastoral Associate as well as a formal assessment of their abilities in interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution, their readiness to commit to a parish ministry role and their personality dispositions. It is further recommended that the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation coordinate all aspects of the selection program.

Recommendation 3

That as part of this selection program, the use of an assessment panel to interview prospective candidates for the purpose of initial and ongoing accreditation for any lay ecclesial ministerial position be continued. Membership of this panel, Parish Priest, staff member of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation, an experienced person from Catholic social services sector and a lay person with pastoral experience in a Catholic setting, should be approved by the Archbishop.

Recommendation 4

That the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation form partnerships with Catholic Theological College, the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, Australian Catholic University and Yarra Theological Union towards the offering of a tailor-made Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies as the entry level qualification for lay ecclesial ministers, pastoral associates, lay chaplains and others. That as a consequence, the Certificate course in Foundations for Pastoral Ministry currently offered by the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation should be phased out.

Recommendation 5

That there be within the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation, a Secretariat for Lay Ecclesial Ministry to be both a reference point for lay ecclesial ministers and to determine, oversee and coordinate all matters associated with the formation, accreditation, the provision of supervision, ongoing support and pastoral care for lay ecclesial ministers, including lay Pastoral Associates, lay Chaplains and others, within the Archdiocese.

Recommendation 6

That the current model of group supervision be used for all lay ecclesial ministers with the proviso that all supervisors be thoroughly briefed concerning the roles of the persons within the supervision groups, and the expectations of supervision sessions, and that for new lay ecclesial ministers four individual supervision sessions be provided prior to their participating in group supervision. It is further recommended that the Secretariat for Lay Ecclesial Ministry partner with the Catholic Theological College to establish a team of supervisors for the supervision of pastoral associates. The organisational support and oversight of such a supervision team would be the task of the Secretariat.

Recommendation 7

That all pastoral training programs contain a strong foundation in sacramental theology.

Recommendation 8

That the facilitation of the work of parish pastoral associates, chaplains and other lay ecclesial ministers working within parishes and Catholic institutions become the responsibility of the proposed Secretariat for Lay Ecclesial Ministry with the aim of coordinating and supporting persons in these roles in the service of a growing population of Catholics, presenting increased demands upon the Church's services.

1.0 Introduction

In May this year the Church celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the *Encyclical on Christianity and Social Progress*, (*Mater et Magistra*), given by Blessed John XXIII to the Church on 15 May 1961. He wrote as follows:

“The era in which we live is in the grip of deadly errors; it is torn by deep disorders. But it is also an era which offers to those who work with the Church immense possibilities in the field of the apostolate. And therein lies our hope.....Our concern is with the doctrine of the Catholic and Apostolic Church. She is the Mother and Teacher of all nations. Her light illumines, enkindles and enflames. No age but hears her warning voice, vibrant with heavenly wisdom. She is ever powerful to offer suitable, effective remedies for the increasing needs of men, and the sorrows and anxieties of this present life.”¹

In the opening paragraphs of this Encyclical Blessed John XXIII speaks of the work of the Church in these words:

“...though the Church's first care must be for souls, how can she sanctify them and make them share the gifts of heaven, she concerns herself too with the exigencies of man's daily life, with his livelihood and education, and his general, temporal welfare and prosperity....Small wonder, then, that the Catholic Church, in fulfillment of his commandment, relies not merely upon her teaching to hold aloft the torch of charity, but also upon her widespread example”.²

In July 2009 the Most Reverend L Tomlinson, Bishop of the Archdiocese of Melbourne, wrote to the Director of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation³, Brother Mark O'Connor FMS, indicating that the Bishops of the Province had agreed, firstly, on the coordination of health and welfare services and their transfer to Catholic Care. Secondly, the Bishops agreed that the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation would assume accreditation responsibility for those involved in lay chaplaincy services, as it does for Pastoral Associates. Brother O'Connor was asked to establish an accreditation program for those involved in lay chaplaincy services.

In January 2011 the Reviewer was provided with a detailed briefing concerning a project to review the accreditation and supervision arrangements for pastoral associates and chaplains. The Reviewer met with the Most Reverend T Costelloe SDB on 1 February 2011 at which meeting it was agreed that the Review would be a single-person Review reporting directly to Bishop Costelloe⁴.

2.0 Process of the Review

In response to this briefing, the Reviewer proposed to Bishop T Costelloe, the parameters of an investigation into the accreditation and supervision arrangements for both Pastoral Associates and Lay Chaplains within the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Key questions

This investigation is to focus upon a small number of key questions, designed to gather information about current accreditation and supervision arrangements and to elicit opinions concerning possible future arrangements about both processes.

¹ Pope John XXIII (1961) *Mater et Magistra – Encyclical on Christianity and Social Progress*, Section 260; accessed at www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_j_xxiii_enc-150561_mater_en_html

² *Ibid.* Sections 3 and 6.

³ The Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation is referred to as “the AOFÉ” within the body of the Report.

⁴ The Review was conducted by Emeritus Professor P G Carpenter and edited by Ms Cathy Jenkins, Deputy Principal, Genazzano College.

The key questions are set out below.⁵

- What are the most suitable methods for the accreditation of Pastoral Associates and lay Chaplains in the Archdiocese of Melbourne?
- What are the optimum arrangements for supervision of Pastoral Associates and Chaplains in the Archdiocese of Melbourne
- How can the Chaplaincy services offered by various Archdiocesan agencies be integrated?
- What role should the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation play in the accreditation and supervision of lay Chaplains and Pastoral Associates and in the integration of chaplaincy services across the Archdiocese?
- Are there other issues concerning the accreditation and supervision of Chaplains and Pastoral Associates?

Approach

The Review was conducted in a number of phases:

- A. Preparation – understanding the context and background of the Review
- B. Data collection – the selection and deployment of a variety of research methods.
- C. Analysis of the data collected
- D. Development of a Draft Report.

Data collection methods

A variety of research methods were employed:

1. A letter to each Diocese from Bishop Costelloe inviting them to make a submission to the investigation by responding to its key questions.
2. A letter from Bishop Costelloe to all Pastoral Associates in the Archdiocese providing them with the key questions and inviting them to make a written submission to the investigation.
3. A letter from Bishop Costelloe to all Priests in the Archdiocese providing them with the key questions and inviting them to make a submission to the investigation.
4. A meeting between the Reviewer and Pastoral Associates within each of the four regions in the Archdiocese in June 2011. Some fifty Pastoral Associates were involved in these consultations.
5. Twenty-four individual interviews across a wide range of portfolios were also held. The persons interviewed are listed in an Appendix.
6. A short theological paper on the role of Pastoral Associates and lay Chaplains, prepared by Bishop Costelloe.

⁵ Question 5 has been included as a means to gather additional information and to allow respondents to range over a number of issues in their responses.

Analysis will be performed to identify both common and divergent patterns and themes within and across the different groups and individuals contacted as part of the study. The analysis will also consider the circumstances under which these patterns occur and if the relationships between themes change under different circumstances.⁶ As Dixon and his colleagues (2007) indicate, the use of such qualitative methods allow one “to listen in depth to the varied and complex stories of participants and obtain very rich, detailed data.....”.⁷

The Report of the investigation will offer conclusions and recommendations for consideration.

3.0 Context of the Review

In keeping with the direction set by Archbishop D J Hart in launching the program *Contemplate – Launch Out* the Review was guided by reference to the Apostolic Letter *At the Beginning of the New Millennium*, (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*) given by Pope John Paul II at the close of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000.

Thus:

“It is above all in the actual situation of each local church that the mystery of the one People of God takes the particular form that fits it to each individual context and culture”.⁸

And again:

“.....the programme of the Gospel must continue to take root, as it has always done, in the life of the Church everywhere. It is *in the local Churches* that the specific features of a detailed pastoral plan can be identified - goals and methods, formation and enrichment of the people involved, the search for the necessary resources – which will enable the proclamation of Christ to reach people, mould communities, and have a deep and incisive influence in bringing Gospel values to bear in society and culture”.⁹

In addition, the Review has been guided by the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, *The Church in Oceania (Ecclesia in Oceania)* as follows:

“From the very beginning of the Church in this vast region, lay people have contributed to her growth and mission in many different ways; and they continue to do so through their involvement in various forms of service, especially in parishes as catechists, instructors in sacramental preparation, youth work, leadership of small groups and communities”.¹⁰

Within the Archdiocese of Melbourne separate reports in the past decade have stressed the key role that Pastoral Associates have to play in the wellbeing and growth of parish life. In their Report to the then Archbishop of Melbourne, Archbishop Pell, the Priests Deployment Committee, chaired by Father M. Cooney, had this to say:

“The Committee recommends that particularly at this stage and in the instances of partnership and cluster, the roles of Pastoral Associate and Parish Pastoral Council be promoted and authorized as significant participants in the leadership of parish life.....the Committee reiterates its recommendation

⁶ G W Ryan and H R Bernard (2003) “Techniques to identify themes” *Field Methods*, Volume 15, Number 1, 85-109.

⁷ R Dixon, S Bond, K Engerbretson, R Rymarz, B Cussen and K Wright (2007) *Catholics who have stopped attending Mass*. Final Report February 2007. Australian Catholic Bishop’ Conference, Pastoral Research Office, Page 9.

⁸ John Paul II (2001) *At the Beginning of the New Millennium (Novo Millennio Ineunte)*, Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls Publications, Australian Edition first published February 2001, no. 3.

⁹ John Paul II (2001) *At the Beginning of the New Millennium (Novo Millennio Ineunte)*, Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls Publications, Australian Edition first published February 2001, no. 29. (Italics as in original).

¹⁰ John Paul II (2001) *The Church in Oceania (Ecclesia in Oceania)* Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls Publications, Australian Edition first published in November 2001, no. 43.

that the roles of Pastoral Associate, Parish Pastoral Council, and others involved in various areas of parish ministry, are to be recognised and promoted.”¹¹

The Committee for Mission established by Archbishop D. Hart, and chaired by Bishop C. Prowse, reported on its tasks including “recommending ways of forming God’s people for leadership and mission”.¹² Among its recommendations to build, what it termed “a culture of formation” within the Archdiocese was the following:

“For Pastoral Associates and Lay Leaders:

- That there be available formal education courses offering theological studies, pastoral praxis and spiritual formation at foundational level and for ongoing formation of lay leaders especially in evangelisation”¹³

This ongoing formation of lay leaders was one of the foci of the Strategic Working Group’s Report, *Journey Towards the Future Parish*¹⁴, to Archbishop D. Hart in 2006.

This Review focuses upon the examination of the accreditation or supervision arrangements for Pastoral Associates and Lay Chaplains in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

From data collected in the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ *Census of the Population and Housing*, Dixon and his associates (2008) at the Pastoral Research Office of the Australian Catholic Bishops’ Conference have produced a detailed *Diocesan Social Profile*¹⁵ of the Archdiocese of Melbourne, including changes over time in Mass attendance by Catholics in the Archdiocese and the numbers of people identifying themselves as Catholics. The Catholic Church in Australia faces the current societal changes posed by increased secularization, consumerism and the disintegration of the traditional family structure. Dixon has analysed the challenging trends faced by the Church in Australia. Mass attendance has declined to low levels, particularly among Catholics in their twenties and early thirties¹⁶.

Yet the Church is experiencing an increased demand for its services in parishes, in health, social welfare and education. The Review was told that it is essential that the Church guarantees the authenticity of those who minister to others, speak in the name of the Church in a secular world and, further, must do so in a consistent and authentic way. Such ministers need both a mature faith and sound theological training.

The Catholic population of the Archdiocese can be expected to grow in the next fifteen years. Using its most conservative assumptions¹⁷, the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ projected population for Melbourne in 2026 is 4,861,700 up from the observed 2006 Melbourne population of 3,743,000, a growth of 1.1 million people of whom it can be assumed a proportion will be Catholics, bringing further demands upon Catholic services.

¹¹ Priests Deployment Committee (Rev. M. Cooney, Chairman) (1998) *Final Report to the Archbishop and Consultors*. Melbourne: Archdiocese of Melbourne, Page 14.

¹² Committee for Mission (Chairman Bishop C. Prowse) (2003) *Draft Report to the Archbishop of Melbourne*.

¹³ Op. cit. Page 7.

¹⁴ Strategic Working Group (2006) *Journey Towards the Future Parish*. Report to Archbishop Hart.

Strategic Working Group for Parishes (2005) *Discussion Paper for the Senate of Priests*. 11 October, 2005

¹⁵ Australian Catholic Bishops’ Conference (2008) *Diocesan Social Profile Based upon the 2006 Australian Census: Archdiocese of Melbourne*.

¹⁶ R. E. Dixon (2005) *The Catholic Community in Australia*. Adelaide: Openbooks.

R. E. Dixon, E., Kuncinunas and S. Reid, ((2008) *Mass attendance in Australia: A Report based upon results from the National Count of attendance, the National Church Life Survey and the Australian Census*. Melbourne: Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Pastoral Projects Office.

¹⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008) *Population Projections, Australia, 2006 to 2101*. Catalogue Number 3222.0. Accessed at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@nsf/mf/3220.0> . The assumptions are: a fertility rate of 1.6, net overseas migration to Australia of 140,000, and life expectancy for females of 88 years and males of 85 years.

Against this background, the Review examined the official *Directory of the Catholic Church in Australia 2010-2011* to gauge the number of Pastoral Associates and other lay ministers within parishes for each diocese in Australia. The results of this analysis, tabled below in separate panels by Province, are part of the context of the Review. Highlighted in these data are the marked differences between Dioceses,¹⁸ not only in the numbers of “pastoral associates”¹⁹ but in the variety of other pastoral ministries exercised in parishes across Australia.

Table 1 – Pastoral Associates²⁰ and Others in Pastoral Roles, Ecclesiastical Divisions, Australia, 2010²¹.

Panel A: Province of Sydney

Diocese	Number of Parishes ²²	Catholic Population ²³	Pastoral Associates and Other in Pastoral Roles, Ecclesiastical Divisions
Sydney	138	576,606	Pastoral Associate (2)
Armidale	25	44,266	
Bathurst	19	66,932	
Broken Bay	32	212,346	
Lismore	24	108,173	
Maitland-Newcastle	42	153,744	Parish Pastoral Coordinator (2) Sacramental Coordinator (1)
Parramatta	49	307,685	
Wagga Wagga	31	63,218	
Wilcannia-Forbes	20	33,423	Parish Pastoral Coordinator (1)
Wollongong	31	178,892	

¹⁸ It is recognised that the numbers of persons in each category may have changed since 30 June 2011.

¹⁹ The Review notes that the term “pastoral associate” is used in a variety of ways. One Episcopal submission to the Review noted that there is “no common standard” for pastoral associates across dioceses in Australia.

²⁰ The Review was advised that some Dioceses may not record numbers of “Pastoral Associates” within the Directory.

²¹ National Council of Priests of Australia (2010) *The Official Directory of the Catholic Church in Australia: July 2010 – June 2011*. Belmont, Victoria: National Council of Priests of Australia published with the authority of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

²² National Council of Priests of Australia (2010) *The Official Directory of the Catholic Church in Australia: July 2010 – June 2011*. Belmont, Victoria: National Council of Priests of Australia published with the authority of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Page 768.

²³ Figures are from the 2006 Census of the Population and quoted in National Council of Priests of Australia (2010) *The Official Directory of the Catholic Church in Australia: July 2010 – June 2011*. Belmont, Victoria: National Council of Priests of Australia published with the authority of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Page 768.

Panel B: Provinces of Canberra – Goulburn, Melbourne, Hobart and Adelaide

Diocese	Number of Parishes	Catholic Population	Pastoral Associates and Other in Pastoral Roles, Ecclesiastical Divisions
Canberra - Goulburn	55	106,082	Pastoral Associates 7 Parish Pastoral Coordinator (4) Community Leader (4) Liturgy Coordinator (1) Sacramental Coordinator (1) Pastoral care assistant (1)
Melbourne	219	1,057,058	Pastoral Associate (130) Pastoral Leader/Director (8) Parish Pastoral Coordinator (1) Liturgy Coordinator (1) Sacramental Coordinator (3) Pastoral Care Assistant (3) Baptism Coordinator (1) Ministry Coordinator (1) Faith/Pastoral Formator (1) Parish Development (1)
Ballarat	52	98,954	Pastoral Associate (8) Pastoral Leader/Director (2) Parish Pastoral Coordinator (3)
Sale	26	103,617	Pastoral Associate (12)
Sandhurst	40	90,199	Pastoral Associate (14)
Hobart	24	87,755	Pastoral Associates (10)
Adelaide	64	277,251	Pastoral Associate (23) Pastoral Leader/Director (6) Sacramental Coordinator (2) Pastoral Care Coordinator (1) Faith Pastoral Formators (3) Parish Religious Education Coordinator (1)
Darwin	14	40,783	
Port Pirie	22	27,174	Pastoral Associates (6)

Panel C: Province of Perth

Diocese	Number of Parishes	Catholic Population	Pastoral Associates and Other in Pastoral Roles, Ecclesiastical Divisions
Perth	107	378,974	Pastoral Associate (12)
Broome	9	8,291	Pastoral Associate (2) Family Care Coordinator (2)
Bunbury	27	53,622	Pastoral Associate (1)
Geraldton	16	23,004	Pastoral Associate (5)

Panel D: Province of Brisbane

Diocese	Number of Parishes	Catholic Population	Pastoral Associates and Other in Pastoral Roles, Ecclesiastical Divisions
Brisbane	103	645,435	Pastoral Associate (18) Pastoral Leader/Director (1) Parish Pastoral Coordinator (1) Community Leader (1) Sacrament Coordinator (3) Pastoral Care Assistant/Worker (1)
Cairns	24	57,144	Pastoral Leader/Director (2)
Rockhampton	31	97,846	Pastoral Associate (4) Parish Pastoral Coordinator (5)
Toowoomba	35	6,861	Pastoral Associate (3) Pastoral Leader/Director (3)
Townsville	26	72,952	Pastoral Associate (2) Pastoral Leader/Director (2) Pastoral Care/Assistant Worker (1)

The panels of Table 1 highlight, firstly, the variety of lay ministerial roles in parishes across the Catholic dioceses in Australia²⁴. Secondly, the diocese with by far the largest number of Pastoral Associates is the Archdiocese of Melbourne with 130 Pastoral Associates²⁵ working across the Archdiocese's 219 parishes serving a Catholic population of 1,000,000+.

The Review is drawn to the conclusion that the presence of pastoral associates in any diocese is largely due to Episcopal vision and Parish Priest decisions and the presence or absence of parish or diocesan resources.

4.0 Lay Ecclesial Ministers

Many lay people²⁶ undertake various roles on a voluntary basis in the ministry of the Church – for example, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, readers, cantors and choir members, collection counters, catechists, pastoral council members, visitors to the sick and needy, and those in sacramental preparation, youth ministry and ministry to people with disabilities. Such volunteers speak of their “ministries” within their parish. At the parish level such ministries require coordination and leadership. Pastoral Associates, who express a sense of vocational calling to their role, often provide for this coordination, ever more needed as the pastoral demands upon parishes increase. It was pointed out to the Review that the role of Pastoral Associate as an identity within parish ministry needs to be articulated. This is addressed by the theological paper that has been prepared as part of the Review. The Vatican Council *Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People*²⁷ highlights the role of the laity in the parish as follows:

²⁴ Within the Eastern Catholic diocese and eparchy no pastoral associates are listed in any parish.

²⁵ Diocesan data reveal that at least 106 of these Pastoral Associates are fully accredited; some 61 are members of the Association of Pastoral Associates.

²⁶ The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (n897, Page 237) defines the term ‘laity’ “to mean all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state approved by the Church. That is, the faithful, who by Baptism are incorporated into Christ and integrated into the People of God, and made sharers in their particular way in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ and have their own part to play in the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world”. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994) Homebush, NSW, St Pauls.

²⁷ Second Vatican Council (1965) *Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People (Apostolicam Actuositatem)*. In A Flannery (editor) (1996) *Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*. New Revised Edition. Northport, NY: Costello Publishing, n10, Page 777 – 778 and n 24, Page 790.

“Participators in the function of Christ, priest, prophet and king, the laity have an active part of their own in the life and action of the Church. Their actions within the Church communities are so necessary that without it the apostolate of the pastors will frequently be unable to obtain its full effect.....

The parish offers an outstanding example of community apostolate, for it gathers into a unity all the human diversities that are found there and inserts them into the universality of the Church. The laity should develop the habit of working in the parish in close union with their priests.....

The laity will continuously cultivate the ‘feeling for the diocese’, of which the parish is a kind of cell; they will be always ready on the invitation of their bishop to make their own contribution to diocesan undertaking.....

Finally, the hierarchy entrusts the laity with certain charges more closely associated with the duties of pastors: in the teaching of Christian doctrine, for example, in certain liturgical actions, in the care of souls.”

In the section “Participation in Christ’s kingly office” the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* notes as follows²⁸:

“The laity can also feel called, or in fact be called, to cooperate with their pastors in the service of the ecclesiastical community, for the sake of its growth and life. This can be done through the exercise of different kinds of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord has been pleased to bestow on them”.

Within this large group, as the *Statement* developed by the Committee on the Laity of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops²⁹ highlights, is a smaller group of people who are properly referred to as “*lay ecclesial ministers*” and their service as “*lay ecclesial ministry*”.³⁰ Such ecclesial service is characterized by:

- Authorisation of the bishop to serve publicly in the local church;
- Leadership in a particular area of ministry;
- Close mutual collaboration with the pastoral ministry of bishops, priests and deacons; and
- Preparation and formation appropriate to the assigned level of responsibilities.

²⁸ *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994) Homebush, NSW, St Pauls, n 910, Page 240.

See also John Paul II (1988) *On the Laity* (Christifideles Laici). Accessed at <http://www.catholicculture.org/catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?id=5482>. Chapter 1.

²⁹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2005) *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord – A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*: Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Pages 10-13.

³⁰ The Review characterises both Pastoral Associates and Lay Chaplains as “lay ecclesial ministers”.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops then defines³¹ certain “key realities” which are reflected by the term “*lay ecclesial ministry*”. They note that the ministry is carried out by *lay people* and that its sacramental basis is the Sacraments of Initiation. The ministry is *ecclesial* for the following reasons:

1. It has a place within the community of the Church, whose mission it serves; and
2. It is submitted to the discernment, authorisation and supervision of the bishop.

It is *ministry* because it is a participation in the “threefold ministry of Christ”.³²

Recently in opening the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome, on 26 May 2009, Pope Benedict XVI³³ spoke in these terms:

“In the first place we must renew our efforts for a formation which is more attentive and focused on the vision of the Church, of which I spoke and this should be both on the part of priests as well as of religious and lay people to understand even better what this Church is, this People of God in the Body of Christ. At the same time, it is necessary to improve pastoral structures in such a way that the co-responsibility of all the members of the People of God in their entirety is gradually promoted, with respect for vocations and for the respective roles of the consecrated and of lay people. This demands a change in mindset, particularly concerning lay people. They must no longer be viewed as “collaborators” of the clergy but truly recognised as “co-responsible”, for the Church’s being and action, thereby fostering the consolidation of a mature and committed laity. This common awareness of being Church of all the baptized in no way diminishes the responsibility of parish priests. It is precisely your task, dear parish priests, to nurture the spiritual and apostolic growth of those who are already committed to working hard in parishes. They form the core of the community that will act as a leaven for the others”.

4.1 Parish Pastoral Roles

Establishing particular pastoral roles within parishes must be based upon a number of fundamental principles.

For example, the Review received advice that as a community of the faithful, stably established within a Diocese, a parish has a legitimate autonomy, while remaining part of the particular Church of the Diocese. Its pastoral care is entrusted to a Parish Priest, under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop, who is responsible for promoting, directing, and coordinating pastoral action in the Diocese.

Secondly, as the theological paper accompanying the Review states;

“Because the ordained minister (bishop or priest) is both sacramentally empowered and, in consequence of this, canonically assigned to be the “living and effective sign” of the presence of Christ to his people as their head and shepherd, the leadership and governance of the community of faith is entrusted to him. It is important to see that this is first and foremost a theological truth which subsequently finds expression in the Code of Canon Law. There it is made clear that the pastoral care of a parish community, and of all the apostolic works undertaken by that community, must be entrusted to the care and oversight of a priest

³¹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2005) *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord – A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*: Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Pages 10-13.

³² The Review received advice from the Bishops Commission for Church Ministry that the latest version of the Mandate of the Bishops Commission for Church Ministry was approved in 2009. As part of this Mandate is the addition of the Mandate for the Australian Catholic Council for Lay Pastoral Ministry, related to the work of the Australian Catholic Bishops Commission, was included in May 2011.

³³ Pope Benedict XVI (2009) Opening of the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome on the theme “*Church Membership and Co-Responsibility*” Basilica of Saint John Lateran, 26 May 2009. Accessed at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2009/may/documents/hf-ben-xvi-spe_20090526_convergno_diocese-rm_en.html

(or in the case of a diocese, of a bishop).³⁴ This is the case even in those situations where it is not possible for a parish community to have a resident priest. If a lay person (including a religious sister or brother) is entrusted with the care of a local community, it will always be under the pastoral care and supervision of a priest.³⁵ This is a canonical requirement because it is first a theological requirement. It cannot be otherwise if the ordained ministry “sacramentalises” the headship of Christ in his Church.”

The vision in the Archdiocese of Melbourne is that every parish, included amalgamated, twinned or clustered parishes, will be under the supervision of a parish priest. Mention has already been made in the Report that the demands on Catholic parishes, social services, education and health services are growing. With the expected significant population growth in the Melbourne metropolitan area such demand is likely to increase even further. The theological paper underpinning the Review has this to say:

“It is a remarkable feature of our contemporary Church that many people who are not ordained discern a vocation from God to work formally in what might be called the internal life of the Church. Some do soon a part-time basis and many do soon a voluntary basis. There are also many for whom their vocation becomes their profession. They are employed, either full-time or part-time, as parish managers, parish Pastoral Associates, catechists, or in some other role. It is their task and their privilege to work in close collaboration with the proper pastor of the parish, helping him to fulfil his role as the living sign of Christ’s presence to his people as their head and shepherd. Depending on local circumstances they will assist him in his decision-making and support him in his ministry. Ideally they will form a partnership or team with him and their expertise, their pastoral gifts, their lived experience and their wisdom will be an invaluable contribution to the life and mission of the parish community. Ideally too the parish priest will recognise the rich potential that such a team of people, working collaboratively together, can bring to the parish community. A deep sense of shared responsibility for the life of the parish will emerge³⁶ as the parish leadership team, gathered around the priest as the living sign of the presence of the Good Shepherd, works together to enable every member of the parish to live out the fullness of their baptismal commitment.”

In official statements provided to the Review several Dioceses have sought to define the role of the *Parish Pastoral Associate*, one of the foci of the Review

For example:

“A Parish Pastoral Associate is a person who co-operates with the Parish Priest in the pastoral ministry of the parish”.³⁷

Or,

“A Pastoral Associate is a religious or lay person who works in collaboration with the Pastor, Parish Pastoral Council and Team in a wide range of specific parish activities that contribute to the building up of the parish as a community of faith. The Pastoral Associate has an overview of parish life and shares responsibility for decision-making, planning and implementation of diocesan and parish pastoral plans”³⁸.

And yet again,

³⁴ Cf. Canon 515, p.1 Cf. also Canon 369.

³⁵ Cf. Canon 517, p.2.

³⁶ This is the concept alluded to earlier which Pope Benedict expressed in an address to the Synod of Rome. Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, *Address to the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome: “Church Membership and Pastoral Co-responsibility”* St. John Lateran Basilica, May 26, 2009.

³⁷ Diocese of Parramatta (2003) *Policy for Pastoral Associates*. Promulgated 30 September 2003, Page 6.

³⁸ Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle (2004) *Interim Guidelines for the Appointment of a Pastoral Worker*. 1 July 2004, Page 5.

“From 2011, a Pastoral Associate will be an accredited person appointed by the Archbishop on the advice of the parish to work under the leadership of the Parish Priest or Pastoral Director. The Pastoral Associate will support the mission and pastoral care of the parish community in accordance with the precepts, teachings and practices of the Catholic Church and as such is a formally recognised public ministry. Specific areas of ministry will vary depending on the needs of an individual parish but will involve working under the direction of the Parish Priest or pastoral Director and as part of a team to ensure the pastoral, spiritual and formative needs of the community are met”.³⁹

In Melbourne, the *Report of the Reference Group for the Review of Policies in regard to Pastoral Associates*⁴⁰ defines the role of the Pastoral Associate in this way:

“The role of the Pastoral Associate is located within the area of formal, public, responsible leadership in a Parish. She or he is appointed by the Parish Priest to assist him in leading the mission and pastoral care of the Parish Community in accordance with the precepts, teachings and practices of the Catholic Church. Thus, in collaboration with the Parish Priest and in accordance with the policies of the Church in Melbourne, the Pastoral Associate has significant areas of involvement at Parish planning level, at the level of coordinating others involved in ministry, and as a point of reference for others in ministry”.

Among the Diocesan responses to the Review were a number that, as well as defining the role of the Pastoral Associate, defined a different role, namely, that of *Pastoral Director* or *Pastoral Coordinator*. In such definitions specific reference was made to the Code of Canon Law⁴¹ with the observation that the concept of such roles was acceptable within the current Code.

Thus, *Pastoral Director* is defined as:

“..a person who in accordance with Canon 517 § 2 exercises the leadership role of responsibility for the day to day operations of the parish under the Parish Priest/Supervisor designated by the Bishop”.⁴²

Pastoral Director is defined by another Diocese as:

“an accredited person appointed by the Archbishop on the advice of the Clergy Appointments Board, to serve in partnership with the Priest Moderator for leading the mission and pastoral life of a parish community in accordance with the precepts, teachings and practices of the Catholic Church”.⁴³

Under the principles detailed above, and the expected increase in demand upon the Church’s services the Review points to the need in the Archdiocese for the role of *Senior Pastoral Associate* as well as *Pastoral Associate*. Both roles are exercised under the supervision of the Parish Priest. The Review will recommend this course of action.

The discernment of parish needs for Pastoral Associates and Senior Pastoral Associate s broached in the following section.

³⁹ Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide (2011) *Accreditation of Lay Ecclesial Ministers – Pastoral Directors and Pastoral Associates Policy*, Page 6.

⁴⁰ M Cooney (Chair) (2004) *Report of the Reference Group for the Review of Policies in regard to Pastoral Associates in the Archdiocese of Melbourne*. Presented to Most Reverend D J Hart, Archbishop of Melbourne. See also Archdiocese of Melbourne (1994) *Tomorrow’s Church*, Page 8.

⁴¹ The Canon referred in all such Diocesan submissions is Canon 517 § 2 that states “If, because of a lack of priests, the diocesan bishop has decided that participation in the exercise of pastoral care of a parish is to be entrusted to a deacon, to another person who is not a priest, or to a community of persons, he is to appoint some priest who, provided with the powers and faculties of a pastor, is to direct the pastoral care”. The Review quotes this Canon from these Diocesan submissions.

⁴² Diocese of Parramatta *op.cit.* Page 6.

⁴³ Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide (2011) *Accreditation of Lay Ecclesial Ministers – Pastoral Directors and Pastoral Associates Policy*, Page 7. In this Document the role of the “Priest Moderator” is defined as the “sacramental minister for the community and works closely with the Pastoral Director in the spiritual development and formation of parish community members”.

4.2 Establishing the need for Lay Ecclesial Ministers

It seems appropriate at this juncture to restate the principle set out above, namely, that as a community of the faithful, stably established within a Diocese, a parish has a legitimate autonomy, while remaining part of the particular Church of the Diocese. Its pastoral care is entrusted to a Parish Priest, under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop, who is responsible for promoting, directing, and coordinating pastoral action in the Diocese.

It is clear from Diocesan correspondence to the Review that a variety of ways are used to establish whether there is a need for a pastoral associate in a particular parish. One method is for the Parish Priest / Parish Council / Parish Pastoral Council to assess the need for, for example, a pastoral associate within a particular parish. In Melbourne, parishes may apply to the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation for assistance from the Diocesan Pastoral and Development Fund to employ a pastoral associate⁴⁴. It is clear in such cases that it is the individual parish that establishes the need for a pastoral associate and employs a person in that role.

Several Dioceses that provided material for the Review, while acknowledging the context of the needs envisaged by the Parish Priest / Parish Council / Parish Pastoral Council, also stressed the wider needs of the Diocese and the necessity of a coordinated and effective ministry within the Diocese. The principle has been expressed thus:

"Hence these developments must be planned, financed, resourced and assessed so that the needy, who may be least able to afford these ministries, will be provided with the necessary pastoral care".⁴⁵

It was also pointed out to the Review that in particular Dioceses the discernment of such roles as pastoral associates must be undertaken in a planned and regular way so that the changing needs of the whole diocese can be met and its vision and mission fulfilled.

Another Diocese has its Diocesan Pastoral Personnel Panel, convened by the Bishop, consult a specific parish following the parish's application for the recruitment and selection of pastoral associates.

The Review will recommend that, without impinging upon the legitimate autonomy of each parish, a means for the discernment of such roles as pastoral associates be undertaken in such a way so that the changing needs of the whole diocese can be met and its strategic vision and mission fulfilled.

5.0 Accreditation of Lay Ecclesial Ministers

For more than thirty years Pastoral Associates have been accredited within the Archdiocese of Melbourne through varied processes and by several paths. In 2005 the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation assumed responsibility for this accreditation.

The Director of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation writes to Pastoral Associates on a biannual basis inviting them to submit applications for Grade 1 or Grade 2 Level accreditation. Associated with this invitation is a statement setting out the relevant accreditation standards for both Levels. At the same time the Director invites applications from current Pastoral Associates for ongoing accreditation for the next three years.

Level 1 accreditation requires evidence of formal theological education, pastoral experience, and personal qualities and leadership. Each applicant must also furnish the names of referees who will be asked to comment upon the applicant's pastoral experience, personal qualities for pastoral leadership

⁴⁴ Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation (2010) *Guidelines for Funding of Parish Pastoral Associates 2011*.

⁴⁵ Diocese of Parramatta (2003) *Policy for Pastoral Associates*. Promulgated 30 September 2003, Page 3.

and theological and pastoral integration. In addition the applicant is interviewed by members of the Archbishop appointed Accreditation Committee.

Level 2 accreditation requires evidence of formal theological education, pastoral experience, personal qualities for pastoral leadership and theological and pastoral integration. The applicant must also furnish the names of referees who will be asked to comment upon the applicant's pastoral experience, personal qualities for pastoral leadership and theological and pastoral integration. Applicants are interviewed by members of the Archbishop appointed Accreditation Committee.

Those Pastoral Associates seeking ongoing accreditation for the following three years must supply evidence of professional development (a minimum of sixty hours over the previous three years), supervision (a minimum of nine sessions per annum), and personal faith development (a minimum of sixty hours over the previous three years).

As various documents consulted by the Review have highlighted, accreditation as a lay ecclesial minister provides a formal step in the process of the commissioning by the Archbishop of a person as an ecclesial minister. It also identifies the professional training and experience required for appointment to a parish leadership position. Accreditation means eligibility for consideration for appointment to such a position if it were to become available.

In 1992 Pope John Paul II published "*Pastores Dabo Vobis*"⁴⁶, an Apostolic Exhortation on the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day.

In this document Pope John Paul II sets out the parameters of ministerial formation:

- Human Formation (n43);
- Spiritual Formation (n45);
- Intellectual Formation (n51);
- Pastoral Formation, to coordinate the human, spiritual and intellectual formation of the priest directed to a pastoral end within a growing understanding of both the ecclesial and socio-cultural situation in which pastoral action is to be carried out (n57); and

Integrating these four aspects of the formation of lay ministers is the work of ongoing formation. This is designed to ensure constant personal growth of the minister and the deepening of each aspect to ensure their integration in practical, pastoral action (n71).

Based upon this teaching the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops endorses these areas of formation as fulfilling the obligation of lay persons "to acquire the appropriate formation which is required to fulfill their function properly"⁴⁷. Just as these areas of formation – human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral – "provide a framework for the formation of priests and deacons, (they also) provide a framework for lay ecclesiastical ministers as well"⁴⁸. The United States Bishops go on to say:

"Lay ecclesial ministers need

⁴⁶ Pope John Paul II (1992) Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, on the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day. Accessed at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii/exh-25031992-pastores-dabo-vobis-en.html. See n43, n45, n51, n52, n57, n71. The Review is grateful to Rev. Dr. David Pascoe, head of the School of Theology, Australian Catholic University, for highlighting the importance of *Pastores Dabo Vobis* for the formation of lay ecclesial ministers.

⁴⁷ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2005) *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord – A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*: Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Page 33.

⁴⁸ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2005) *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord – A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*: Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Page 34.

- *Human qualities* critical to form wholesome relationships and necessary to be apt instruments of God's love and compassion
- A *spirituality* and practice of prayer that root them in God's Trinitarian life, grounding and animating all they do in ministry
- Adequate *knowledge* in theological and pastoral studies, along with the *intellectual skill* to use it among people and cultures of our country
- The practical *pastoral abilities* called for in their particular ministry."⁴⁹

In a small number of submissions and interviews the Review was advised that aspirants to the role of pastoral associate could be guided to undertake an internship as a volunteer within a parish under the supervision of the parish pastoral associate to establish whether the individual feels suited to this work. These submissions associated such voluntary internship with more formal training offered by undertaking some form of pastoral education containing an element of supervision. The facilitation of effective supervision at this stage is very important to provide support for the aspiring pastoral associate.

5.1 Methods of Accreditation

All those interviewed as part of the Review, as well as those who provided written material, including material from various Dioceses, stress the importance of the accreditation of lay ecclesial ministers as well as the ongoing evaluation of the extent to which the ministers meet the accreditation requirements.

Comment was sought by the Review concerning three key issues about accreditation:

- the most suitable methods for the accreditation of pastoral associates and chaplains;
- the optimum arrangements for ministerial supervision of lay ecclesial ministers; and
- the role to be played by the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation in both these processes.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

5.1.1 Methods of Accreditation

Written Submissions

1. Some submissions highlighted that the primary criteria for the accreditation of pastoral associates should be the “character, faith, life experiences, ability to communicate rapport with people, work ethic, community involvement and commitment to the Church”; the possession of theological qualifications and formal pastoral education should be secondary criteria”.
2. Others stressed the primacy of studies at a tertiary level in theology in an “accredited theologate” with the expectation that an individual will undertake “further studies and formation in theology, spirituality, counseling, personal development, pastoral ministry and leadership”.
3. Much comment focussed upon the actual process of determining whether applicants for initial accreditation are suitable. The views on this matter are summarised below.
 - (a) Several submissions stressed the need for a process to examine aspiring pastoral associates’ suitability with “rigorous and honest assessment, interviews, references and psychological assessment.”
 - (b) There was general agreement that the use of an interview panel to assess candidates’ suitability is an excellent idea and allows experienced persons appointed by the Archbishop to examine an individual’s “academic background and theological development, societal awareness, pastoral experience, understanding of the Catholic tradition, commitment to ongoing multi-faceted formation, maturity and motivation”.
 - (c) There were different views expressed about the composition of this assessment panel appointed by the Archbishop. Most indicated that a Parish Priest should be a member of such a panel along with a staff member from the Archbishop’s Office for Evangelisation. Other suggestions included an experienced person from the Catholic social services sector, and another person from the locus of the applicant’s practice – i.e. pastoral associate or chaplain.

The Review makes three separate recommendations. Firstly, that a program for the selection of persons for the roles of *Pastoral Associate* and *Senior Pastoral Associate* be developed within the Archdiocese. This program should involve aspirants in several months of mentorship under an experienced Pastoral Associate as well as a formal assessment, a formal assessment of their abilities in the areas of interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution, their readiness to commit to a parish ministry role and their personality dispositions.

Secondly, that the use of an assessment panel to interview prospective candidates for any lay ecclesial ministerial position be continued. All members of these panels, Parish Priest, staff member of the Archbishop’s Office for Evangelisation, an experienced person from the Catholic social services sector and a lay person with pastoral experience in a Catholic setting, should be selected and approved by the Archbishop.

Thirdly, it is further recommended that the Archbishop’s Office for Evangelisation coordinate all aspects of this program.

Many persons stressed that what is important for an assessment panel to focus upon are the qualifications and experience of applicants in Sacramental Theology, as they will often coordinate sacramental programs within parishes. The Review is of the view that successful study of sacramental theology must form part of the accreditation qualifications for pastoral associates.

As well as this, the Review heard the centrality of assessing “the un-teachable”, namely, empathy for people, an ability to work with others and flexibility of outlook to the challenges to be faced in the role. The optimum method to assess this is via the “professional judgement of professionals”.

The use of a variety of means to assess candidates, theological background, experience and training and experience in interpersonal relationships being frequently mentioned, sends a clear message that the Archdiocese views lay ecclesial ministers as professionals upon whom professional demands may be placed.

Interviews and Consultations

A range of individuals and groups were interviewed as part of the Review. As with the written submissions, a variety of views about lay ecclesial ministry accreditation came to light.

In a very helpful set of interviews with, respectively, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy at Australian Catholic University, the Head of the School of Theology at the University, the Master of the Catholic Theological College and the Principal of the Yarra Theological Union⁵⁰, the Review was assured that each institution wished to establish a formal partnership with the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation for the provision of the requisite theological studies that are to be the foundation of the formation of lay ecclesial ministers.

The United States Bishops comment on such partnerships as follows:

"Partnerships between dioceses, academic institutions, and other training programs are helpful, particularly in situations where no single diocesan or academic institution is able to provide all the formation needed by most lay ecclesial ministers."⁵¹

The Master of the Catholic Theological College made several suggestions to the Review:

Catholic Theological College⁵² could offer a purposively designed Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies to both pastoral associates and chaplains, akin to the Graduate Certificate in Guiding Meditation⁵³ which has been developed in partnership with the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation.

The Master of the College highlighted that the proposed Graduate Certificate would be an award of the Melbourne College of Divinity, currently being assessed by a Committee of the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority to become a specialist university to be known as *The Australian University of Divinity*. Further, the Graduate Certificate would conform to the Australian Qualifications Framework specifications for such awards. The qualification type descriptor in the Table below is expressed as learning outcomes in terms of what graduates are expected to know, understand and be able to do as a result of the learning acquired in the Graduate Certificate.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Respectively, Professor A Hunt OAM, Rev. Dr. D Pascoe, Very Reverend S Mackinlay and Very Reverend C Monaghan CP.

⁵¹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2005) *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord – A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*: Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Page 34.

⁵² Catholic Theological College is a Recognised Teaching Institution of the Melbourne College of Divinity.

⁵³ Approved by the Senate of the Catholic Theological College at the June 9, 2011 Meeting.

⁵⁴ The latest version of the Australian Qualifications Framework was approved by the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment on 18 March 2011 for implementation in Australia on 1 July 2011.

Summary	A graduate at this level will have advanced knowledge and skills for professional or highly skilled work and for further learning
Knowledge	Graduates at this level will have advanced theoretical and technical knowledge in one or more fields of study or practice
Skills	Graduates at this level will have advanced cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: critically evaluate and transform information to complete a range of activities; analyse, generate and transmit solutions to complex problems; and transfer knowledge, skills and ideas to others
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, well developed judgement, adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner or learner

Secondly, the Review was advised that Catholic Theological College could offer the Graduate Certificate by intensive mode and via regional rotations; it would, thus, be advantageous to offer such a Qualification to chaplains and pastoral associates together. In a quite separate interview it was stressed to the Review that the key issue was to avoid “systemic isolation” of one group of lay ecclesial ministers from other groups of ministers.

Provision has already been made in the design of the qualification for specialisation in either Chaplaincy or Pastoral Care. Further, the course could be “modularized” to allow students to audit components of the course according to their professional needs and interests. Completion of the Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies would entitle the holder to enter the Graduate Diploma / Master’s degree courses.

The Catholic Theological College **Strategic Plan 2011-2013** has as a key goal the development of partnerships between the College and both Dioceses and Diocesan Agencies to “develop and deploy courses that would serve the needs of these Dioceses and Agencies”.⁵⁵ The proposed partnership with the Archbishop’s Office for Evangelisation would see the Office publicise the Graduate Certificate course for lay ecclesial ministers (chaplains, pastoral associates and others).

Most importantly, the College Master indicated that prospective students without undergraduate qualifications, or with previous studies in fields other than the theological disciplines, would be admitted to the Graduate Certificate on the basis of **prior professional attainments and experience**, to be assessed on application. Such students would be classed as *Special Entry* students but on the successful completion of two Graduate Certificate units would be transferred to *Normal Entry* status.

The provision for Special Entry into the Graduate Certificate on the basis of prior professional attainments and experience will progress through the Melbourne College of Divinity’s Academic Board by year’s end. This is a key component of the change in higher education produced by the national drive to increased participation. “In future higher education will mean different things to different people. More people will dip in and dip out of higher education during their lifetimes and there will be more sandwiching of study and work.....”⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Catholic Theological College (2011) *Strategic Plan 2011-2013*. Approved by the Senate of the College on 10 March 2011. Page 8.

⁵⁶ R James (2011) *Address at the Melbourne College of Divinity Conferral Ceremony*. 12 May, 2011. Mimeographed.

Likewise, both the Dean of Theology and Philosophy and the Head of the School of Theology at Australian Catholic University expressed great interest in a partnership with the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation in the offering of a tailor-made Graduate Certificate course for lay ecclesial ministers. For chaplains and pastoral associates, for example, a proportion of such a course would comprise units common to both specialisations, to be followed by a specifically designed unit for the respective specialisation. As with the Catholic Theological College, Australian Catholic University recognises prior professional attainment and experience as a valid basis for entry to the Graduate Certificate. Students admitted through this pathway would be termed *non-Award* enrolments in the first instance but, upon the successful completion of two course units would be transferred to standard course enrolment.

The Dean and the Head of School informed the Review that the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy is already providing similar studies for another Australian Diocese and noted that the course components are offered online, an added advantage for lay ecclesial ministers engaged in parish ministries.

In similar vein the Principal of Yarra Theological Union, an institution already offering courses to pastoral associates, expressed interest in forming a partnership with the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation in providing tailor-made courses for lay ecclesial ministers. A similar entry and progression provision would apply to students admitted to the Graduate Certificate on the basis of prior professional attainments and experience as was offered by Australian Catholic University and the Catholic Theological College.

In the light of these promising developments the Review will recommend that the Archbishop's Office form partnerships with each of these higher education institutions towards the offering of the Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies with a tailor-made specialisation as the entry level qualification for lay ecclesial ministers.

Many persons raised the matter of the cost of the fees for the units in such courses. For example, it is highly likely that the fees for each of the three units in a Graduate Certificate offered by the Recognised Teaching Institutions of the Melbourne College of Divinity in 2012 will be in the region of \$1,446 per unit, an increase of 10.0 percent over the 2011 unit fee of \$1,308 per unit⁵⁷. Fee assistance via scholarships or subsidy was requested. The Review holds the view that this is a matter for further investigation, especially to attract new pastoral associates and chaplains to Church ministry.

Secondly, the Review will recommend that no new entrants be admitted to the *Foundations of Ministry Certificate* currently offered by the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation but that those already enrolled be allowed to complete their courses. In the light of the ready cooperation offered by the Catholic theological higher education institutions, the Review suggests that the Archbishop's Office withdraw from the provision of such courses. Articulation arrangements for those who are part-way through their studies and who wish to transfer to the relevant Graduate certificate course, will need to be examined and then established.

5.1.2 Organisational Provision for Lay Ecclesial Ministers

During these interviews, and in the written submissions, a significant matter was raised, namely, the organisational provision within the Archdiocese for lay ecclesial ministers. The Review has concluded that there is a need for much more coordination of several matters relating to the selection, accreditation, supervision and ongoing development, human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral⁵⁸, of lay ecclesial ministers, if the location and work of lay ecclesial ministers is to serve the strategic mission of the Archdiocese itself. A number of organisational arrangements were considered; for example the placement of all matters relating to pastoral associates and other lay ecclesiastical ministers under an Episcopal

⁵⁷ Melbourne College of Divinity Council Papers, 29 June 2011, Attachment 2.2, Page 5.

⁵⁸ Pope John Paul II (1992) Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, on the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day. Accessed at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii/exh-25031992-pastores-dabo-vobis-en.html. See n43, n45, n51, n52, n57, n71.

Vicar, or the creation of a separate entity for lay ecclesiastical ministry associated with the Seminary or the Ministry to Priests. The Review has rejected all such options but does suggest that discussions take place of the possible role that could be played in the ongoing development of lay ecclesiastical ministers by the Catholic Leadership Centre, East Melbourne.

In his letter of 8 July 2004 establishing the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation Archbishop Hart indicated that one of the three key tasks for the newly established Office was

- To support the efforts of the many people and instruments of the Archdiocese engaged in evangelisation⁵⁹.

Key among these people are lay ecclesial ministers, whose role, as laity, is to minister on behalf of the Church. To quote again Pope Benedict XVI: the laity "must no longer be viewed as collaborators of the clergy but truly recognised as co-responsible, for the Church's being and action".⁶⁰

The Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation serves the Archdiocese of Melbourne through a very broad mandate. Included in its activities are as follows:

- Parish Life and Leadership
- Faith Education and Formation
- Liturgy and Worship
- Prayer and Spirituality
- Community Engagement.

Within each of these major initiatives are several areas of endeavour.⁶¹

The Review has come to the view that the essential work of a variety of lay ecclesiastical ministries is evangelisation. To quote again Archbishop Hart, the work of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation is "to support the efforts of the many people and instruments of the Archdiocese engaged in evangelisation".

The Review will raise this matter again later in the Report, but will recommend that there be within the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation, a small Secretariat for Lay Ecclesial Ministry to be both a reference point for lay ecclesial ministers and to coordinate all matters associated with the selection, formation, accreditation, ongoing formation, and provision of supervision as well as ongoing support and pastoral care for all lay ecclesial ministers⁶².

⁵⁹ An edited version of Archbishop Hart's Homily to the Annual Clergy Conference on June 23rd, 2004 announcing the establishment of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation was published in *Kairos*, Sunday, July 25th – August 1st, 2004, Page 3.

⁶⁰ Pope Benedict XVI (2009) Opening of the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome on the theme "Church Membership and Co-Responsibility" Basilica of Saint John Lateran, 26 May 2009. Accessed at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2009/may/documents/hf-ben-xvi-spe_20090526_convergno_diocese-rm_en.html

⁶¹ Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation, *AOFE Services Guide*. Accessed at <http://www.evangelisation.org>

⁶² The person appointed by the Archbishop to head this Secretariat should be a very experienced administrator with a theological, pastoral and educational background and with a track record of successful transformational leadership. See B M Bass (1990) "From transactional to transformative leadership: learning to share the vision" *Organisational Dynamics*, Winter and L G Bolman and T E Deal (2003) *Reframing Organisations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership*. 3rd edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

6.0 Supervision

The second major focus of the Review has been the matter of the provision of supervision for lay ecclesial ministers. Within the written submissions, and in the interviews, a number of strongly held positions were argued and key questions were raised.

- What arrangements for lay ecclesial ministerial supervision should be provided?
- Who should pay for this?
- Should it take place within working hours?
- What form should such supervision take?
- How should it be conducted?
- What is, and what is not, part of supervision?

The Review has been greatly assisted by material provided by major Agencies that provide supervision. These Agencies have highlighted that supervision for lay ecclesial ministers does not have as its purpose spiritual direction, nor has as its purpose discussion of line management issues, nor is it clinical supervision, nor merely a support group. Against this view were those who saw supervision sessions as a chance for lay ecclesial ministers to “vent in a helpful and respectful environment as long as such sessions did not descend into mere criticism of others”. Others saw the current group supervision sessions as a means to the development of solidarity with one another. The key component of the leadership of these sessions was identified: “the supervisor is well versed in what pastoral care means in a Catholic setting”. Both group supervision and individual supervision have their supporters; the latter is seen as a means to focus upon “the self and the issues bearing upon it”, the former is seen as a means to examine practice, what pressures affect it but to do this within a supportive environment where each person can learn from others.

As several submissions and interviews have highlighted, supervision for lay ecclesial ministers must be independent and concern itself with their personal growth and accountability. Secondly, ministerial supervision focuses upon theological reflection to attend to the “inner work of the person”. One submission highlighted that the purpose of supervision is to look at “the constants” within the self that affect one’s work with others to allow the Pastoral Associate to work with others in a healthy way without biases or “hang ups”. Good supervision, the Review was told, challenges the individual to look at one’s professional situation to explore why “things happened as they did”. Through this means the Associate comes to the root cause of particular reactions or behaviours to enable them to be confronted.

The Review heard that there is a need for the Archbishop’s Office for Evangelisation to brief supervisors about the Office’s expectations of supervision. Supervisors need to understand the role of the Pastoral Associate. Some criticism was leveled at supervision groups where the supervisor allowed individuals to dominate the group for the purpose of airing personal agenda. The fact that supervisors have accreditation was seen as essential, and several persons asked that the Archbishop’s Office hold annual discussions with individual supervisors to review the supervision program and to clarify the Office’s expectations of group supervision.

The Archbishop’s Office could structure supervision sessions to establish boundaries in which supervision takes place. Where this structure was in place a number of Pastoral Associates reported that group supervision was helpful. The Review heard many expressions that supervision groups allowed and encouraged Pastoral Associates to listen to and learn from each other, provided that supervisors were committed to supervision and understood the wide variety of tasks carried out by pastoral associates. This latter was seen as crucial. Supervisors need to demonstrate to the Archbishops Office familiarity with parish ministry undertaken by lay people and an understanding of the issues faced in such ministry in multi-cultural and multi-racial environments.

Supervisors face the challenge of teasing out within a group environment the thoughts and feelings of lay ecclesial ministers.

Many submissions raised the matter of individual supervision for lay ecclesial ministers. Some preferred this to group supervision currently subsidised by the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation and stated that the "Archdiocese should pay" for such supervision. One of the professional supervisors, to whom the Review spoke, held firmly to the view that some sessions of individual supervision ought to precede any involvement by the lay ecclesial minister in group supervision. In such individual supervision one's personal experience in several contexts affecting professional work, can be reflected upon and then shared later in group supervision.

A number of these suggestions raise cost pressures for the Archdiocese. With over one hundred pastoral associates and many lay chaplains the cost of individual supervision would be prohibitive. But the Review agrees with the view that some form of individual supervision is necessary, especially for new ecclesial ministers, prior to their involvement in group supervision sessions.

Other Church Agencies use group supervision as their preferred method of professional supervision.

The current model of several subsidised group supervision sessions per annum ought to continue. The group model of supervision allows individuals to learn from others, become steeped within the Catholic ethos guiding their work and face the challenges of their work. Some suggest that the supervision groups contain lay ecclesial ministers from several work contexts, as well as Priests, recognizing that different contexts, for example, prisons, hospitals, aged care centres, parishes will have different requirements for supervision.

Other key issues highlighted to the Review concern the principle that an individual's supervision needs will vary according to their stages of development within their work, long-serving lay ecclesial ministers compared to those new to the role. Secondly, the question of what should be the supervision requirements for pastoral associates who, for example, serve their parish in this role for six hours per week compared to those who are full-time in the role. The Review does not have a firm view about this question but it does need further discussion by the Advisory Board of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation.

However, in the first year of an individual's service within a Church Agency at least four individual supervision sessions – one per month for four months - could be provided. The Review suggests this course of action.

Some submissions and interviews noted that a number of pastoral associates choose not to use the suggested Agencies to access supervision but rather go to an accredited spiritual director of their own choice. The Review holds the view that this is an individual's choice with which there will necessarily be costs to the Individual.

However, it is worth considering that the comparable amount paid per person to CatholicCare as a subsidy for the provision of group supervision sessions could be set aside for an individual seeking individual supervision, with the individual paying the remaining costs.

What has emerged, however, in interviews and submissions concerning supervision is criticism that some supervisors do not understand the role of the parish pastoral associate. It is clear from several comments that this is seen to lessen the impact of the group supervision sessions. One correspondent to the Review said simply, "The Office is not getting value for money". Another indicated that some group supervision sessions were "fluffy" and failed to assist the Pastoral Associates to "touch the real stuff" that affected their carrying out a challenging and multi-faceted role.

The Review heard and endorses the fundamental principle that supervision must be embedded in a Sacramental model whereby those being supervised have adequate academic background in sacramental theology to enable them to be able to engage in "theological reflection as an integral part of an educational model". The Review agrees with the view that those pastoral training programs that do not require of their participants background in sacramental theology do not, the Review heard, "serve our Catholic community".

The Review suggests that the matter of an annual detailed briefing for supervisors be revisited and include a detailed description of the role of pastoral associate. Supervisors in some cases were reported to the Review as not understanding the many challenges faced by pastoral associates. Tight coordination of the supervision sessions has been called for by those participating in the Review so that such sessions do not become simply “a nice chat for two hours” or “simply affirming” or “mutual therapy” or “venting sessions”. It was stressed that supervision must be challenging towards the personal growth of group members.

Associated with the several matters raised under the broad heading of “supervision” was the need felt by many Pastoral Associates for mutual support from colleagues so that particular problems or challenges are placed in perspective. “I am not the only one dealing with this” was a common statement. As well as more formal gatherings, conferences, seminars and the like, Pastoral Associates expressed keenness to meet informally in regions or in networks of nearby parishes to hear ideas about different Pastoral Associates’ means to carry out aspects of their roles. As one put it: “I have been able to improve our Parish Baptismal Program because of the approach I learned from another parish.”

The Review takes the view that with any professional group such collegial meetings are vital so that members can learn from one another. The Review supports the widening of such mutual support among Pastoral Associates.

The Review concludes that the provision of quality supervision based upon Christian principles, theological reflection, and professional skill development needs to be strengthened. The Review has received evidence of the need of a change of direction. One possibility would be to locate the coordinated provision of supervision within the Pastoral Studies Department of the Catholic Theological College who, with the Secretariat for Lay Ecclesial Ministry would establish a team of supervisors for pastoral associates across the Archdiocese and provide the necessary professional and academic oversight.

7.0 Chaplains

The Review examined documents relating to proposed position and accreditation standards of lay chaplains.⁶³ The position description for lay chaplains notes that they:

- Are appointed by the Archbishop after accreditation by the Archbishop’s Office for Evangelisation;
- Are subsequently employed by CatholicCare to assist in leading the mission of the Church’s pastoral care in prisons, hospitals, juvenile justice, mental health, and HIV-AIDS ministries in accordance with the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church;
- Need to have a strong belief in God and be nourished by their life of prayer and the practice of their Catholic faith;
- Will have a role and responsibility unique to the position and determined by the organisation in which they minister; and
- Must hold a current Certificate of Accreditation as a Chaplain from the Archbishop’s Office for Evangelisation, and ratified by the Archbishop, prior to their employment as a Lay Chaplain.

⁶³ Archdiocese of Melbourne, *Recommended Position and Accreditation Standards – Lay Chaplains*. Archdiocese of Melbourne, Process for Application to be Accredited as a Chaplain in the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne.

The initial Accreditation Standards for Lay Chaplains are fourfold:

1. Formal Education – possession of a Theology, Religious Studies, Pastoral Counselling degree or their equivalent; and a minimum of one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education or its equivalent.
2. Knowledge and Skills of Pastoral Care
3. Personal Identity
4. Professional Identity.

New Chaplains are required to obtain Accreditation prior to applying for positions; Lay Chaplains currently employed must apply for Accreditation. Ongoing accreditation as a Lay Chaplain requires Lay Chaplains to demonstrate that they have participated in professional development in areas relevant to their specific ministry, have participated in professional development that contributes to their understanding of theology and pastoral care and developed their skills in communication and leadership. Supervision with a qualified supervisor, negotiated on an individual basis and documented for review, is an ongoing requirement of accreditation.

The Review was advised that this proposed accreditation system for Lay Chaplains was developed after lengthy consultation between CatholicCare, who consulted with chaplains, and the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation. Chaplains employed in public institutions are supervised by CatholicCare. The Review was provided with the Healthcare Chaplaincy Council of Victoria Incorporated Policy on *Capabilities Framework for Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy*⁶⁴. The stated aim of this Policy, which applies to chaplains employed by CatholicCare, is expressed as follows:

"The Capability Framework developed by the Healthcare Chaplaincy Council of Victoria Inc. aims to clarify for professionals working in the Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care field and those with whom they work, the qualities and capacities that are required for this work, the qualifications that are needed, and the ways that these can be developed appropriately over time"⁶⁵.

The Review received documentation from other Dioceses concerning the preparation, accreditation and employment of chaplains. In the Diocese of Cairns chaplains are located in hospitals, aged care settings and as community home visitors. They are all required to possess a Certificate of Chaplaincy. The Chaplains have monthly peer group supervision provided by an outside service provider, an annual retreat and four professional development opportunities each year provided by outside facilitators. Chaplains are formally appraised annually.

Within the Archdiocese of Brisbane the accreditation of lay chaplains is currently under review. Chaplains are involved in psychiatric pastoral care, prison chaplaincy and hospital chaplaincy.

Hospital chaplains in Queensland are in receipt of no government funding but the Archdiocese funds a very small number of chaplains' positions and provides to other chaplains reimbursement of expenses. Chaplains must have at least Certificate level training and a successful interview prior to their being recommended to a particular hospital which then appoints them to a position. The Review was advised of the dual lines of responsibility for hospital chaplains within the Archdiocese, to the Church regarding matters of faith and chaplaincy practice and to the hospital in matters of hospital policy.

Within the Archdiocese of Brisbane six Christian traditions combine and cooperate in the offering of chaplaincy services in prisons. A State Chaplaincy Board has developed policies and processes for the

⁶⁴ Healthcare Chaplaincy Council of Victoria Incorporated (2009) *Capabilities Framework for Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy*.

⁶⁵ Healthcare Chaplaincy Council of Victoria Incorporated (2009) *Capabilities Framework for Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy*, Page 5. **Capability** is distinguished from **competence** within the Policy. The former refers to "the extent to which a person can apply, adapt and synthesise new knowledge from experience and continue to improve his/her performance". The latter "describes what a person knows or is able to do, in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes at a particular point of time". Healthcare Chaplaincy Council of Victoria Incorporated (2009) *Capabilities Framework for Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy*, Page 6.

appointment of individuals to chaplaincy positions. The Director of Centacare Pastoral ministry nominates individuals to the State Chaplaincy Board as chaplains. After their appointment Catholic chaplains participate in monthly supervision conducted by an outside facilitator, undertake an annual retreat and participate in a three-day professional in-service along with all prison chaplains in Queensland.

The Brisbane Archdiocese has published a Handbook regarding Catholic Psychiatric Pastoral Care against the background of the policies of Queensland Health⁶⁶. Positions as lay chaplains are advertised widely through the Catholic media and applicants are initially assessed through a rigorous interview process. Successful applicants then undertake a six to seven month training course conducted by both medical specialists and pastoral care practitioners on behalf of the Archdiocese. After appointment, Catholic psychiatric pastoral care appointees undertake weekly briefing sessions, three one-day spiritual retreats annually and a formal annual appraisal.

Several individuals during interview stressed the benefits of integrating parish pastoral associates and chaplains working within Catholic institutions within the one organisational unit. Both groups offer fundamental pastoral care service within Church settings and are engaged in the Church's work of evangelisation. Integrating the two groups provides "mutually enriching professionalism" and prevents the development of "silos" since such occupations are susceptible to professional isolation. Noting that such integration is the hallmark of successful professional collaborations, the Review will recommend accordingly.

Such integration, if it were to be successful, requires clear, published role definitions⁶⁷ of both pastoral associates and chaplains. Each of these professional groups has different experiences but the formation of networks between them can only enrich both. It is suggested that the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation, through the Review's recommended Secretariat for Lay Ecclesial Ministry, would play a key role in such integration. Indeed, referring to Panel B of Table 1, the Secretariat is the ideal organisational unit to coordinate the various parish lay ecclesial ministry roles noted as existing within the Archdiocese.

8.0 The role of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation in the Accreditation and Supervision of Lay Ecclesial Ministers

This question produced a wide range of comments and was the focus for the expression of sorrow, tension and anxiety among particular groups and individuals about a range of matters. The Review established that the source of such tension and feelings of disappointment could be traced back to the establishment of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation and the structural changes which accompanied this establishment. The historical interruption of the change of Archdiocesan policy to cease the employment of the Coordinator of Pastoral Associates has become part of the collective memory of a number of pastoral associates.

The Archdiocese values the work of pastoral associates and has indicated their important role in the functioning of many parishes. Ongoing work is needed to continue to attend to:

- the orientation of new pastoral associates;
- their coordination during a particular parish's Pastoral Associate's taking sick leave;
- the organisation of ongoing training and support of Pastoral Associates;
- ensuring new pastoral associates had 'settled in' to their parish work environments;
- pastoral care of pastoral associates, including when a pastoral associate's position ceases in a particular parish; and

⁶⁶ The Diocese of Toowoomba informed the Review that the Queensland Health Policy on Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care is used by the Diocese.

⁶⁷ The Review was informed that the Association of Pastoral Associates is developing a Directory of Pastoral Associates and their varied activities for use by members in offering mutual support in the carrying out of particular tasks.

- ‘trouble-shooting’ when issues arose within the pastoral associate’s working environment.⁶⁸

As stated earlier in this Report, the Archbishop’s Office for Evangelisation is an “umbrella organisation overseeing a large number of activities for the Archbishop”. The Review finds that since its inception the Archbishop’s Office for Evangelisation has endeavoured to create a culture of support and provision of services in the meeting of accreditation standards and their maintenance.

One of the issues raised in this Report is the very large number of variables which affect the employment of pastoral associates within the Archdiocese and the need for coordination of the allocation of such lay ministerial posts across the Archdiocese has been recommended.

As the Review has heard, parishes with fewer resources, but who need lay ministerial assistance to support the work of ministry in the parish, may struggle to appoint them, irrespective of the assistance offered by the Archdiocese over three-year periods to make such appointments.

A number of suggestions were received by the Review concerning tasks that the Archbishop’s Office could ideally coordinate. For example:

- Supporting and liaising with the various chaplaincy organisations;
- Providing a central online advertising notice board / clearing house on which positions could be advertised;
- Advertising online to all areas of pastoral involvement, and thus to all lay ecclesial ministers, both “one-off sessions and short courses of a pastoral nature that we can all tap into”;
- Advertising for lay ecclesial ministers and providing support for the proposed Secretariat of Lay Ecclesial Ministry in the discernment of suitable applicants.

The Review has highlighted on several occasions the necessity for what it terms a ‘Secretariat for Lay Ecclesial Ministry’ within the Archbishop’s Office to coordinate the variety of lay ecclesial roles in the service of a growing population of Catholics bringing increased demands upon parishes. A key task for the Secretariat is the promotion of lay ministry to assist in supporting a culture of lay ministry in parishes and developing their pastoral skills and expertise. In short, the proposed Secretariat has both a “people” and a “culture” function as it seeks to develop the vocational dimension of lay ministers.

One task for the Secretariat would be to foster regular regional “conversations” involving priests, deacons and lay ecclesial ministers, with relevant expert input, to address particular regional challenges caused, for example, by rapidly growing populations, marked ageing of a particular region’s population or the growth of immigrant communities from particular countries. This fosters shared understanding of common challenges and provides clarity of roles undertaken by each group in addressing such challenges. It was stressed that the Archbishop’s Office for Evangelisation would, as a matter of course, invite priests to their workshops.

⁶⁸ Included in the wide variety of materials provided to the Review were the following: Employment Relations Focus Group, Association of Pastoral Associates (2006) *Report: A contribution towards the review of employment and engagement policies and associated documents for pastoral associates within the Archdiocese of Melbourne* and a list of enhancements to pastoral associates’ conditions of employment and related matters from 2005 to 2009. Requirements in legislation such as the *Fair Work Act*, contract law, and discrimination legislation have meant that recruitment, appointment and employment practices must be overseen by specialist human resources personnel. This professional assistance and oversight is envisaged as being completely separate from the pastoral role envisaged by the establishment of a Secretariat for Lay Ecclesial Ministry.

9.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

On September 1st, 2004 Archbishop D J Hart established the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation noting that the key tasks of this Office were as follows:

- To promote evangelisation within the Archdiocese;
- To support the efforts of the many people and instruments of the Archdiocese engaged in evangelisation; and
- To coordinate and unite a diocesan focus and effort in evangelisation.

The Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation would:

- "Assist all involved in evangelisation by identifying leaders for evangelisation, and training them (from parishes and communities);
- relate to those involved in evangelisation (deanery coordinators, resource persons and teams and others – formerly CROPP);
- Encircle and guide Catholic Adult Education Melbourne under the Director of the Office for Evangelisation, including education for evangelisation and the accreditation of Pastoral Associates;
- Encircle and guide the Office for Worship under the Director of the Office for Evangelisation including other approved forms of prayer – the heart of *Contemplate – Launch Out*;
- Relate strongly with other diocesan agencies so that the focus on Evangelisation will be primary"⁶⁹.

This assessment of the accreditation and supervision of pastoral associates and lay chaplains comes at a point seven years after the establishment of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation. Each Diocese in Australia was invited to provide material to inform this Review. All priests and pastoral associates were invited by Bishop T Costelloe SDB to make a submission to the Review in response to four key questions or on any other matter relevant to the focus of the Review. A range of interviews was held, both individual interviews and group consultations, and a theological paper concerning lay ecclesial ministry was specifically prepared as part of the Review. Through written submissions, individual interviews and group consultations approximately fifty pastoral associates provided material for the Review, as did some seventeen of Australia's Catholic Dioceses.

In the light of this evidence, including Diocesan practice across Australia, the Review concludes with the following recommendations for consideration.

Recommendation 1

That the expected population growth in Melbourne in the next fifteen years, as reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, will result not only in an increase in the Catholic population, but an increased call upon the Church's services across parishes. These developments point to the need in the Archdiocese for roles to assist parish priests under his supervision in a variety of parish configurations. There will continue to be the need for the role of *Pastoral Associate*. But as parishes expand and the calls upon parishes grow, the Review recommends that the position of *Senior Pastoral Associate* be established, to replace the Pastoral Associate Grade 2 role as needed. Such a person would, under the supervision of the parish priest, and excluding those matters that are the exclusive domain of priests, act upon his behalf when he is not present.

⁶⁹ An edited version of Archbishop Hart's Homily to the Annual Clergy Conference on June 23rd, 2004 announcing the establishment of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation was published in *Kairos*, Sunday, July 25th – August 1st, 2004, Page 3.

Recommendation 2

That a program for the selection of persons for the roles of *Pastoral Associate* and *Senior Pastoral Associate* be developed within the Archdiocese. This program should involve aspirants in several months of mentorship under an experienced Pastoral Associate as well as a formal assessment of their abilities in the areas of interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution, their readiness to commit to a parish ministry role and their personality dispositions. It is further recommended that the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation coordinate all aspects of this program.

Recommendation 3

That as part of this selection program, the use of an assessment panel to interview prospective candidates for any lay ecclesial ministerial position be continued. Membership of this panel, Parish Priest, staff member of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation, an experienced person from Catholic social services sector and a lay person with pastoral experience in a Catholic setting, should be selected and approved by the Archbishop.

Recommendation 4

That the Archbishop's Office form partnerships with Catholic Theological College, the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, Australian Catholic University and Yarra Theological Union towards the offering of a tailor-made Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies as the entry level qualification for lay ecclesial ministers, pastoral associates, lay chaplains and others. That as a consequence, the Certificate course in Foundations for Pastoral Ministry currently offered by the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation should be phased out.

Recommendation 5

That there be within the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation, a Secretariat for Lay Ecclesial Ministry to be both a reference point for lay ecclesial ministers and to determine, oversee and coordinate all matters associated with the formation, accreditation, the provision of supervision, ongoing support and pastoral care for lay ecclesial ministers, including lay Pastoral Associates, lay Chaplains and others, within the Archdiocese.

Recommendation 6

That the current model of group supervision be used for all lay ecclesial ministers with the proviso that all supervisors be thoroughly briefed concerning the roles of the persons within the supervision groups, and the expectations of supervision sessions, and that for new lay ecclesial ministers four individual supervision sessions be provided prior to their participating in group supervision. It is further recommended that the Secretariat for Lay Ecclesial Ministry partner with the Catholic Theological College to establish a team of supervisors for the supervision of pastoral associates. The organisational support and oversight of such a supervision team would be the task of the Secretariat.

Recommendation 7

That all pastoral training programs contain a strong foundation in sacramental theology.

Recommendation 8

That the facilitation of the work of parish pastoral associates, chaplains and other lay ecclesial ministers working within parishes and Catholic institutions become the responsibility of the proposed Secretariat for Lay Ecclesial Ministry with the aim of coordinating and supporting persons in these roles in the service of a growing population of Catholics, presenting increased demands upon the Church's services.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1: Background to the Establishment of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation

In 2001 Pope John Paul II issued two key documents to the Church. The first, marking the close of the Year of Great Jubilee, was issued on 6 January, 2001. This was the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, in which Pope John Paul II exhorted the whole Church to examine how far the Church had “renewed herself, in order to take up her evangelising mission with fresh enthusiasm”⁷⁰. On 22 November, 2001 Pope John Paul II issued the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Oceania* on Jesus Christ and the peoples of Oceania.

In the Archdiocese of Melbourne Archbishop Hart responded with two separate but closely related initiatives. Firstly, in response to *Novo Millennio Ineunte* he offered the reflection program *Contemplate - Launch Out* to focus upon the teachings in the Apostolic Letter and to encourage pastoral efforts to link closely prayer and mission in a parish context. *Contemplate - Launch Out* operated in the Archdiocese from the Feast of Mary Help of Christians May 2002 to the Feast of Pentecost in 2004. During these two years both Lenten and Advent reflection programs were offered within the Archdiocese and a Pastoral FOCUS Newsletter, containing prayers and reflections derived from the Apostolic Letter, was published monthly for the Archdiocese.

Secondly, in the year following the issuing by Pope John Paul II of *Ecclesia in Oceania*, Archbishop Hart wrote on 24 October, 2002 to every priest in the Archdiocese advising them of the establishment of a working group, the Committee for Mission, to consult with and to reflect various groups in the Archdiocese with regard to the following:

- vocations to the priesthood and the formation of priests;
- the establishment and promotion of effective structures within the Archdiocese in relation to parishes, deaneries and agencies;
- the identification, encouragement and formation of leaders within the Archdiocese;
- youth and new ecclesial movements; and
- the development of new and effective methods of evangelisation in a rapidly changing society.

Accompanying Archbishop Hart's letter was the Brief for the Committee for Mission. The Committee, chaired by Bishop C Prowse, comprised the following membership: Bishop J O'Connell, Mrs. C Crawford, Sr. G Danza RSM, Rev. G Bennet, Rev. M Cooney, Rev. P Cross, Rev. B Lane, Rev. G Pritchard and Rev. M Vidola, who acted as Secretary to the Committee. Between its formation in October 2002 – first meeting of the Committee being held on 5 December, 2002 – and its Final Report to Archbishop Hart on 15 June, 2004, the Committee for Mission met frequently and considered magisterial documents on evangelisation. The Committee produced a Draft Report in September 2003 as a basis for consultation. The Committee then conducted five (5) listening sessions across the Archdiocese, heard some seventy-six verbal presentations, examined seventy written submissions from parishes, agencies and individuals, and met with a representative group of primary and secondary school principals. The Committee's Final Report in June 2004 offered to Archbishop Hart some 26 Recommendations relating specifically to his Brief⁷¹.

In November 2004 Archbishop Hart issued a Pastoral Letter, *We Are Sent: Leading People to Encounter the Gospel*, to all in the Archdiocese. In this Pastoral Letter Archbishop Hart set out what he termed “Guidelines” about what he saw as his foremost pastoral priority since becoming Archbishop of Melbourne, namely evangelisation and mission in the Archdiocese. These Guidelines included an understanding of the nature of evangelisation, the need for a new evangelisation, who evangelises, who is evangelised and practical implementations from these considerations.

⁷⁰ *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, #2.

⁷¹ The Review studied the 1994 Report entitled *Tomorrow's Church – a Plan for Leadership* concerning an examination of the “needs and directions for parish leadership” in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. The Report was released by the then Archbishop of Melbourne, Archbishop Sir T F Little on 1 March 1994.

Highlighted as the practical response to the issues in his Pastoral Letter, Archbishop Hart announced that he had established the **Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation** as "of primary importance among the agencies by which the Archdiocese supports parishes"⁷²

The Establishment of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation

On 8 July, 2004 Archbishop Hart wrote to Rev Greg Bennet announcing that on 1 September, 2004 he was establishing the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation and that from that date Father Bennet was appointed as inaugurating Director of the Office⁷³. In this letter Archbishop Hart noted the key tasks of this Office:

- To promote evangelisation within the Archdiocese;
- To support the efforts of the many people and instruments of the Archdiocese engaged in evangelisation;
and
- To coordinate and unite a diocesan focus and effort in evangelisation.

Archbishop Hart further developed his vision for the new Office in a detailed brief released on 20 July, 2004. In this document he spelled out the structure of the Office, its areas of ministry and its support.

The structure of the Office was spelled out in detail by Archbishop Hart as follows:

"The Office is to assume primary importance among the services offered by the Archdiocese. Thus it will:

- Assist all involved in evangelisation by identifying leaders for evangelisation, and training them (from parishes and communities);
- Relate to those involved in evangelisation (deanery coordinators, resource persons and teams and others – formerly CROPP);
- Encircle and guide Catholic Adult Education Melbourne under the Director of the Office for Evangelisation, including education for evangelisation and the accreditation of Pastoral Associates;
- Encircle and guide the Office for Worship under the Director of the Office for Evangelisation including other approved forms of prayer – the heart of *Contemplate – Launch Out*;
- Relate strongly with other diocesan agencies so that the focus on Evangelisation will be primary".

In detailing the area of ministry for which the new Office was to become responsible Archbishop Hart noted the following tasks:

1. Explaining Evangelisation in the new millennium;
2. Provision of the ongoing courses offered by the Office for Worship and Catholic Adult Education Melbourne;
3. Provision of "how to" resources for evangelisation for parishes and communities;
4. Aiding the ongoing reflection on and implementation of the Report to Archbishop Hart by the Committee for Mission and the insights gained from the program *Contemplate – Launch Out*;
5. Undertaking the initiatives detailed under the description of the structure of the Office above.

Archbishop Hart made the Director of the Office directly responsible to himself, noted that appropriate staff support for the Office would be developed, and indicated that the Director of the Office would also be supported by an Implementation Committee.

⁷² *We Are Sent*, Section D, Page 4.

⁷³ An edited version of Archbishop Hart's Homily to the Annual Clergy Conference on June 23rd, 2004 announcing the establishment of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation was published in *Kairos*, Sunday, July 25th – August 1st, 2004, Page 3.

Vision and Mission of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation

The Vision and Mission of the Office for Evangelisation is captured in the following statement:

Led by the Holy Spirit, the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation will actively and creatively engage people from all walks of life to know, experience and follow Jesus Christ and His message of Good News, particularly as it is lived and celebrated in the rich life and tradition of the Catholic Church community.

The Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation will offer a hope-filled and integrated vision of life and faith, grounded in our contemporary Australian culture and times, that responds to the deep yearnings, heart questions and concerns in people's lives, so to awaken a personal commitment to Jesus Christ and His Mission.

Aims and Tasks of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation

In the light of its Vision and Mission, the **Aims** of the Office of the Office for Evangelisation are as follows:

- To be of service to the Archdiocese of Melbourne;
- To promote Archbishop Hart's vision for evangelisation across all agencies of the Archdiocese and the people of the Archdiocese;
- To encourage a new, courageous and consistent preaching of the Gospel in accord with Church teaching and Scripture;
- To focus on evangelisation and mission;
- To facilitate a systematic focus on evangelisation through: education and formation courses, the provision of information, the provision of resources and the implementation of appropriate strategies;
- To direct the focus of the Office to: the Priests of the Archdiocese, Parishes, Pastoral Associates, Communities, Deaneries and Deanery personnel;
- To relate closely with other agencies of the Archdiocese so that the focus on evangelisation will be primary within the Archdiocese.

The specific **Tasks** of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation can be summarised as follows:

1. To unpack the concept of "evangelisation" and to explain it in the context of the new millennium;
2. To assist all involved in evangelisation by identifying, training and supporting leaders for evangelisation within the Archdiocese;
3. To provide resources for evangelisation for parishes and for communities;
4. To aid the ongoing reflection on and implementation of the Report of the Committee for Mission and the insights gained from the program *Contemplate – Launch Out*;
5. To encircle and guide the activities of the former Catholic Adult Education Melbourne office, including both education programs for evangelisation and accreditation programs for Pastoral Associates;
6. To encircle and guide the programs of the Office for Worship, including the development and provision of programs for the development of other prayer forms.

Implementation of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation

The implementation of the Office has had two quite distinct phases, an organisational phase and an envisioning and resultant activity phase.

Phase 1: Organisation

In this first phase the Office commenced to operate. This phase was marked by a number of specific tasks as follows:

- The establishment of the Office and the placement of its key personnel;
- The establishment of relationships with the key groups of personnel in the Archdiocese identified above – Priests, Pastoral Associates, Deanery Coordinators and Deanery Resource Coordinators;
- The review of the services then offered by both Catholic Adult Education Melbourne and the Office for Worship;
- The establishment of links with the Archdiocesan Strategic Working Group, the body charged with strategic and structural planning at both individual parish and personnel levels;
- The establishment of the Implementation Committee for the Office to assist the Office in setting directions for its work. This task is set out in more detail below.

As noted above, early in 2005 Archbishop Hart constituted an Implementation Committee to aid the Director of the Office and to act as a resource for him. The Implementation Committee was chaired by Monsignor T Doyle AO, then Parish Priest of St James, Brighton. The membership of the Committee included Mrs. J Mentha, Catholic Communications Office, Mrs. C Crawford, then Office for Evangelisation – Policy and Outreach, Rev. B Reed, then Assistant Director Religious Education Catholic Education Office Melbourne, Sr. G Danza RSM, then Pastoral Associate, Our Lady's Craigieburn, Rev. M Vidola, then Parish Priest, St Joseph's, North Reservoir, Mrs. N Kitson, then Office for Evangelisation – Special Projects, Emeritus Professor P Carpenter and Rev. G Bennet, then the Foundation Director of the Office. Four (4) of the members of the Implementation Committee, Rev G Bennet, Rev M Vidola, Mrs. C Crawford and Sr. G Danza, had been members of the Committee for Mission, chaired by Bishop C. Prowse.

In 2005 the Implementation Committee met on eight (8) occasions to aid the Director and the staff of the Office to put into effect the wide-ranging brief for the Office received from Archbishop Hart late in 2004 and outlined above.

Phase 2: Vision and Activity

The second phase of the implementation of the Office has been marked by activities designed to commence putting into practice Archbishop Hart's vision for the Office. Again, a number of specific ongoing tasks mark this phase:

- The development of a definition of *evangelisation* for the Archdiocese based upon a foundation of theology and ecclesiology in terms of **worship, proclamation, community and service**;
- The delivery of information, resources, education programs and strategies to target groups in the Archdiocese;
- The development of resources for evangelisation incorporating specific target groups – migrants, young people and families – utilising appropriate technology, multi-media and the resources of the Catholic Education Office;
- Outreach to identified target groups – parishes, deaneries, schools and those seeking Catholic adult education;
- Networking and strategy development across agencies, parishes, ecclesial movements and communities;
- Formation in leadership for lay leaders, pastoral leaders and agency heads.

A key activity for the Office for Evangelisation is that of **formation**.

A major task for the Office for Evangelisation Implementation Committee has been to assist the Office to establish a set of principles and the necessary structure to commence the development of a culture of

lifelong formation in the Archdiocese as mandated by Archbishop Hart. As a first step the Implementation Committee developed, for Archbishop Hart's approval, a set of guiding principles for formation activities to be undertaken by the Office for Evangelisation. These principles are:

1. Formation is lifelong;
2. Formation is to encompass the areas of worship, community, service and proclamation;
3. Broad-based participation will be encouraged to foster inter-connectedness and community;
4. Course delivery will primarily be interpersonal and utilise mixed media where appropriate.
5. Formation will be delivered in regional areas;
6. Formation themes will foster connection to the Archdiocesan mission for evangelisation and ministry;
7. Delivery of the formation courses will be flexible.

These principles have been used to link the four areas of proclamation, worship, service and community to the liturgical cycle in developing a framework for the implementation of formation programs across the Archdiocese. This framework offers three delivery modes: regional formation for ministry which is lectionary-based, presentations using inspirational speakers, and training courses for skills in ministry.

Appendix 2: Correspondents and Submissions to the Review
(alphabetical by surname)

Sr M Fields OP: Pastoral Associate, St Mary's Parish, Dandenong
Ms L Lilburne: Pastoral Associate, St Peter's Parish, Clayton
Mr P Gleeson: Pastoral Associate, Holy Child Parish, Meadow Heights/Dallas
Mrs M George: Pastoral Associate, Sacred Heart, St Kilda – St Columba's, Elwood Parish and member of the Executive of the Association of Pastoral Associates
Mr R Jupp: Pastoral Associate, St Francis Xavier Parish, Montmorency
Rev Fr T Keane: PP, St Francis Xavier Parish, Montmorency
Rev Fr G Keith: PP, Pastoral Cluster incorporating the Parishes of Bell Park, Geelong West and Manifold Heights.
Sr M Kennan PVBM: Pastoral Associate, St Mary's Parish, Hampton
R Lees: Pastoral Associate, St Francis of Assisi Parish, Mill Park
D Lyons: Pastoral Associate, St Thomas the Apostle Parish, Blackburn
Rev Fr G McKernan PP: St Kevin's Parish, Templestowe
Mr K McIntosh: PP, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Sunbury
Rev Fr M Miles PP: St Mary's Parish, Hampton
Mr L Monk: Pastoral Associate, St Francis Xavier Parish, Corio/Lara
Rev Fr P Rankin OP: PP, St Dominic's Parish, East Camberwell
Rev Fr S Rigo PP and Ms J Bright, Pastoral Associate: St Mary's Parish, Greensborough
Ms M Santamaria: Pastoral Associate, Blackrock/Beaumaris Parish
Ms M E van der Weert: Pastoral Associate, Sacred Heart, Newport and St Margaret Mary's, Spotswood.
Religious Education Leader/Literacy Leader, St Peter's Primary School, Keilor East
Sr S Visentin: Pastoral Associate, St Paul's Parish, Coburg
Ms L Willison: St Oliver's Parish, Pascoe Vale Parish, and

Archdiocese of Adelaide – Mrs. H Carey, Chancellor
Archdiocese of Brisbane – Archbishop J Bathurst; Sr M Franzmann PBVM, Ministry Development Officer, Ministry and Community Life, Faith and Life Vicariate; Rev Fr J Chalmers, Director, Centacare Pastoral Ministries
Archdiocese of Perth – Auxiliary Bishop D Sproston
Archdiocese of Sydney – Auxiliary Bishop Porteous
Australian Defence Force – Bishop M Davis
Diocese of Bathurst – Bishop M McKenna
Diocese of Cairns – Ms C Spencer, Manager, Pastoral Support Services
Diocese of Lismore – Bishop G H Jarret
Diocese of Maitland – Newcastle
Diocese of Parramatta – Very Rev R M McGuckin, Vicar General
Diocese of Port Pirie – Bishop G O'Kelly SJ
Diocese of Rockhampton – Bishop B Heenan
Diocese of Wagga Wagga – Bishop G Hanna
Diocese of Wollongong – Bishop P Ingham
Diocese of Townsville – Bishop M Putney
Diocese of Broken Bay – Bishop D L Walker
Diocese of Toowoomba – Mr. R McCormack, Director for Pastoral Formation

Appendix 3: Persons interviewed for the Review and Consultations (alphabetical by surname)

- A. Rev Fr G Bennet PP: Former Director of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation
- B. Fr G Bourke: The Director of the Ministry to Priests
- C. J Bright: Pastoral Associate, St Mary's Parish, Greensborough and recent member of the Executive of the Pastoral Associates' Association.
- D. Rev Fr J Caddy: The Director of CatholicCare
- E. Mr T Carr: The Personnel Manager, Archdiocese of Melbourne
- F. Mrs C Crawford: The Mercy Ethos Coordinator, Sisters of Mercy, Melbourne Congregation
- G. Sr G Danza RSM: Prison chaplain and a member of the Archbishop's Office Interview Panel
- H. Ms A Davies: Pastoral Associate and a member of the Executive of the Pastoral Associates' Association
- I. Mrs F Davis: The Manager, Administration and Projects, Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation
- J. Mrs C Dixon: The Assistant Manager, Marriage and Relationship Unit, Archdiocese of Melbourne and a member of the Archbishop's Office Interview Panel
- K. Ms A Dowling: Pastoral Associate and a member of the Executive of the Pastoral Associates' Association
- L. Ms K Hewitt: The Director of Pastoral Services, Aged Care Services, Mercy Health
- M. Mrs M George: Pastoral Associate and a member of the Executive of the Pastoral Associates' Association
- N. Professor A Hunt OAM: The Dean of the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy at Australian Catholic University
- O. Mrs A Martin: Chairperson of the Leadership Team of the Association of Pastoral Associates
- P. Mrs L McCarthy: A member of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation Advisory Board
- Q. Very Rev Dr S Mackinlay: The Master of Catholic Theological College
- R. Very Rev C Monaghan CP: The Principal of Yarra Theological Union
- S. Br Mark O'Connor FMS: The Director of the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation
- T. Rev Dr D Pascoe: Head of the School of Theology, Australian Catholic University
- U. Ms Liz Payne: The Manager, Pastoral Services, CatholicCare
- V. Rev Fr J Petrulis PP: St Columba's Parish Elwood, Sacred Heart Parish St Kilda West
- W. Sr S Richardson IBVM: A Supervisor from the Heart of Life Spirituality Centre
- X. Mrs F Thompson: Pastoral Associate, Pastoral Services, Aged Care Services, Mercy Health and a member of the Executive of the Pastoral Associates' Association

Consultations

1. A Briefing Consultation was held with the Executive members of the Association of Pastoral Associates
2. Separate regional Consultations were held with Pastoral Associates as follows:
 - Southern Region;
 - Western Region;
 - Eastern Region; and
 - Northern Region of the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

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Lay Ministry in the Church – A Theological Reflection

A paper prepared to accompany the *“Review of the Accreditation Requirements for Pastoral Associates and Lay Chaplains Within the Archdiocese of Melbourne”*.

Lay Ministry in the Church – A Theological Reflection

Preamble

Sharing in the function of Christ, priest, prophet and king, the laity have an active part of their own in the life and activity of the Church. Their activity within the Church communities is so necessary that without it the apostolate of the pastors will frequently be unable to obtain its full effect.”⁷⁴

Even a cursory glance at the life of our parishes and other Church communities will reveal how much our Church is marked by the experience of what is often called “lay ministry”.⁷⁵ Most parishes have an active Parish Pastoral Council, many employ full-time or part-time Pastoral Associates, a significant number would have a team of catechists, and most are blessed with dedicated Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, lectors and readers, choirs, visitors to the sick, youth workers, parish secretaries and so forth. There are as well large numbers of well qualified and dedicated teachers in our Catholic schools, both primary and secondary, and in Catholic and secular universities. All of these people, and others whose specific roles may not be listed here, are engaged in “lay ministry”.

This paper, prepared to accompany the “*Review of the Accreditation Requirements for Pastoral Associates and Lay Chaplains Within the Archdiocese of Melbourne*”, seeks to explore the theological foundations of lay ministry, and to do so within the larger context of a theology of the Church, for it is in and through the Church that lay ministry becomes an expression of the universal call to holiness (Cf. *Lumen Gentium* Chapter 5) and the Christian vocation of discipleship. In particular the paper is concerned to establish the theological foundations for a proper understanding of the relationship between the ordained ministry and those more formally established lay ministries, such as Pastoral Associates, Lay Pastoral Leaders, Parish Pastoral Councils and other similar roles.

The Church, Community of Disciples

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus

⁷⁴ Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Apostolate of the Lay People (Apostolicam Actuositatem) (AA), no. 10; see also LG, no. 33, and Congregation for the Clergy et al., Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests (Ecclesiae de Mysterio) (Washington, DC: USCCB–Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998), Foreword.

⁷⁵ The terminology of “lay ministry” is not without its ambiguities. Pope John Paul II addressed this issue in an address to a symposium on this matter. See Pope John Paul II, Discourse at the Symposium on ‘The Participation of the Lay Faithful in the Priestly Ministry’ (22 April 1994), n.3, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English Language Edition, 11 May, 1994. The Pope recognizes the legitimacy of such usage “in some cases” but alerts us to the danger of confusion between the role of the ordained ministry and the role of the “lay faithful”.

Christ you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy (1 Peter 2:4-5;9-10).

In the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, commonly known by its Latin name "*Lumen Gentium*", the Church is described in a great variety of ways. However the first and arguably most fundamental description of the Church proposed by *Lumen Gentium* is as follows:

The Church, in Christ, is in the nature of a sacrament – a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all people (LG1).

This description, rich in significance, can be understood as giving expression to the fundamental vocation of the Church as the community of the disciples of Christ, and of every baptized person as a member of this community. Individually, and together, we are called to be signs and instruments of communion – with God, with each other and with the whole of humanity.

In the theological understanding of the First Letter of Saint Peter, this community is "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people". It is no surprise then that the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, having established the "sacramental" nature and identity of the Church, should go on to speak of the Church as the "People of God". In paragraph 11 of *Lumen Gentium* it is the sacrament of Baptism which is identified as the foundation of this People.

Incorporated in the Church through baptism, the faithful are destined by the baptismal character for the worship of the Christian religion; reborn as children of God they must confess before all the faith which they have received from God through the Church (LG11).

The same paragraph goes on to speak of the meaning of the Sacrament of Confirmation:

They are more perfectly bound to the Church by the sacrament of Confirmation, and the Holy Spirit endows them with special strength so that they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith, both by word and by deed, as true witnesses of Christ (LG11).

All of this finds its culmination in the celebration of the Eucharist:

Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life, they offer the Divine Victim to God, and offer themselves along with It Strengthened in Holy Communion by the Body of Christ, they then manifest

in a concrete way that unity of the people of God which is suitably signified and wondrously brought about by this most august sacrament (LG11).

These three sacraments, the Sacraments of Initiation, are the foundation of every Christian's life and vocation within the People of God. No-one, whether that person be a lay person, a religious, a deacon, a priest or a bishop, is excluded. This helps us to understand what it means to say, as the document published in preparation for the 2012 Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization reminds us, that the whole Church is missionary.⁷⁶ All are called to "spread and defend the faith".⁷⁷

Pope John Paul II has also written of this fundamental dimension of the life of the Church. In his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifidelis Laici* he writes as follows:

Thus with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Baptism and Confirmation, the baptized share in the same mission of Jesus as the Christ, the Saviour-Messiah (CL13).

Because all the members of the Church "share in the same mission of Jesus as the Christ, the saviour-messiah" all are called to recognize the co-responsibility we have for the life and mission of the Church. As Pope Benedict remarked in a recent address (May 2009) to the Diocesan Synod of the Diocese of Rome:

It is necessary to improve pastoral structures in such a way that the co-responsibility of all the members of the People of God in their entirety is gradually promoted, with respect for vocations and for the respective roles of the consecrated and of lay people.

This demands a change in mindset, particularly concerning lay people. They must no longer be viewed as "collaborators" of the clergy but truly recognized as "co-responsible", for the Church's being and action, thereby fostering the consolidation of a mature and committed laity.⁷⁸

Pope Benedict's words remind us that, while there are different roles and different gifts within our Catholic community, we are all jointly responsible for the Church's fidelity to her fundamental calling, to be "in the nature of a sacrament, a sign and instrument that is, of communion with God and of unity among all people." Through what we say and what we do we are called to *proclaim the mighty acts of him who called (us) out of*

⁷⁶ Synod of Bishops *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith* Vatican City, 2011.

⁷⁷ This insight, of course, is expressed very clearly in another of the documents of Vatican II, namely *Ad Gentes*, the Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, in paragraph 2.

⁷⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, *Address to the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome: "Church Membership and Pastoral Co-responsibility"* St. John Lateran Basilica, May 26, 2009.

darkness into his marvelous light (1 Pet 2:9). We cannot simply leave it to others – not if we wish to be faithful to our deepest identity as disciples.

Practically this means that within the Church we should not think of two classes of people: those who are the active givers and those who are the passive receivers. Rather we are all called to serve and care for each other and we are all called to receive this service and care with gratitude. Of course, as Pope John Paul II has reminded us, this service, if it is truly Christian and ecclesial, must always be understood with constant reference to the one source, the “ministry of Christ.”⁷⁹ If we minister to each other, it is only because we share in the ministry of Christ. If we are a priestly people, it is only because we are in communion with Christ the one true Priest. It is his priesthood, and his ministry, that we share and to which we give expression. As Saint Paul reminds us, we are all called to have in us “the same mind that was in Christ Jesus” (Phil 2:5).

The Church “in Christ”

When we speak of “the People of God” or of a “priestly people” we are of course speaking of the Church. Rather than isolated individuals we are a people, a communion of faith and discipleship, and our true identity is to be found here. Established by Christ (LG 8) and empowered by his Spirit (Cf. LG 4), the Church of Christ, which “subsists in the Catholic Church” (LG 8) is our home and the place in which we live out our vocation. As *Lumen Gentium* explains, we are “a sacrament” of communion only because we are “in Christ” (Cf. LG 1). It is he who is the source of our communion and it is he who stands at the heart of our communion. Saint Paul reminds us of this in the Letter to the Galatians:

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ (Gal 3:27).

This “clothing in Christ” is renewed and deepened whenever we celebrate the Eucharist. Once again it is Saint Paul who makes this clear:

Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread (1 Cor 10:17).

This is why Pope Benedict, in the address already referred to, insists that

in giving us his Body, (Christ) reunites us in this Body of his to make us one. In the communion of the “Body of Christ” we all become one people, the People of God, in which to cite St Paul again all are one and there are no longer distinctions or differences ... we are all united in Christ.

⁷⁹ Cf. John Paul II, Discourse at the Symposium on ‘The Participation of the lay Faithful in the Priestly Ministry’ (22 April 1994), n.3, *L’Osservatore Romano*, English Language Edition, 11 May 1994.

Thus we see that the two concepts "People of God" and "Body of Christ" complete each other and together form the New Testament concept of Church.⁸⁰

Any understanding of ministry, therefore, needs to find its home within the communion of the Church, and understand itself as an expression of the Church's identity and mission. If we are to "get ministry right" we need to first "get the Church right". We must ask ourselves how it is that the Church becomes and remains the "People of God" and the "Body of Christ". How do we remain "in Christ"? At least part of the answer to this question is found in the structure and ordering of the Church which, as Vatican 11 affirms, is given to us by Christ (Cf. LG18).

A hierarchically-structured Church

Lumen Gentium, having established very firmly the Church's "sacramental" nature, and having expressed its fundamental character as the People of God, devotes considerable attention to the Church's hierarchical structure (Cf. *Lumen Gentium* chapter 3). It indicates that this ordering of the Church, which is the expression of God's will for his Church, is at the service of the Church's fidelity to its nature and mission. This hierarchical structure is founded on the Apostles and their successors and continues into our own time.

With priests and deacons as helpers, the bishops received the charge of the community, presiding in God's stead over the flock of which they are the shepherds in that they are teachers of doctrine, ministers of sacred worship and holders of office in government (LG20).

The ordained ministry, therefore, is at the heart of the Church's identity. Its task is to enable the whole Church to be the "priestly people of God" and the "Body of Christ". The bishops, who according to the teaching of Vatican 11, have the fullness of the sacrament of Orders,⁸¹ preside in God's stead over the flock of Christ in three specific ways, namely as teachers, as ministers of sacred worship and as holders of office in government. These three dimensions of the office and role of bishop find their origin in the three-fold "munera" of Christ who is presented in the teaching of Vatican 11 as the prophet (teacher), the priest (minister of sacred worship) and as king (holder of office in government).⁸²

While the bishops have the fullness of the sacrament of Orders, priests (presbyters) and in a more limited way deacons also share in this ordained ministry. While deacons are

⁸⁰ Pope Benedict XVI, *Address to the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome: "Church Membership and Pastoral Co-responsibility"* St. John Lateran Basilica, May 26, 2009.

⁸¹ LG21.

⁸² LG chapters 10, 12 & 13.

ordained “not for the priesthood but for service”⁸³ those ordained as priests (presbyters) receive a share in the priesthood of Christ. Like the bishop, and always in communion with him, they share in the three-fold munera of Christ and exercise a role as teachers, sacred ministers and leaders of the Christian community. As *Lumen Gentium* expresses it priests

are consecrated in order to preach the Gospel and shepherd the faithful as well as to celebrate divine worship as true priests of the new covenant (LG28).

Reflection on the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, and on the long theological traditions which find expression in that teaching, has enabled the Church to appreciate more clearly the rich nature of the ordained ministry and the ways in which the priesthood of the ordained (bishops and presbyters) is related to the priesthood of the whole Church. The meaning of the enigmatic statement in chapter 10 of *Lumen Gentium* is becoming clearer:

Though they differ in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless ordered one to another; each in its own proper way shares in the one priesthood of Christ (LG10).

In order to understand the meaning of this mutuality between the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial priesthood, and therefore the mutuality between the ministry of the ordained and lay ministry, it is necessary to return to the Vatican Council’s teaching on the Church as being “in the nature of a sacrament” of communion. As has already been noted this is only true because the Church is “in Christ”. How is the Church “in Christ”? How is Christ in the Church? What is the relationship between Christ and his Church?

Christ and His Church

Three biblical images can help us to understand better the relationship between Christ and his Church, though they do not exhaust the mystery. They are the images of Christ as the head with the Church as his body (Cf. Eph 5:23; Col 1:18), of Christ as the shepherd with the Church as his flock (Cf. Jn 10:11-15), and of Christ as the spouse with his Church as the bride (Cf. Eph 5:21-32). Each of these images points to the intimacy of Christ with his Church, but also to the distinction between Christ and his Church. Each image also points to the dependence of the Church, the People of God, on Christ. The body is lifeless without its head, the flock will scatter without its shepherd and the bride can only be the bride if united with her spouse.

All three images offer subtle and significant insights into the relationship between Christ and his Church. However it is the first, that of Christ as head of the Church which is his

⁸³ Cf. St. Hippolytus, *Trad. ap.* 8:Sch 11,58-62.

body, which finds a significant place in the theology of the Second Vatican Council when it deals with the matter of the ordained ministry.

In the document on the Life and Ministry of Priests (*Presbyterorum ordinis*) we read that

... priests, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are signed with a special character and are conformed to Christ the Priest in such a way that they can act in the person of Christ the Head (PO 2).

This is so, according to the teaching of the Council, because

... the office of priests, since it is connected with the episcopal order, also, in its own degree, shares the authority by which Christ builds up, sanctifies and rules his Body (PO 2).

Of the episcopal office, to which the office of presbyter is connected, the Council will say that

... bishops in an eminent and visible way sustain the roles of Christ Himself as Teacher, Shepherd and High Priest, and that they act in His person (LG 21).

The intimate and essential connection between the bishop and the priest points to the unity of the ordained ministry. This ministry, particularly as it pertains to these two roles of bishop and priest, exists so that Christ may be present in and to his Church as head and shepherd. The ordained ministry therefore “sacramentalises” this presence of Christ to his Church. In traditional Catholic theology this can be expressed by saying that the ordained ministry of bishops and priest *signifies* and *effects* Christ’s presence to his Church as head and shepherd.

This is precisely what John Paul 11 teaches in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo Vobis*:

In the Church and on behalf of the Church, priests are a sacramental representation of Jesus Christ - the head and shepherd - authoritatively proclaiming his word, repeating his acts of forgiveness and his offer of salvation - particularly in baptism, penance and the Eucharist, showing his loving concern to the point of a total gift of self for the flock, which they gather into unity and lead to the Father through Christ and in the Spirit (PDV 15).

Of course this “sacramentalising” role is at the service of the whole Church. If, as *Lumen Gentium* teaches, the whole Church is “in the nature of a sacrament ... of communion with God and of unity among all people” (LG !), then we must say that the whole Church is in the nature of a sacrament of Christ for he himself is the great sign and instrument of this communion. However, for the Church to be what it is called to be, it must live out of the truth of its utter dependence on its head and shepherd, Christ

himself. It is the ordained ministry which enables this reality to be concretely lived in the life of the Church.

There is a three-fold dimension to this “sacramentalising” role within the Church. It is that which is identified by Vatican 11 and expressed in *Presbyterorum ordinis*: the authority by which Christ builds up, sanctifies and rules his Body (PO 2). This corresponds in large part to the three-fold munera of Christ as prophet (building up the body), priest (sanctifying the body) and king (ruling the body).

It is clear from this theological perspective that the ordained ministry exists to be at the service of the whole Church in order to enable the Church to be faithful to its fundamental identity and vocation. This service is of a very particular kind. The ordained ministry sacramentally makes Christ present in and to his Church specifically as its head and shepherd. The ordained ministry acts *in persona Christi capitis* (in the person of Christ as head) so that the whole Church can be the sacrament (the sign and instrument) of Christ in and to the world. The role of the ordained ministry to act in the person of Christ the head does not exclude the whole community of the Church from being the “sacrament” of Christ. Rather it makes it possible.

It is within this context and this theology that we can situate the role of those who exercise what we are calling in this paper “lay ministry”. In particular it helps us to appreciate the particular nature of the contribution made by those who assume a more formal and explicit role in the formation and leadership of the ecclesial community, be it a parish, a school or any other Church institution.

Because the ordained minister (bishop or priest) is both sacramentally empowered and, in consequence of this, canonically assigned to be the “living and effective sign” of the presence of Christ to his people as their head and shepherd, the leadership and governance of the community of faith is entrusted to him. It is important to see that this is first and foremost a theological truth which subsequently finds expression in the Code of Canon Law. There it is made clear that the pastoral care of a parish community, and of all the apostolic works undertaken by that community, must be entrusted to the care and oversight of a priest (or in the case of a diocese, of a bishop).⁸⁴ This is the case even in those situations where it is not possible for a parish community to have a resident priest. If a lay person (including a religious sister or brother) is entrusted with the care of a local community, it will always be under the pastoral care and supervision of a priest.⁸⁵ This is a canonical requirement because it is first a theological requirement. It cannot be otherwise if the ordained ministry “sacramentalises” the headship of Christ in his Church.

It is a significant feature of our contemporary Church that many people who are not ordained discern a vocation from God to work formally in what might be called the internal life of the Church. Some do so on a part-time basis and many do so on a voluntary basis. There are also many for whom their vocation becomes their profession.

⁸⁴ Cf. Canon 515, p.1 Cf. also Canon 369.

⁸⁵ Cf. Canon 517, p.2.

They are employed, either full-time or part-time, as parish managers, parish Pastoral Associates, catechists, or in some other role. It is their task and their privilege to work in close collaboration with the proper pastor of the parish, helping him to fulfil his role as the living sign of Christ's presence to his people as their head and shepherd. Depending on local circumstances they will assist him in his decision-making and support him in his ministry. Ideally they will form a partnership or team with him and their expertise, their pastoral gifts, their lived experience and their wisdom will be an invaluable contribution to the life and mission of the parish community. Ideally too the parish priest will recognise the rich potential that such a team of people, working collaboratively together, can bring to the parish community. A deep sense of shared responsibility for the life of the parish will emerge⁸⁶ as the parish leadership team, gathered around the priest as the living sign of the presence of the Good Shepherd, works together to enable every member of the parish to live out the fullness of their baptismal commitment.

As was pointed out at the beginning of this paper, in this whole discussion we are caught up in the reality and the mystery of the Church. Ordained ministry is at the service of the Church. So too are all those other ministries which can together be classified as lay ministry. Every parish, and all who work in the parish, do so as members of Christ's body the Church. No parish stands alone but is always part of a diocese. And of course, no diocese stands alone but is always a part of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church. As priests minister in and to their parishes, acting *in persona Christi capitis*, and sharing the burden and joy of their ministry with their Pastoral Associates, catechists and others, they and their collaborators are servants of unity and communion. The priest together with his Pastoral Associate(s) and other key collaborators, will foster and deepen communion with the local bishop, who presides in God's stead over the flock of which he is the shepherd (Cf. LG 20). In this regard the words of Saint Ignatius of Antioch are worth pondering:

... I exhort you to strive to do all things in harmony with God: the bishop is to preside in the place of God, while the presbyters are to function as the council of the Apostles, and the deacons, who are most dear to me, are entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ, who before time began was with the Father and has at last appeared. Conform yourselves, then - all of you - to God's ways, and respect one another, and let no one regard his neighbour with the eyes of the flesh, but love one another at all times in Jesus Christ. Let there be nothing among you tending to divide you, but be united with the bishop and those who preside - serving at once as a pattern and as a lesson of incorruptibility.

Just as the Lord, therefore, being one with the Father, did nothing without Him, either by Himself, or through the Apostles, so neither must you undertake anything without the bishop and the presbyters; nor must you attempt to convince

⁸⁶ This is the concept alluded to earlier which Pope Benedict expressed in an address to the Synod of Rome. Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, *Address to the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome: "Church Membership and Pastoral Co-responsibility"* St. John Lateran Basilica, May 26, 2009.

yourselves that anything you do on your own account is acceptable. No; at your meetings there must be one prayer, one supplication, one mind, one hope in love, in joy that is flawless, that is Jesus Christ, who stands supreme. Come together, all of you, as to one temple and one altar, to one Jesus Christ - to Him who came forth from one Father and yet remained with, and returned to, one.⁸⁷

Because of our common baptism we are all called to be, together, a living sign of the presence of Christ as saviour of the world. In order for us to realise our vocation and to be faithful to it, we look to the presence of our bishops and priests as the sacramental (visible and efficacious) sign that Christ is present to us as our head and shepherd. Through their ministry of preaching, sanctifying and governing according to the mind and heart of Jesus himself, they enable us to be *a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people* (1 Peter 2:9).

The presence of committed lay people within our parishes or other ecclesial setting working closely with the priest or priests who have been entrusted with the pastoral care of their community is a sign of hope and promise for our Church. Their ministry enriches the life of our parishes and other communities and complements and extends the ministry of the priests. This is especially true of those who work in close communion with the priests in the pastoral care of God's people. Among such people, Pastoral Associates and lay chaplains have an especially privileged role.

The task ahead of us is clear: we are all called to work together, in full harmony with the theology and discipline of the Church, to foster that "spirituality of communion" of which Pope John Paul II speaks in *Novo Millennio Ineunte*.⁸⁸ This spirituality of communion, "by prompting a trust and openness wholly in accord with the dignity and responsibility of every member of the People of God, supplies institutional reality with a soul".⁸⁹ The Lord is asking this of us and awaits our response.

+Bishop Timothy Costelloe SDB

November 4, 2011
Memorial of Saint Charles Borromeo

⁸⁷ St Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Magnesians* 6:2; 7:1;7:2.

⁸⁸ *NMI* 43.

⁸⁹ *NMI* 45.

