

The Church calls each member of Christ's Body – priest, deacon, lay-person – to participate in the ministry of consolation: to care for the dying, to pray for the dead, to comfort those who mourn..

Order of Christian Funerals a.8



*What's happening in your parish?
What would you like to happen?*

Is parish outreach to the dying and bereaved a need in your area? Is this a ministry your community would like to develop and energise?

Who are those approaching death in your area? Where are they? Do they experience the love and support of the Christian community?

What supports are available in your local area and do you know how to help people access them?

Look around your community. If you were dying, who would you like to companion you? Invite them to consider ministry with the dying and bereaved

**The ministry of consolation
needs the involvement of many people
with different gifts.
It can't be left to one or two people.**

Tenison Woods Education Centre
A ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Lochinvar

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A Missionary Church

**Reaching out
through
End of Life Ministry**

Parishes choosing life...



*Come and See
A Journey into ministry
with the dying and the bereaved*

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Phase One Parish Discernment

Upon request members of the *Stepping Stones* committee accompany a parish community in exploring how it might develop and energise its outreach through ministry with the dying and the bereaved.

How: Through participation in a parish discernment workshop

Who: Parish Leadership, those already involved in 'end of life' ministry all interested in this ministry.

Where: In your parish

Time: 2 hours

When: as arranged by the parish

Aim: To—

- Explore the nature of 'end of life' ministry;
- Identify existing ministry and other available community support;
- Identify the parish need regarding ministry with the dying and the bereaved;
- Outline *Stepping Stones* and determine whether it would help the parish;
- Identify the next step the parish wishes to take.

Phase Two Stepping Stones Initial Formation

Step 1: *We Grieve ...*

Seeks to support participants by inviting them to:

- Explore and reflect on their own experiences of grief;
- Develop their understanding of grief.

Transition 1: *Foundations of Reflective Ministry*

This involves—

- A *Stepping In* Gathering
- A Reflective Ministry Workshop
- Beginning *A Taste of Ministry* which continues through *Stepping Stones*
- A Discernment Conversation—as appropriate

Step II: *We Minister ...*

Seeks to support participants by inviting them to:

- Reflect on their pastoral experiences of visiting the dying and the bereaved in their own parish;
- Develop a theology of sickness, suffering and death;
- Practice the skills of: active listening, empathy, self-awareness and self-care.

Transition 2: *Informing Reflective Ministry*

This involves—

- Safe Ministry Practice Workshop [Parish Child Protection Workshop]
- Group Discernment
- A Discernment Conversation—as appropriate

Step III: *We Pray Together ...*

Seeks to support participants by inviting them to:

- deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ through prayer, ritual, reflection and examination of the funeral rites;
- review their understanding of Church and Catholic liturgy;
- become familiar with the various liturgical ministries, especially that of the Lay Liturgical Leader;
- develop understandings central to working with families in the preparation of the Funeral Rites;
- discern their involvement in liturgical ministry.

Transition 3: *Reflective Ministry in Context*

This involves—

- Diocesan Policies and Procedures Workshop
- Discernment Conversation

Phase Three Transition to Ministry in the Parish

Step IV: *Stepping Out ...*

A time for parish leadership, existing death and bereavement ministers and *Stepping Stones* participants to —

- Share each person's discerned ministry;
- Revisit parish needs and hopes for their ministry with the dying and bereaved—from the initial parish discernment workshop;
- Work on a charter for this ministry in their parish;
- Reflect and ritually mark the end of *Stepping Stones*.

Step V: *Commissioning*

Each parish commissions and celebrates their new Ministers.