

National Vocation Framework 2024 – 2025

Pilgrims of Hope

In the years 2024 and 2025, the Universal Church directs its attention to the Jubilee- *a year of favour*¹. It is surely right that as an office of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales, the National Office for Vocation (NOV) should direct its energies to respond to the great gift of renewal and hope expressed in the preparation and celebration of such a significant time of grace. For this reason, *Pilgrims of Hope* will be the driving inspiration for planning for the next two years.

Attention to young people will be central to the projects, since these youthful years are the privileged years of formation, decision making, and of new life. Notwithstanding this, NOV will always be attentive to brothers and sisters of any age, who seek companionship on the journey of following the Lord more closely and meaningfully.

Sensitive to the needs of the local ecclesial reality at this time, the pressing need to encourage those who might be called by the Lord to dedicate themselves to a life of special consecration has been recognised. These vocations of service to the Church and the whole people of God deserve particular attention for the continued wellbeing of the Church's mission, and the sacraments with which the Church nurtures us. The Church needs good and holy priests, deacons and consecrated men and women; she needs faithful and dedicated husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, and single people committed to the love of God and the service of their brothers and sisters.

*'We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us, and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision. The forthcoming Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire.'*²

Attentive to the call of Pope Francis to celebrate this Jubilee year, 'To foster a renewed awareness of the universal call to responsible participation by enhancing the charisms and ministries that the Holy Spirit never ceases to bestow for the building up of the one Church.'³ with the spiritual tools of "deep faith, lively hope and active charity.'⁴ NOV will work to:

¹ C.f. Isaiah 61

² Letter Of the Holy Father Francis to Msgr. Rino Fisichella, President of The Pontifical Council for The Promotion of The New Evangelization, For the Jubilee 2025

³ Letter Of the Holy Father Francis to Msgr. Rino Fisichella, President of The Pontifical Council for The Promotion of The New Evangelization, For the Jubilee 2025

⁴ Letter Of the Holy Father Francis to Msgr. Rino Fisichella, President of The Pontifical Council for The Promotion of The New Evangelization, For the Jubilee 2025

Objectives:

1. Promote active Christian Discipleship by working to embed an awareness of vocational identity in every generation in the Church.
2. Support those working in the Church, to promote Evangelisation, Discipleship and Vocational choices.

To promote active Christian Discipleship by working to embed an awareness of vocational identity in every generation in the church.

When a person understands that they are *called*, that they have a *purpose*, they are empowered by the joy of knowing they have a place in God's eternal plan for creation. This realisation liberates us all from the incessant search for meaning in temporal distractions and directs our energies to that meaningful fulfilment which is found in God alone. The energy of this empowerment spurs us to enter into communion with all our brothers and sisters, loving them, serving them, and journeying with them.

Faith-in-action

'Make your faith credible through your decisions. For unless faith gives rise to convincing lifestyles, it will not be a "leaven"⁵ in the world. It is not enough for us Christians to be convinced; we must also be convincing.'⁶

The National Office for Vocation sits within the Department for Evangelisation and Discipleship. This placement underlines the close relationship between following Jesus in a definite service⁷ and the mission of evangelisation in the church; those who are called are also sent to make disciples in their turn⁸. The witness of our faith through our lifestyle⁹ proclaims the Gospel of life to our brothers and sisters, and the faithful living out of our vocational state speaks louder than any word we could ever utter.

- NOV will work to promote vocational awareness alongside the call to be missionary disciples.
- NOV will work to encourage those living out their vocation, to actively witness to the Lord's work in their lives transparently and authentically – evangelising by the invitation to *come and see*¹⁰. This means, we are all the vehicle of that vocational call of the Lord.
- NOV will encourage those persons who are discerning their vocation, to commit themselves in some concrete way, so that they conform themselves more and more to the dream God has for them in a more

⁵ C.f. Matthew 13:33

⁶ *Meeting With University Students Address of His Holiness to Portugal on The Occasion of The XXXVII World Youth Day (2-6 August 2023)*

⁷ C.f. John Henry Cardinal Newman: "Some Definite Service"

⁸ C.f. Matthew 28:19

⁹ C.f. James 2:14-26

¹⁰ C.f. John 1:38

complete, decisive, and fulfilling way, evading all temptations of superficial role-playing and provisional commitment.

- NOV will particularly encourage prayer, deeper engagement with Scripture, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, prayer before a crucifix, or before a holy icon, as tools which encourage people to come to know the Lord more closely, so as to imitate him more authentically in their daily lives. “In worshipping God, we rediscover that we are free.”¹¹

Hope

‘Let us find the courage to see our world not as in its death throes, but in a process of giving birth, not at the end, but at the beginning of a great new chapter of history.’¹²

‘Created by him in his image and likeness, we can be signs of his love, which gives rise to joy and hope even in situations that appear hopeless.’¹³

The challenge to see the new life that the Lord always brings in his Church is often frustrated by the culture of our times. This can have significant impact on the wellbeing of our brothers and sisters, especially those who are young. The theological virtue of hope urges us to believe that God walks with us even in these turbulent times.¹⁴ This is the virtue with which we can fiercely combat the culture of death and despair by bringing in our own persons, the life that flows like a river from Jesus into The Church for the world.¹⁵ The Paschal mystery is the source of our hope, the truth that through death, our Lord Jesus rose to life, and that in Him, we too will triumph over the darkness that presses around.

Hope is the virtue which we cling to, believing in particular regard for pastors and leaders for our Church, in the promise of God who says through the prophet Jeremiah, ‘I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.’¹⁶

- NOV will work with schools, university chaplaincies, and youth ministers to promote positive wellbeing and purpose for young people in churches, encouraging them to unveil the wonder of a life belonging to Jesus and his Church.
- NOV will work to promote discernment to the diocesan priesthood, diaconate, and religious life, as an imperative to provide servants and leaders for the people of God.

¹¹ C.f. Homily of His Holiness Pope Francis, Conclusion of the Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, St Peter's Basilica, XXX Sunday in Ordinary Time - Sunday, 29 October 2023

¹² *Meeting With University Students Address of His Holiness to Portugal on The Occasion of The XXXVII World Youth Day (2-6 August 2023)*

¹³ Letter Of the Holy Father Francis to Msgr. Rino Fisichella, President of The Pontifical Council for The Promotion of The New Evangelization, For the Jubilee 2025

¹⁴ C.f. CCC #1818

¹⁵ C.f. Ezekiel 47

¹⁶ C.f. Jeremiah 3:15

Charity

'In the book of Genesis, the first questions God asks are: "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9) and "Where is your brother?" (Genesis 4:9). We do well to ask ourselves: Where am I? Am I trapped in my own bubble, or am I ready to take the risk of leaving my security behind and becoming a faithful Christian, working to shape a world of justice and beauty? Or again: Where is my brother or sister?' ¹⁷

Our common vocation is to communion with our fellow human beings, and to communion with God. We are called to live out our likeness to our creator,¹⁸ by loving and by building up the body of Christ each according to the gifts given to us.¹⁹ Charity is love, to care for our brothers and sisters, and to love them enough to share Jesus with them. We cannot live simply for ourselves, but also with a concern for the growth of our neighbour.

- NOV's work will seek to promote vocational awareness among those people who are often forgotten in the traditional target audiences, seeking to cast our net on the other side of the boat²⁰ with the original invitation of Jesus to 'come, follow me.'²¹
- NOV will work with schools, universities, and youth ministers to encourage service and care for our common home, as tools to sustain our spiritual growth and development and as found throughout the Scriptures.

Shaping the World

'One of the most important tasks for Christians is to recover the meaning of the incarnation. Without the incarnation, Christianity becomes an ideology – and currently there is the temptation towards "Christian ideologies." Whereas the incarnation enables us to be amazed by the beauty of Christ revealed through every brother and sister, every man and woman.'²²

Our world is living a time of great uncertainty, with shifting models of lifestyles and values. For the Christian, Jesus is our Way, our Truth, and our Life²³, our model and example. The National Office for Vocation will work to promote an understanding of service to our neighbour modelled on the example of Jesus' way of teaching, healing, and praying, a model of our God who became man so that he could live alongside us. We are called by God to live in communion with Jesus and with the Church at the service of the world.

¹⁷ *Meeting With University Students Address of His Holiness to Portugal on the occasion of the XXXVII World Youth Day (2-6 August 2023)*

¹⁸ C.f. Genesis 1:27

¹⁹ C.f. Ephesians 4

²⁰ C.f. John 21:6

²¹ C.f. Matthew 4:19

²² *Meeting With University Students Address of His Holiness to Portugal on the occasion of the XXXVII World Youth Day (2-6 August 2023)*

²³ John 14:5-7

- The work of the National Office for Vocation will seek to promote vocational discernment which is attentive to the natural gifts of the individual and encourage those discerners to place these gifts in joyful service of the church.²⁴
- Jesus' teaching of the beatitudes helps us understand values which are for many, counter cultural. The Gospel values are not of this Kingdom.²⁵ We will work to help guide those with whom we work to bring life to these Gospel values as a courageous witness to the Kingship of Christ in their lives, making of them models of evangelisation, charity, and compassion.
- Mary, the first Apostle of Jesus, is our model of faith, hope and love. We encourage discerners to reflect on the example of the most Holy of God's creation to follow her as obedient and fruitful disciples, bringing into life, Jesus in our own selves.

To support those working in the Church, to promote Evangelisation, Discipleship and Vocational choices.

'Devote 2024, the year preceding the Jubilee event, to a great "symphony" of prayer. Prayer, above all else, to renew our desire to be in the presence of the Lord, to listen to him and to adore him.'²⁶

Prayer is the foundation of our Christian lives, and the lifegiving energy of our participation in Christ.

- The National Office for Vocation will work to provide formation resources for use in schools, youth groups, and parishes, which encourage prayer for vocations and inspiration from the many models of vocation found in the Scriptures.
- NOV will prepare resources for Eucharistic Adoration, encouraging people to know Jesus who loves them, and follow Jesus who can direct their lives to fulfilment.
- NOV will continue to support vocation directors in their work of promoting vocation to service in the Church, through resources, training, and advice.
- NOV will continue to work together with organisations promoting active participation in the Church.
- NOV will continue to work to build up a culture of service born of faith and charity to neighbour.

²⁴ C.f. 2 Corinthians 9:7

²⁵ C.f. John 18:36

²⁶ Letter Of the Holy Father Francis to Msgr. Rino Fisichella, President of The Pontifical Council for The Promotion Of The New Evangelization, For The Jubilee 2025