

A parish in the Care of the Salesians of Don Bosco – Northeast Hampshire Pastoral Area
Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth - Registered Charity Number 1199568

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PARISH OFFICE: 71 High View Road – Open, Tuesday to Friday – 8.30 to 12.00.

The Collaborative Empowerment Ministry Model

A way forward for the Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes and Saint Dominic Savio – Farnborough, Hampshire.

Pope Francis has proposed '**Synodality - Walking Together**' for the Universal Church and he says that "the world in which we live, and which we are called to love and serve, even with its contradictions, demands that the Church strengthen cooperation in all areas of her mission. It is precisely the path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium." ¹

Through his writings, speeches and his symbolic actions, he has clarified his intention to usher in a **Missionary-Synodal Church** with bottom-up and participatory communication.

Rt. Rev. Philip A Egan, Bishop of Portsmouth in agreement with the Salesian Provincial, Fr Gerry Briody SDB has assigned the care of the parish of OLSD to the Salesians of Don Bosco represented in the person of Fr Anthony Lobo, SDB. As a religious, he is called to work in union with the bishop and to preserve the Salesian Identity and charism to the parish entrusted to the Salesian congregation.

Inspiration:

- Pope Francis' call for a "Synodal Church" one that walks and works together and fosters collaborative decision-making.
- Alignment with the diocesan mission plan.
- Salesian charism emphasising working with young people.

Mission:

Our journeying together is to build on the three pillars of **Evangelisation, Catechesis and Formation** to bring about the Kingdom of God at OLSD. The parish to be a privileged space for young people for evangelisation-missionary community and to assume the pastoral guidelines of the Salesian identity and spirituality. The **Laity are Indispensable Partners in the Evangelisation Mission of the Church.**

¹"Address of his Holiness Pope Francis at the ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of the institution of the synod of bishops," Paul VI Audience Hall, Saturday, 17 October 2015,
https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html

Vision:

As a Salesian pastor of OLSD the vision is to be a synodal parish church, where we walk and collaborate to create a more **engaged, vibrant, inclusive parish community**, reflecting the vision of Pope Francis, the mission of the diocese of Portsmouth and the Salesian Spiritual Identity.

Model:

- **Biblical Basis:** The concept of shared leadership finds support in the Bible, where Jesus is seen collaborating with his disciples. Paul emphasizes the importance of shared leadership and using one's power to empower others. As Paul states in Ephesians 4:11-12, "And these were his gifts: some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip God's people for work in his service, to the building up of the Body of Christ."
- **The Salesians of Don Bosco**, a Catholic religious order with a focus on youth ministry, have been given the responsibility of the parish in question. Young people are actively involved in planning and execution.
- **Parish Pastoral Council (PPC):** The PPC comprises twelve ministry leaders who oversee twelve ministries and who collaborate on initiatives aligned with the parish's mission, vision, and the diocese's mission plan. These are volunteers chosen by the Pastor and who have generously been giving of their time, talents, gifts, and resources for service of the mission in building the parish community. Emphasis on shared decision-making through prayer, discussion, and discernment. Leaders empower their ministry teams.
- **Role of Parish Pastoral Council (PPC):** The PPC advises the pastor on pastoral matters and fosters participation from the entire parish community.
- **Collaborative Empowerment Ministry Model:** This model proposes a leadership structure where the pastor empowers twelve volunteer ministers to lead twelve parish ministries. Each minister then forms a team of six parishioners as in the gospel of 72 disciples being sent on a mission.

Goals:

- Empower parishioners to participate in the parish mission.
- Foster a more vibrant, inclusive, and healthy parish community.
- Reduce the burden on the pastor.
- Align with the diocesan mission plan and Salesian educative pastoral plan.
- Overcome resistance to change and traditional leadership styles.
- Address potential socio-pastoral obstacles.

Alignment:

- **The Mission plan of our diocese of Portsmouth** is three-fold in bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through our parishes.
 - To be a Christ-centred church – **Evangelisation**.
 - To be a missionary community – **Catechesis**.
 - To be prudent stewards – **Formation**.
- **Salesian Educative Pastoral Plan (SEPP):** This plan emphasises co-responsibility, youth involvement, and creating a welcoming environment for all.

This plan outlines five key areas for a Salesian parish:

An outline of the **Salesian Educative Pastoral Plan:**²

1. **A CENTRE** for evangelisation and education in the faith.
 - From a pastoral care of sacramentals only to an initiation and maturation in the Christian life.
 - It offers a systematic proposal for evangelisation and education in the faith.
 - Attentive to continuous, gradual, and diversified paths of Christian life.
 - A community where one can experience the values of Salesian Youth Spirituality.
 - Promotes the centrality of the Word of God.
 - Makes community life central.
 - The sacraments of Christian life.
 - Feeds the devotion to Mary Help of Christians'.
 - Gives relevance to educational mediation.
2. **A PRESENCE** of the Church open and inserted in the territory.
 - Socially inserted in the daily life of the territory.
 - Believers: all those who inhabit the geographical space (baptised in their diversity, Christians who have moved away, people of other religions, non-believers, doubters or indifferent).
 - With a Salesian style of welcome.
 - Significant centre also of all the various ecclesial communities and groups.
 - Attentive to dialogue with other religions and traditional beliefs.
3. **A COMMUNITY** with a missionary outlook.
 - The evangelical preferential option for those most in need.
 - Pastoral attitude of openness, of welcoming, which requires us to sharpen our gaze, to reach out to all.
 - Treating existential unity of evangelisation, human promotion, and Christian culture.
 - Greater care and pastoral attention towards the elderly, foreigners, "existential" peripheries, emergencies, and parish missionary chapels and stations.
4. **A CLEAR OPTION** for the Young and the working-class people.
 - Preferential choice for youth (not exclusionary) and popular character of wide acceptance.
 - Up-to-date knowledge of the youth situation.
 - Elaboration of itineraries, initiatives, and proposals for young people.
 - Valuing people who work with/for youth.
 - Awareness of the diocesan community.
 - Concern to bring the young people most in need closer to the faith.
 - Interest in the world of work and unemployment.
 - Promotion of active participation of young people in the celebrations.
 - Updating the processes of Christian initiation and formation.
 - Renewal of songs, gestures, language, etc.
 - Youth participation in parish groups and bodies.
 - Sensitisation of the entire parish community for educational issues.
 - Adult preparation on youth issues.

² Cf. The Parishes and Shrines entrusted to the Salesians – Sector for Salesian Youth Ministry. <https://www.sdb.cz/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/parrocchia-en.pdf>

5. **A PLACE of CONVERGENCE** of the different ministries in the Parish.

- Central Ministry (PPC) in which all other ministries converge as a place of reference to celebrate and share the faith.
- "Tent of encounter" where the PPC meets and prays to discern the activities of the various ministries.
- Place of welcome in the Parish for all walks and pilgrims of life.
- The Parish a Space and Place of joyful celebration, linked to life.
- "Family" for the children, seated at the table of the Father.

Benefits:

This collaborative approach aims to:

- o **Share the burden:** Reduce the workload on the pastor and distribute leadership responsibilities.
- o **Empower parishioners:** Allow parishioners to use their gifts, time, talents, and resources for the good of the parish.
- o **Increase effectiveness:** Enhance the parish's ability to fulfil its mission.

Governance:

- The parish priest takes on the role of presiding over the Pastoral Council, while the PPC Chairperson takes on the role of chairing it. The pastor's role is crucial in ensuring that the council operates effectively and aligns with the mission and vision of the parish (Salesian Parish) and the diocese. While the council advises and recommendations, the pastor remains the proper shepherd of the parish.
- The pastor keeps ultimate responsibility but consults with the PPC.
- The PPC advises and makes recommendations.

Challenges and Considerations:

- **Shifting Power Dynamics:** moving to a more collaborative model may require overcoming resistance to change and traditional power structures.
- **Socio-pastoral obstacles:** Being able to identify potential challenges like competitiveness, parochialism, and lack of training that can hinder collaboration.
- **Canonical Considerations:** The role of the pastor and PPC within the Church's legal framework. The pastor has the legal and ultimate responsibility while valuing the PPC's collaborative role and respecting their decisions.



28.03.2024

Fr Anthony Clifford Lobo SDB
Priest-in-charge