

PARISH OF OUR LADY AND ST DAVID, CWMBRAN

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THE MINISTRY OF DIACONATE

In the most recent *Ad Clerum*, the Archbishop's Letter to the Clergy of the Diocese, Archbishop Mark noted that, following consultation, he has agreed "to explore a discernment of potential candidates for the Permanent Diaconate in both dioceses".

The ministry of deacon is hugely significant in the life of our Church; a ministry of service to the life of the local Church. Among many other things, the deacon assists the priest at the altar, celebrates the sacraments, and has a particular ministry to the proclamation of the Word of God.

The period of discernment, which Archbishop Mark has opened up in our diocese, is significant. It's a chance for those men, who feel that they have a calling to the diaconate, to explore at a deep level what God is asking of them; how God is calling them to live out their vocation in the world. I am reminded of the words of Pope Francis, to a group of seminarians recently, who asked them: "what do you seek?" In seeking to discern God's will in our lives, we must begin by asking ourselves this question.

In the same conversation, the Holy Father invites the seminarians to "let yourselves be worked upon by the Lord". In allowing the opportunity to explore a vocation to the diaconate, Archbishop Mark is giving potential candidates an opportunity to be 'worked upon by the Lord'. Discernment takes time, and requires space to allow God to speak into our hearts - 'heart, speaking to heart', as St. John Henry Newman reflected.

Archbishop Mark has issued some guidelines on the diaconate, which I have made available on the parish website (www.ourladyoftheangels.org.uk/diaconate). If you would like to explore the possibility of a vocation to the diaconate, please contact me through the Parish Office to arrange a convenient time to meet together.

Let us ask for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our parish and diocese.

Yours faithfully,
Fr. Daniel Stanton