**Notes from Briefing for New Training Incumbents (TIs)**

**June 13th 2024**

**Starter questions for discussion and reflection**

* What are you excited about?
* What do you need to know?
* What are you feeling nervous about?

**Answers from questions that were asked following above discussion:**

**Ordination Service**

* Ordinands go on retreat to Park Place from Wednesday 26th June following at rehearsal in the Cathedral
* Ordination is 10am Sunday 30th June. Please arrive at 9:30 and robe in the Retroquire: Cassock, Surplice and Red Stole
* The service will be explained with instructions before procession. TI’s to help newly ordained with stoles after all have been ordained.
* Ordinands will begin sitting with supports in the Nave. TI’s will process and sit behind the Altar. (Further information, including a seating plan is promised from the cathedral on Thursday, we will when I receive it.)

**Files and Resources**

* All curates will be enrolled onto ‘Moodle’ an online learning portal where (amongst other things) they will find all of the paperwork needed to be completed over the coming years.
* Training Incumbents will be given access to a Microsoft Sharepoint Folder containing all relevant files, including material from recent training.
* This folder will be added to over the course of the curacy with any additional files you need. For example by the Induction Day the 2024 IME2 Handbook will be added- we will notify you when anything is added.
* By the end of September, Curate and TI will need to discuss together, complete and submit: Ministry Specification, Learning Agreement, Qualities Grid, Core Skills Checklist and Curacy Development Plan. The curate will submit these through Moodle.

**Licence**

* Curates are given their license at ordination. They are required to read this out in their first service in the parish- something for Incumbent to say, and something for curate. It also needs signing.
* This doesn’t have to be read out at every church in the benefice, some in the past have found it a nice way of welcoming curate to church and including each worshipping community.

**Welcoming a Self-Supporting Curate**

* A lot of what we discussed here applies to all curates, and mostly boils down to the need for clear and open communication from the start and regular time to review and check in if things are working.
* Likely an SSM curacy will be very different to your curacy, and potentially different to parish expectations
* Very hard to give a one size fits all unpacking of SSM ministry, because all a likely to be different from each other: some retired, some working full time during the week, some wanting to offer full time hours to church, others trying to fit hours in between other responsibilities. Some are sponsored for primary leadership, some are sponsored for assistant leadership
* Working Agreement: Define the expected number of hours, Set clear expectations for SSMs, but come back to them- they may have over or under estimated their capacity

**Being Training Incumbents**

* Full on and hopefully fun role, but with many parts, wearing multiple hats
* It is important to remember the unique roles and contexts of each TI and curate.
* Curacy is a training post where failure is allowed and even encouraged and success is allowed and even encouraged- allow space for curates to be better than us
* What are we training curates for? To be: flexible reflectors, critical thinkers, competent, and courageous. For the church of now in all its complexities and for the church of the future in all it’s unknowns.

**Working Together**

* Adult to Adult rather than Parent to Child which the TI/Curate relationship can be and the institution perhaps pushes towards
* Be intentional in creating an Adult-Adult relationship with the curate from the start. You are tasked with creating a space for the curates learning and growth
* Curates can often report feeling like they are ‘de-skilled’ in the beginning, discuss this and work out together, perhaps with the 4 stages of competency model (below), how to work best to avoid this

**The Power of Checking in**

* To prevent the development of a parent-child dynamic in your relationship with your curate, it is essential to be intentional about checking in regularly.
* Some questions you might use:
  + What do you need from me in this? (Teaching, supportive ear, mutual annoyance, solutions etc.)
  + Is this helpful?
  + Is this useful?
  + Are we addressing the need here?
* be intentional in checking in, and do so more than you might think necessary or feels comfortable.
* By consistently checking in, you shift power from being solely held by you (the TI) to a more shared and collaborative model. This fosters a sense of mutual responsibility.
* Going forward, regular check-ins provide opportunities for encouragement, support, and constructive feedback, helping the curate grow and thrive. Use these times to discuss progress, set goals, and reflect on experiences.

**Concepts and Tools**

I introduced 3 visual tools for discussion and thought for now and going forward, they may be helpful tools to use with curates. These are in the PowerPoint, in the shared folder.

* **4 stages of Competence**:
  + Unconscious Competence,
  + Conscious Competence,
  + Conscious Competence,
  + Unconscious Competence.
  + Beware pit of despair. Check in with curate, do they need support or challenge? Where do you feel they are, where do they feel they are?
* **Expectations Gauge:** A tool for addressing expectations: how can you work together to have realistic expectations of one another and of tasks.
* **Understanding Self (Jahari Window):** This model provides a way of looking at self understanding relationship with others, especially in developing and investing in others.
  + **Open Self:** Known to self and others.
  + **Blind Self:** Known to others but not to self.
  + **Concealed Self:** Known to self but not to others.
  + **Unknown Self:** Unknown to both self and others.

Unknown self is a place where God is at work and a place of collaborative discovery and adventure, perhaps an aim of curacy to create a space safe and trusting enough to discover together.

**Parish Dynamics**

* **Sensitive Communication:** Share relevant information thoughtfully, avoiding gossip or a list of people to avoid.
* **Discernment:** Provide what your curate needs to know at appropriate times. Help the curate to recognise their unique position and work together to handle relational challenges. It would be helpful to develop joint strategies for managing difficult dynamics before they are first confronted with someone trying to ‘use’ them.

**Formation Framework: Qualities**

* As well as the grid, I gave out copies of the longer formation framework, also available in the shared folder.
* This may be helpful at various times, but mainly stick with the ‘top level grid’
* Please note that the difference between ‘Primary’ and ‘Assistant’ on full framework is when there are two points with the same number, and second point being in italics.

**Final Thoughts**

* Be intentional in setting expectations, checking in and working things through together
* Curates can act as a mirror to ourselves- revealing things we may not have been aware of or reflecting back things that area uncomfortable. How will you manage this- Spiritual Director, external supervision, therapy
* How can you support one another in the task of being a TI? Whatsapp group, meeting up with those local to you etc.