



MR. PAUL NORTHAM BA
DIOCESAN ADVISOR FOR EVANGELISATION AND DISCIPLESHIP
T: 0121 321 5148 / 07760 965886 • E: office.mission@rcaob.org.uk

Diocesan Vocations Office • St. Mary's College, Oscott • Chester Road • Sutton Coldfield • B73 5AA
www.vocations.org.uk/office-for-mission

INTRODUCTION

My name is Paul Northam and I am the Diocesan Advisor for Evangelisation & Discipleship with Marriage & Family Life. This work comes under the title of Office for Mission.

WHAT IS THE OFFICE FOR MISSION?

Following a re-structuring of a number of roles in evangelisation and formation in spring 2022, the Office for Mission was established within the Vocations Office, which is based in the grounds of Oscott College, and is led by Fr Craig Szmidt. This new start has given me the opportunity to look again at what the role can offer to lay people and to priests, and how I can best support parishes in their mission in these areas.

When the Office for Mission is doing what it should, it is about enabling priests and lay people to take the *next step* towards what God may be calling them to do: from drawing people together to think about outreach for the first time, to considering particular models – for example, *Divine Renovation*, *Called & Gifted* or *Alpha*.

Three words capture what the Office for Mission is about. They are:

ENVISION, ENCOUNTER & EQUIP

- THE OFFICE FOR MISSION IS VISION LED

It exists to serve the Diocesan Vision and this is done, first, by the work of ‘envisioning.’ To envision means to win people to our Vision. To envision means to unite people in a common purpose. This is an important step for any parish that wants to see its dreams become reality, so that each Catholic can identify the desired destination, and see the part that they can play in reaching it.



- **A clear Vision encourages Gifts** – God has given His Holy Spirit to the Church and has gifted His people. When people really catch a vision, they *want* to use their gifts in service of it. In fact, you'll probably struggle to stop people using them! A vision is also useful in directing those gifts to a shared end.
- THE OFFICE FOR MISSION AIMS TO EQUIP AND RESOURCE
Parishes may need help to discern the gifts of its members, and to encourage people to use them. The Office for Mission can also help with ideas for reaching out, as well as support to kick-start them.
 - **Co-responsibility** – Lay people and clergy are called to discern and work together. The Synod has encouraged us to work with a shared responsibility, for the mission of the Church. Synodal groups may play a key role in establishing this kind of culture as they continue to meet, as is happening in some parishes.
- IT'S ALL ABOUT ENCOUNTER!
Encounter is at the heart of what the Office for Mission does. The other elements mentioned should remind Catholics of the centrality of Christ, and are directed toward an encounter with Him. The Office for Mission's main aim is to invite people to know Jesus better, so that they can respond more fully to God's call in their lives and in their place.

SUPPORTING YOUR WORK

There are a number of ways people can connect with the Office for Mission and receive the help and support they might need. These are:

- **dedicated webpages** (see below),
- **social media**,
- **regular e-newsletters**,
- **bi-monthly Zooms**,
- **digital feedback forms**.

WORKING TOGETHER IN FUTURE

I would like to start an ongoing conversation as to the best way to offer support to you and your parishes, so that this role can adapt to both the opportunities and challenges that our Church is currently facing.