

Diocese of Kerry



Ministry of PASTORAL LEADER

A VOLUNTEER MINISTRY

*New training programme
beginning in January 2026*

Introduction

A recent article, written to prompt prayer and reflection on the ongoing Synodal Journey of the Irish Church, states:



"Together, participation in the threefold messianic mission of Jesus Christ (the teaching, priestly, and kingly offices) calls for a Spirit-filled community that listens, prays, meditates, dialogues, accompanies, discerns, decides and acts as all the baptized journey in Christ to God the Father. Even as the differences between the common priesthood of the baptized and the ministerial priesthood of the ordained is recognized, the essential quality of the one People of God is maintained."

Every baptized person is called to play their part in their local Christian community. The ministry of Pastoral Leader is making a vital contribution to this happening in our diocese. Sincere congratulations and thank you to the 25 Pastoral Leaders commissioned early this year.

We now set out to identify and prepare an additional group of Pastoral Leaders. This leaflet is an excellent outline of what is involved. I invite you to read it and ponder: is God calling you to be a Pastoral leader?

† **Ray Browne**
Diocese of Kerry

1st October 2025
St Therese of Lisieux



Why this ministry?

People are concerned about the future of their parishes. Where once we had a priest resident in each parish, now many parishes are served by the team of priests in the pastoral area. At this time, we must ask ourselves how our local church communities can remain a vibrant Christian presence.

As a diocese, we envision a future where parishes will be served by clergy and pastoral leaders working together as a team. The ministry of the pastoral leader is a ministry of co-ordinating, leading and supporting pastoral activities in their local area. It will involve taking responsibility for some ministries traditionally carried out by priests. This ministry complements the ministry of the deacon and the priest.



What is the Role of the Pastoral Leader?

The role of the pastoral leader is to co-ordinate and take responsibility for a particular aspect of ministry, in response to local needs.

Some possible ministries:

- **Nurturing the relationship between home, school and parish**

Co-ordination of initiatives to support families presenting their children to receive sacraments, empowering parents to share their faith with their children.

- **Liturgy**

Co-ordinating the preparation and celebration of our Sunday Mass, supporting liturgical ministers and leaders of prayer and worship.

- **Youth Ministry**

Supporting parishes to enable young people reach their God-created potential.

- **Faith formation**

Exploring faith with adults, facilitating opportunities for prayer and exploring the Word of God.

- **Pastoral Care**

Co-ordinating visitation of the homebound/elderly; Supporting nursing home staff and residents to celebrate moments of prayer.

What training is offered?

The training will include:

- Personal and spiritual development (*Prayer, mentoring and retreat days*)
- Pastoral ministry (*Placement and training in ministry*)
- Leadership (*developing skills and working as part of a team*)
- Modules in Pastoral Theology (*Accredited by Mary Immaculate College*)

The formation will be delivered through a blend of online modules (*Wednesday evenings for two hours*) and in person gatherings (*on a select number of Saturdays*) in St. John Paul II Pastoral Centre, Killarney.

Should I enquire further?

These questions may help your reflection:

- Have you the capacity to lead and encourage others in ministry?
- Do you work well with others?
- Are you willing to reflect on your own faith journey, and participate in learning with others?
- Have you developed skills in other aspects of your life that could contribute to ministry?
- Can you commit yourself to 3-4 hours per week as a volunteer lay Pastoral Leader over the coming 5 years?

There are many generous, well-trained people, with "hands-on" experience. This is a treasure that needs to be put to good use, with a constant eye to new situations and challenges.

Place your talents at the service of the Church's mission.... in order to reach those who, albeit distant, are often waiting, without being aware of it, to hear God's word of life.

*Pope Leo
June 6th 2025*



WHERE TO FROM HERE?

For more information, contact
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or phone **064 6632644**

