

# *Growing the Permanent Diaconate in our Diocese*

*Fr Chris Gorton*

*Director of the Permanent Diaconate Programme*

The permanent diaconate is open to men who are in a position to receive the sacraments in the Church. This includes men who are married, whose marriage is recognised by the Church, as well as single men who are willing to choose a celibate life for the Kingdom.

We now have six permanent deacons in our diocese, four of whom were ordained in our diocese in 2022, and two more have joined us from other dioceses. Over the last 12 months, a team has been gathering to put a system in place to help enquirers for the permanent diaconate. This team covers the four different areas of discernment and training: spiritual, pastoral, human development, and academic. With help from the diocesan communications team, the profile of the permanent diaconate as part of our diocese has been raised. Different deacons have shared their own story on the diocesan website and social media, and publicity is being developed for enquirers and parishes.

We now have a clear system in place from the moment someone states an interest. The first point of contact is to speak with his parish priest, as this vocation of service comes from within parish life. It is important that someone is known by the parish priest, is involved in the life of the parish, has the support of the parish priest, is in a position to be a candidate for the permanent diaconate and the community and is settled in that place. Then, contact will be made with Deacon Stephen Scott, assistant director of our permanent diaconate programme ([stephen.scott@dioceseofsalford.org.uk](mailto:stephen.scott@dioceseofsalford.org.uk)) who will have an initial conversation with the enquirer. The journey continues with meeting a priest of our diocese and a home visit from one of our permanent deacons to help with the discernment.

After an application process, which will include a medical, a psychological assessment, and a panel interview with Bishop John, a successful candidate will complete a four-year programme of tailored formation as part of the Northern Diaconate Formation Programme.

Is God calling you to the permanent diaconate? This is something to discern in prayer, discuss with your parish priest, a permanent deacon you may know, and find out more through the diocesan website and other information that is available. Nobody has the right to be ordained, this is a call to service not status and will not make you richer or poorer in material ways but if it is God's calling for you, please take a step in faith and find out more. Get in touch via the contact information below:

Fr Christopher Gorton - [christopher.gorton@dioceseofsalford.org.uk](mailto:christopher.gorton@dioceseofsalford.org.uk)

Deacon Stephen Scott - [stephen.scott@dioceseofsalford.org.uk](mailto:stephen.scott@dioceseofsalford.org.uk)