

# READERS AWAY DAY

8 October, 2105

Readers are an important ministry and unique within the Anglican Communion. Yes we have altar assistants who help at the mass or Holy Communion; yes we have lectors who read scripture during worship times; and yes we have members of the congregation that lead in the 'prayers of the people' and Readers do all these things and much much more.

Readers are Lay Ministers within our church – they are called, trained, licensed and accredited.

First of all they are called. Many people desire to become Readers, but to do so they have to go through a period of discernment and selection at a diocesan level. In our diocese, Bishop Hamid is the Coordinator of all Readers. Readers first must first meet with and receive the endorsement of their parish priest and then the other members of the parish formally through a written recommendation of the Parochial Chaplaincy Council (through a formal motion and approved vote.) Then their sense of ministry is reviewed, assessed and endorsed by a diocesan appointed regional director of Reader ministry. Our Diocesan Handbook section E3 and our National Church's Canon Law section E4 to E6 address the selection of Readers.

If selected, Reader-candidates receive three years of academic and practical training. This is quite an extensive formation program. It involves church history, biblical studies, pastoral care, homiletics (the craft of preaching and public speaking), ethics, child and adult education, and spirituality.

When the program is completed then Readers are admitted into a Reader ministry and licensed by the Bishop to a specific parish with the primary goal of assisting the parish priest.

Readers primarily minister in the leadership of non-sacramental worship – Morning and Evening Prayer and in assisting the presiding clergy at sacramental worship services – Baptisms, Holy Communion, Ordinations and Funerals. Readers may or may not be licensed to preach. They are not ordained clergy and do not wear the vestments or clerical collar of clergy, but they do have distinctive Reader vestments – in our diocese this is cassock & surplus or alb with a distinctive blue scarf.

At All Saints, we have three Readers – Christine Portman, Stéphane Javelle, and Jane Quamby. Stéphane is currently away at college in England doing graduate level academic work as part of his discernment process for ordained ministry.

On Tuesday 6 October, Tim and Amanda Haste opened their home in Manosque for an All Saints' Readers' away-day. Both Jane and Christine met with Fr David for a five hour discussion on Reader ministry and issues facing the church. We started with a social time of gathering and lunch. Prayers at mid-day were read using the Common Worship liturgy for Morning Prayer and then we met and discussed and shared and laughed and prayed for four hours.

Thank you Amanda and Tim for your hospitality and the ability to meet in peace and tranquillity. The gift of focused time is a rarity in today's busy world.



*Christine Portman (left), Jane Quarmby (centre) and Fr David (right) discuss church matters during the 6 October Readers' away day.*