

Diocese of Ontario

LAY READERS' ASSOCIATION

Lay Readers have been involved in this diocese for the past century. The first documented reference to their existence came in the Synod Journal for 1901, and over the past 60 years the numbers of individual Lay Readers in our Diocese has grown from 12 to over 200. Many diocesan clergy have acted as Warden or Deputy Warden for the Lay Readers and not a few Lay Readers have gone on to ordination as Deacons and Priests. Individuals have also contributed greatly to their own parishes worship and general well being.

Lay Readers are persons who have made a specific commitment to their Bishop, Parish Priest and Churchwardens to use their existing and developed gifts in ministry to the glory of God and for the benefit of the church (people), particularly in the conduct of public worship, giving instruction in the Christian faith, evangelizing, providing pastoral care within their community and other such duties as requested of them. Authority is given by the Bishop in the form of a bishop's license after a probationary period of training.

The duties will vary according to Parish needs and Lay Readers must give prayerful consideration on how best to reconcile the concept of their vocation and the whole-hearted cooperation with and support of the Incumbent. Typically, Lay Readers perform such functions as reading lessons, administering the chalice, leading the Prayers of the People, sharing leadership in and planning for public worship services, including giving the homily or sermon. When appropriately trained, Lay Readers may be called upon for more extensive ministry such as preparing and conducting services of Morning or Evening Prayer in their own or another parish, taking leadership roles in parish events, committees, training sessions and sacramental preparations or taking the Reserved Sacrament to the sick or shut-ins, with special Episcopal permission.

In order to provide some guidance and help to the Lay Readers of the Diocese of Ontario, the Executive Committee of the Lay Readers' Association, in co-operation with the school of Lay Ministry, started working, in 1996, on a handbook and a standardized Training Programme. This manual has been tested and is currently being used in the Diocese. For more information on becoming a Lay Reader or to obtain a copy of the *Diocesan Lay Reader Manual* please feel free to be in touch with one of the individuals listed below. The Lay Readers' Executive meets six times a year. The mission statement, mandate and Canon 29A related to Lay Readers are all found in the Diocesan Lay Reader Manual.

Contact Information

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