



Diocese of Broken Bay

Catholic Communications

Statement

Wed. 17 May 2006

Consecrated Ministers for Diocese of Broken Bay

The Bishop is the chief shepherd of the flock, the one responsible for the pastoral care of the people committed to his care. He exercises this responsibility in union with the presbyterate who share this responsibility with him. It is exercised as well through the diocesan curia, which helps the bishop fulfil his pastoral mission. The bishop is free to establish other structures and means to assist him in this pastoral mission.

As Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay, I am intending to create a new means to help me with my pastoral care. I plan to provide an opportunity for a new vocation for women within the Diocese. It will offer women an opportunity to be more deeply involved in the life and leadership of the Diocese. I plan to form a group of ecclesial women who will share with me the pastoral care of the people of Broken Bay Diocese.

Pope Benedict, following the teaching of Pope John Paul II, has emphasized the importance of the role of women in the Church. Pope John Paul II spoke of the “feminine genius” and its importance within the Church. I believe the project I am undertaking is well grounded in the current teaching of the Church, and is a positive action to recognize and include this “feminine genius” in the life and leadership of the Catholic Community.

These ecclesial women could minister in any aspect of the pastoral needs of the diocese. Part of their initial formation would be to equip them with a degree or qualification that would help them with their ministry. Individuals could be given further education according to the needs of the Diocese. However, whatever they do, the important thing would be that it comes from a consecrated person who has made a commitment to minister in the Diocese. Their ministry would be an expression of their consecration.

I would hope that this vocation would attract single women, who are practicing their faith, feel a need to be more involved in their local Church, and want to embody it in a consecrated way of life. It is a vocation that could attract young women finishing school or their professional studies. It may also attract older women who see it as a way to live out their commitment to the Lord. As there is a great diversity of ministries in the Diocese, a great diversity of women might apply.

This vocation involves a celibate life. Celibacy is not just giving up marriage, but a positive commitment to the Lord which is to be expressed in service to others. It is a grace-filled way of life which enriches the ministry of those committed to it. It also makes women more able to be available to those whom they serve.

Those who come to this vocation would make an initial commitment of one year, followed by a three year commitment. This would be the time of basic formation and education. Appropriate studies would be undertaken at this time. This would be followed by a commitment of five years, after which a woman may choose to make a commitment for life.

This vocation is not to be interpreted in the light of other vocations, such as religious life, diaconate, or priesthood. It is to be defined in its own terms, even though aspects of it may relate to things present in other religious vocations. As this is a new vocation in the Church, those who are involved in it in its early stages will contribute significantly to how it unfolds.

I am making this project public in order to promote discussion and to draw responses from those who are interested. I believe it will be an important contribution to the pastoral care of the people of our Diocese. I would be happy to receive any comments on my email: bishop@brokenbay.catholic.org.au or via mail at the Curia postal address.

All can help with this project by praying for it. In any effort to begin a new movement in the Church, prayer is essential. The more we do things in the context of prayer, the more we are able to discern the Holy Spirit working in our efforts. I ask you to support this project in any way you can.

For further information please contact

Annie Carrett

Communications Manager

Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay

T:(02) 9847 0724

M:0439 600 233

F:(02) 9847 0501

news@brokenbay.catholic.org.au