

From:  
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Bishop of Lancaster  
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Rev Peter Stanton, *Director*, Castlerigg Manor  
Rev Philip Conner, *Director*, Diocesan Youth Services

26 December 2007

Dear Peter & Philip,

**Re: Fit for Mission - Youth**

For months on end the 'Fit for Mission?' Review has been uppermost in my mind. Its objective – the Proclamation of the Gospel today – is the perennial challenge facing the Church. The question remains: 'Is Christ at the Centre of our Mission?' which is, of course, a sharing in His life and mission. Answering the question demands great humility and an openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The ramifications of the Review for the Church in this Diocese are enormous. One clear mission priority, advocated by Parishes and Schools, is Ministry to Young People. Given that the Review is well underway in our parishes and Schools, this seems the opportune moment to focus on our Youth Service, both residential and outreach. It goes without saying that Ministry to and with Young People is central to any strategy for the future.

We need now - and here I'm asking for your full co-operation – to take stock of where we are, where we have come from and where we might go in the future. Only ministry to and with young people counts, everything else can change. The latter is not 'writ on stone'! The successes and failures of our Diocesan Youth Service since its inception need to be looked at closely and in great detail, that is, if we are serious about planning for the future. We must plan and execute a service which does justice to the needs of young people in our time.

Only last year I issued my own Vision for *Youth Ministry in the Diocese of Lancaster* and would ask you to turn to that document as a starter in launching this far-reaching consultation and review – 'Fit for Mission - Youth'.

I believe, too, that the emphasis in future Ministry with Young People is going to be much more in terms of primary evangelisation – an introduction to the person and teachings of Jesus Christ, encouraging them to be His disciples in the Church at the heart of the world. What we have so often presumed to be present in young people's lives – in terms of faith and practise – is no longer the case. Many families and young people suffer a grave deficiency in their knowledge of the Lord and His power and presence in their lives. Our approach in methodology and strategy will need to change if we are to reach them. Here again we need the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

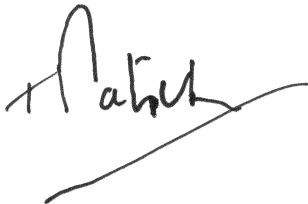
Bishop's Apartment, Cathedral House, Balmoral Road, Lancaster LA1 3BT

Already, at my invitation, an experienced Working Party is being set up to carry out this 'taking stock' exercise. Mgr Mulvany will be in touch shortly with more details about the membership of this group and their Terms of Reference.

I know that I can count on your full support and generosity. Both of you and your staff and management are major players in this exercise. I am aware that a lot will be asked of you all in the provision of a Youth Service that continues to speak loudly and clearly of the love of the Lord for young people and their needs today.

With much thanks and prayers,

Yours very sincerely in Christ our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. A. A.', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Bishop of Lancaster**