

Ad Clerum 2.4

Pastoral care of retired clergy

The retired clergy of our diocese are a rich source for the life of the Church. Many take services on a regular basis, provide a listening ear to people in distress and make themselves available on a wide variety of occasions.

We have retirement officers in each Archdeaconry in the diocese (see the diocesan *Directory* under 'Diocesan Officials') and they make links with those who are retired. However, in spite of all our best efforts, we sometimes receive complaints that 'the diocese' (by which is usually meant 'the bishop') does not seem to care. It goes without saying that that criticism is not always justified; but it may also be based on a misconception - that the diocese is the primary pastoral caregiver. The fact is, in the Church of England, the primary source of care is the local Church: clergy and people together exercising the compassion of Christ in their local neighbourhood.

We would urge, please, that if there are retired clergy in your parish, they should not only be valued as fellow clergy but should also receive such pastoral care from the parish as is appropriate. If there are specific matters which should be brought to the attention of the retirement officers or the bishops, please do not hesitate to be in contact with us.

Those who have borne the burden and heat of the day, as our predecessors have, deserve not only our appreciation but should also be accorded that sense of dignity and worth which is due to all who are retired after years of long service in ministry.

Revised April 2015.