



Lay Pastoral Ministry Program  
Catholic Diocese of Ballarat

# Diocese of Ballarat

## Lay Pastoral Ministry Program

Online Course Provider:

The Virtual Learning Community, University of Dayton

[www.vlcff.udayton.edu](http://www.vlcff.udayton.edu)

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **What is the Lay Pastoral Ministry Program for?**

To develop lay ministers for our parishes. To offer opportunities to those who are working (paid or volunteer) in lay ministry to receive skills and formation so they can be effective in their roles.

#### **Can I do the Program without online study?**

Both the online study and the formation/reflection opportunities are key parts of the program.

#### **When can I put in an application form?**

Whenever you wish. We advise you have a discussion with the Program Facilitator (details at end of this document) about your intentions before you put the application form in, but this can also happen after the form goes in.

#### **Why is there an application form?**

So the Diocese can support you through the program with information and advice, and let you know directly about the Formation events and opportunities. It also means the diocese keeps a record of your study and formation so it can certify or attest to what you have done.

#### **Why should I have a Working with Children Check?**

A WWCC is not required to undertake these studies. However, it is Diocesan Policy that a WWCC is required if you are volunteering in your Parish. If you do not hold a WWCC please contact your Parish to apply for a Volunteer WWCC. *More information can be found on the Ballarat Diocese website [here](#)*

#### **How much study will each subject require?**

Each subject is done over 3-5 weeks. It must be completed during the specified five weeks. (See list of subjects for details of dates when subjects are offered). Each subject is divided into weekly sections. You will be given the focus and objective for the week, and tasks including reading, posting reflections and responses on online discussion boards and short written work/reflections. You will have an online subject facilitator to lead and support you, and to answer questions. At the end of the course, you will complete a final task that summarises or 'rounds off' what you have done. This is typically a written piece of work (not long). There are no 'exams'.

#### **Can I do the week's work in one evening or on Saturday afternoon?**

No. You will need to engage with the material at the start of the week and post responses to tasks and contribute to the discussion board several times during the week.

**What if I start the course and find it difficult?**

Your online course facilitator is there to assist you and guide you. You can contact this person by private email as well as through the discussion boards. Each person starts at their own level, with the objective of enriching or deepening their understanding from that level.

**Do I need a particular level of education before I can participate in the Lay Pastoral Ministry Program?**

No. You will need regular access to a computer online, and to be familiar with using a computer. All courses are in the English language.

**When do I need to enrol for my online subject?**

You need to enrol online at least a week before the start of that particular subject. You will need to pay at the start. The Ballarat Diocese Lay Pastoral Ministry Program Facilitator will give you the details. It is better to enrol earlier than this so you can ensure a place and also source a text book, if it is needed. Again, you can contact the Diocese for assistance in sourcing textbooks.

**What if I don't finish my subject?**

Each subject is required to be completed in the one study cycle with the one Course Facilitator and group of participants. If you have had to withdraw from a subject and still want to pass that subject, you will have to start from the beginning in a new study cycle, with a new registration and payment.

**People say the first subject is the hardest. Why is this?**

Most people find they spend a bit more time at the start becoming familiar with online study, with managing their time, with expressing their thoughts on the group discussion boards, and with developing a process of reflection on the subject material. All these points are frequently mentioned when people talk about their first subject. Most people find it gets easier and quicker as they 'grow into' the process. Overall, we are getting very positive feedback from people about their study: how enriching and satisfying it is.

**How many subjects must I complete to gain a Certificate?**

You must complete a minimum of six (6) subjects with a minimum total of 11 points to gain a Certificate. You need to do more than 6 subjects to make up 11 points

**How do I know what points my subject is worth?**

Points are based on the Subject (Course) Levels. A Level 1 subject (Basic) is equal to 1 point, Level 2 (Intermediate) is 2 points and Level 3 (Advanced) is 3 points.

**Ballarat Diocese Lay Pastoral Ministry Program Facilitator**

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