



From Bishop Donald To the Clergy and Licensed Lay Ministers

cc *Bishop's Council, Diocesan and Cathedral Staff, Diocesan Registrar,
Diocesan and Deanery Lay Chairs, Yaxley Deanery Clergy and Lay Chair*

Dear friends

Warm greetings in this strange, hot and cold, wet and dry, June. I look forward to seeing quite a few of you at summer services and activities. This is a relatively short letter, with just a couple of topics.

Congratulations

Rachel Lomas, our Bishop's Office Secretary, has just given birth to Sophie Claire, a sister to Eddie. Our congratulations to Rachel (and husband Ross). During Rachel's maternity leave, **Ben Kirk**, one of the lay clerks (adult singers) in the Cathedral choir, is filling in for her in the office. Welcome to him. You may well hear from him in one way or another over the coming year. We hope to welcome Rachel back next spring.

Permission to Officiate

I am sorry to say that we have come across a few cases recently of retired clergy being invited to minister when they do not have Permission to Officiate. This is a serious breach of our national and diocesan safeguarding policy, and could lead to unpleasant consequences for the incumbent who invites or permits their ministry. I realise that, more often than not, incumbents have simply assumed that a retired colleague has PTO; or, knowing that they had it some time ago, assumed that they still do. However, I have to stress that it is the responsibility of the incumbent (or the rural dean during a vacancy, or an incumbent's illness) to check that PTO is currently in place.

Some facts may help. Not every priest receives PTO on retirement. PTO only lasts for five years at a time, and lapses unless it is renewed. PTO can in some circumstances be rescinded before the renewal date. Nowadays the issue or renewal of PTO requires recent safeguarding training as well as a clear DBS check. The application process for first PTO, or for renewal, has necessarily become more complicated than it used to be – which is putting some people off renewing. It is not acceptable to assume that PTO is in place, or to believe an assurance that it is, without seeing the certificate and checking the expiry date.

The best way to check is very simple: log into the online database at <http://directory.peterborough-diocese.org.uk> and simply click the *Clergy with Permission to Officiate* link. This is always up to date. (Don't print it out, as it could be out of date by the next day!) If you have forgotten your unique log-in details for the database, Karen Setchfield at the Diocesan Office, can help you: karen.setchfield@peterborough-diocese.org.uk or 01733 887011.

With much gratitude for your service,
and with every blessing for the summer.

+ Donald

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