

Media Questionnaire: Priests

Your name, age and original home village, town or city (i.e. the place where you grew up):

Answer:

Simon King, 58, Preston. Educated by Jesuits at Preston Catholic College and I briefly attended Blackburn Art College before working on community schemes in Clayton Brook.

The church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

Answer:

St. Lawrence with St Paul, Longridge.

Tell us about your family:

Answer:

Met my future wife Tracy at a New Year's Eve party and we have two adult children, Emma and James. We also have a grandson, Reuben.

If applicable, your former job before entering ministry?

Answer:

Marketing manager for a Carnforth company that still manufactures steel doors. Earlier in my career I found employment as a graphic designer, working for a lithographic printer in Bamber Bridge.

What led you to take the steps towards ordination?

Answer:

In the first instance it was a dream in which Jesus challenged me to explore my calling without prevarication. The discernment process took quite a while.

What's been the best thing about your training?

Answer:

Getting to know the other deacons better and a growing sense of community and support.

Can you say what is the most important thing you have learned during your training?

Answer:

That there is support available from outside the parish, we just need to ask.

Reflecting on the difficult past year, please share a few thoughts about how the pandemic has impacted on ministry at this time (you could reflect how people have adapted to the circumstances in different ways as part of this response) ...

Answer:

I think that the pandemic has made ministry much more difficult. In a role that requires the development of personal relationships, the fear of infection and the necessary isolation has led to an increase in loneliness. On a more positive note, our communities have shown remarkable resilience and a willingness to overcome their fear and mistrust of technology and to join in prayer and worship where the local church has facilitated an on-line presence.

It is notable that the most vulnerable have perhaps been the quickest to embrace the necessary changes.

Meanwhile, what are some of your personal reflections on ministry in the post-pandemic period that lies ahead; the challenges and the opportunities?

Answer:

The task, it seems to me, is to re-establish existing relationships quickly and be vigilant for opportunities for new conversations. Be that at the local school, coffee shops or through home communion and pastoral visits. I sense that as the fear of infection gradually diminishes, it will be replaced by an increased desire for community and the church should be at the centre of making that possible.

Tell us something people don't know about you that might surprise them?

Answer:

Before ministry training, I was a black belt at karate and used to teach it three times a week at a local leisure centre.

What do you view as your most significant personal achievement, before or during training?

Answer:

Overcoming cancer and dealing with the subsequent lymphedema.

How do you hope to continue to support the Diocesan Vision 2026 at a parish level?

Answer:

God willing, I would like to enable and grow meaningful, vibrant and relevant worship for and by the community that I serve, through prayer, the discernment of scripture and prompts from the Holy Spirit.

How would you express your own vision for the church?

Answer:

Jesus' community for the hurting, the healing and the hopeful.

Finally, when you get the chance, how do you relax?

Answer:

I like to cook for anyone and everyone.