



Candidate Assessment Programme Non-residential Remote Assessment Information for Candidates

Due to the Covid-19 epidemic and safety concerns we will be facilitating the Candidate Assessment Programme remotely. You will be asked to participate in the interviews, psychological testing and feedback meeting through Zoom meetings. We look forward to working with you as part of your vocational discernment and would like to give you some information on what the programme offers and what to expect from this process.

The **Non-residential Remote Candidate Assessment Programme** at the St. Luke's Centre offers a robust broad-based team approach to assessing the spiritual, psychological and psychosocial make-up of candidates coming forward for service in the Church. Whilst commissioned by the Diocese or Religious Congregation (our Client), we firmly believe that our candidate assessment programme offers the candidate of the assessment a Grace-filled opportunity to know themselves more fully, to share this knowledge with those accompanying them in their discernment, and ultimately to have the freedom to say 'yes' to the next step of the journey. Our programme offers candidates and the commissioning Diocese or religious Congregation the confidence of working with trained professionals grounded in the Roman Catholic Tradition. (Please review the Staff Information Booklet outlining their qualifications and areas of work at the Centre). Fundamentally the assessment is commissioned by the Diocese/Community as part of their selection/evaluation process and with your consent we release a final report letter to them to aid their assessment of you. Despite the evaluative nature of the assessment, we also do our utmost to work with you to try to make your experience of the Assessment supportive and useful in your ongoing discernment and formation.

An Overview of the Non-residential Programme

Before you commence the Assessment: The formation staff from the commissioning Diocese or Community will have contacted us to arrange for you to come to the Centre and they will have sent us some background information on you and your journey with them so far. We will have contacted you to arrange a mutually agreeable date for the assessment to be facilitated by Zoom meetings, informed you about the process and questionnaires we send out in preparation for your time with us. We include our **Privacy Notice** and a copy of the **Consent Form** so you can be fully informed about how we use the personal data that we collect. We require you to give us detailed information about yourself and your spiritual journey, by completing two preparation questionnaires which we ask you to complete and return by email as soon as you are able, but at least one week before the start date of the assessment. We will also send you the psychological tests to complete the week before you start the remote assessment. It is vital that we have these completed tests the week before you are scheduled to begin the remote assessment. One test will be facilitated online through Q Global-you will receive a clear email from us explaining how to access the test online. The second test will be sent to you by email and you will be asked to return your answer sheet by email as soon as you complete the test. You will be supported by one of our staff members when you complete the tests. The assessment cannot go ahead as scheduled if we do not have the completed tests and your completed personal profile/spirituality questionnaires.

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We ask that you keep information about the content of these tests confidential so that any future users will not have the process contaminated. The integrity of these tests is very important and we send them to you in the understanding that you will help to maintain their integrity.

You will receive a personalized schedule for the assessment which outlines the dates and times for the testing, individual Zoom interviews and team Zoom feedback meeting. It is important that you have access to a computer, laptop or tablet with Cam and audio equipment. Your interviews are confidential so you should make sure you are in a quiet confidential space for the interviews and feedback meeting. We encourage you to download Zoom and get familiar with how it works-it is an easy user-friendly platform. You will receive an email with an invitation to join the meeting with the staff member-you click on the link in the email or type in the meeting ID and password on the Zoom website.

Once you have reviewed the various information documents about the Non-residential Remote Candidate Assessment Programme please feel free to contact us with any questions and to let us know if you have any individual needs.

The Team Approach: Building on the referral information we have from you and the Diocese/Congregation, our staff members - a Clinical Psychologist; Counsellor/Psychologist; and a Spiritual Director, work with you to gain a thorough appraisal of your psychological and spiritual make-up and history. This team approach offers the commissioning Diocese/Congregation, and you the candidate, the benefit of utilizing three distinct professionals focusing on bringing their expertise to the task of formulating a team understanding of the data compiled over the course of the evaluation- human and spiritual. We aim to encourage and help a deep understanding of self, vocational discernment and necessary assessment information.

Preparation for The Non-residential Remote Assessment: We will have received referral information from the Diocese/Congregation about you with any supporting documentation. The week before your scheduled Zoom meetings we need to have your completed questionnaires with any other supporting materials that you include-please send these electronically (completed WORD questionnaires and other materials scanned). We will facilitate the administration of the psychological tests by email and phone conversations/Zoom meetings. These preparation materials will then be shared with the Assessment Team.

The Non-residential Remote Process: Your personalized schedule for the assessment will start with a Zoom Welcome Orientation Meeting which outlines the assessment process and reviews various documents relating to the assessment. We will discuss your scheduled Zoom meetings with the staff and feedback meeting at the end of the process. We will go over much of the information in this sheet as well as confidentiality agreements and GDPR issues. We will ask you to give us permission to release information to the Diocesan or Congregational representatives named in their referral information. This verbal permission will be supported by you sending us permission by email.

Zoom Interviews: You will be invited to meet with three different members of our staff for online Zoom 'face-to-face' interviews in the following areas:

1. **Psychosocial Interview** with one of our Counsellors/Psychologists: Covering your background, family life, sexual development, school/work life, vocational journey, recreational

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pursuits and general safeguarding/child protection screening. This interview builds on the relevant information you have shared in the personal profile questionnaire.

2. **Clinical Interview** with one of our Clinical Psychologists who chairs the Assessment: This covers your general mental health and psychological history. It builds on the relevant information you have shared in the personal profile and spirituality questionnaires.
3. **Intellectual Screening** with the Chair of the assessment: this involves completion of a short (20 minutes), paper and pencil, standardised test of intellectual functioning. The results of this test will be explained at the feedback meeting.
4. **Spiritual Assessment** with one of our trained spirituality assessors: this interview looks at your general spiritual life and vocational journey. It builds on the answers you have given in the questionnaire and any other materials shared with the team at St Luke's.

Our staff are mindful that you will be meeting us for the first time and we will be inviting you to share personal information through these interviews. As this is a detailed exploration of all aspects of a candidate's life, we understand the process can feel intense and at times exposing. We do however work very hard to make the process as manageable as possible by explaining everything along the way and we encourage you to ask us as many questions as you like. You are under no duress to answer questions if you do not wish to do so; please note that we ask you to share with us so that we can get as rounded a picture of you as possible. This helps us to be of best service to you and the Diocese/Congregation who have commissioned the assessment. Please contact us if you have any questions about the interviews.

As explained above, the Assessment team will also have access to your completed psychological tests. The results of these tests will be explained to you by the Chair of the Assessment at the Zoom Team feedback meeting:

5. **Computer Psychological Testing Questionnaires** facilitated by our staff remotely: These questionnaires are Psychological Tests based on your personal response to questions looking at your personality and general mental health.

The final part of the assessment is the **Zoom Team Feedback Meeting** with our staff members who have worked with you during the Assessment:

6. **Feedback Meeting & Report Letter:** You will be invited to attend a Zoom Meeting with the staff so they can give you feedback on the various parts of the assessment process. They will also give you practical suggestions or recommendations for your ongoing discernment/formation journey. This meeting is followed up with a detailed Report Letter.

The feedback will highlight all your positive qualities and what you bring to the discernment process. Part of the purpose of the programme is to assess if you have any psychological or behavioural issues that, in our professional opinion, warrant further attention at this time in your journey, prior to going on to formal seminary formation or the next step in formation for Religious Life. If there are issues that we recommend you to address we will explain in detail what they are and how we suggest you may address them. You will be encouraged to discuss our feedback with the team.

Please note that our staff do not say whether you should be accepted or not accepted by the Diocese or Congregation; this decision is up to the relevant ecclesial authority. Our staff offers professional

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advice to the Diocese/Congregation so that they can both assess suitability and assist you in making an informed decision about the road ahead. Throughout the process we ask you to be yourself, to be open and honest. Our staff are not looking for 'problems' but for ways you might be encouraged and supported in your vocational discernment journey.

The assessment also hopes to identify practical ongoing human development and spiritual growth needs for your vocational journey. It is our hope that your time at St. Luke's and our feedback (both verbal and in the Report Letter) will be of use to not only the Diocese/Congregation but also you in your ongoing vocational journey. We remain available to you if ever you may wish to contact us in the future.

Feedback and Report Letter: These final stages in the process are very important and we are committed to providing you and the Diocese/Community with clear feedback and a written report that is succinct but thorough. Our aim is to make the feedback and report relevant and useable for not only the people concerned with the ongoing process of selection, discernment and training, but also candidates themselves. Typically, within two weeks of completing the Assessment we send you a draft copy of the team's collaborative Report Letter which contains a summary of the data gathered, the sense we have made of this, and any recommendations the team may have, which you will have heard in the verbal feedback. The letter will be addressed to the vocations/formation director as the commissioning client. We ask you to review the draft letter and let us know if there are any factual errors; if there are, we correct them and then send out the final version of the letter to the vocations/formation director, Bishop/Superior and yourself. How this letter is used in the selection process varies and if you have any questions about this we would encourage you to ask your vocations/formation director prior to commencing the Assessment.



Confidentiality is a crucial building block of our work and as mentioned before we need to have your permission in order to share information about you with our commissioning client. This is typically the Bishop/Superior and vocations/formation director. Having commissioned the assessment, we know that they are expecting a written report letter outlining the results of the assessment programme. In order for us to send this letter or speak about you with the named people above we need to have your verbal and written permission to do so.

As outlined above, in the Welcome Orientation Zoom Meeting you will be asked to review and sign a release of information form, so that we can share information with these named people (we will not share information outside of this signed agreement). This release of information form will be explained and you will be asked to email it to the Centre. Confidential information sharing is a crucial part of the assessment programme and we cannot complete the programme if you do not give us permission to share the report letter with the Commissioning Client; if you have any doubts or concerns we would encourage you to discuss this with the Diocesan or Congregational representative prior to commencing the Assessment. If after starting the Assessment you decide to cancel the release of information, the assessment will stop and we will not produce any report or share any information about you. You are free to cancel the permission to release information at any time. It is our experience that this is not an issue for most people completing our Assessment programmes.

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As you can see we take confidentiality in our work very seriously. There are however some instances when we will be obliged to report information received by our staff in the interests of safeguarding, requirements of the law, or for public protection; that means that we reserve the right to liaise with the relevant authorities if we receive information in the following areas:

1. Any form of past or current abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult.
2. A risk of harm to self or others (suicide/self-harm/ credible threats of violence).
3. Major crimes or terrorist activities.
4. If required to release information by a court order.

If we receive information about these areas of concern we will work with candidates to inform the relevant authorities. We are explaining this to you prior to commencing the Assessment and we will explain it again at the Welcome Orientation Zoom Meeting.

Ongoing Support: For some candidates the assessment programme highlights areas that could benefit from ongoing therapeutic or spiritual support. We are available to facilitate this ongoing support should it be needed, but there is no obligation to use our service. The assessment, formulation and recommendations of the Candidate Assessment Programme will in no way be influenced by the availability of, engagement with, or expressed intent to use or not use, our other services. We believe it is a privilege to be part of a candidate's vocational discernment and we offer to remain a resource for the long-term, because we value this privilege and recognise the value of doing so at both an individual and wider Church level. Indeed, our staff work with the seminaries and houses of formation throughout the UK, Ireland and abroad. We therefore invite you and/or the Diocese/Community to contact us at any time in the future should you wish to.

Please Contact Us: If you have any questions about this information please feel free to contact Fr. Gerard (gerardfbyrne@stlukescentre.org.uk) or Irene Robinson (irener@stlukescentre.org.uk) on 0161 226 4563.

We look forward to working with you.
For more information please see our website:

www.stlukescentre.org.uk

