



The Society of the Holy Trinity

A collaboration of Anglican New Monastic Communities

POLICY THREE

*Maintaining harmonious relationships in Community:
Code of Conduct*

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POLICY THREE CONTENTS



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1.0 Introduction

For a New Monastic Community to function effectively the relationships and interactions between all those participating in the life of the Community, and in particular between residential members of the Community, need to be of good quality. Indeed, residential members need to model interactions of the highest standards if the Community is to fulfil its missional calling. In particular any conflicts need to be handled well; swiftly and with compassion and transparency, to allow the maximum potential for growth and learning to result.

The Summary of the great commandment by Christopher Jamieson OSB ‘to learn to receive the love of God, to be able to learn to love ourselves and to be able to love others.’ (*Christopher Jamieson, 2010*) reminds us that we are all on a journey seeking to grow in knowledge of self and God, in compassion and acceptance.

2.0 Principles of Harmonious living

*‘God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.’
1 John 4:16.*

2.1 Therefore members of the community will seek at all times, within and beyond the community, to: express attitudes and behaviours which:

- Listen attentively and openly
- Demonstrate that their hearts and minds are
- Open to others with compassion, not judgementalism(?)
- Value everyone’s vulnerability and perspective, including their own
- Express concern and empathy

2.2 Practice 6 pastoral principles for living well.

- **Acknowledge Prejudice:** No one is unconditioned by the experience of life, positively or negatively. All of us must reflect deeply on our attitudes and behaviour. The journey from prejudice to hatred is a short one.
- **Speak into Silence:** Silence can shelter abuses of power. People must be given space, permission and opportunities to speak, and speak with words that come from both head and heart.
- **Address Ignorance:** Ignorance is inevitable, but ignorance about the experiences and perspectives of everyone in the Community can and should be addressed.
- **Cast out Fear:** by consciously demonstrating and living out what it means for perfect love to cast out fear.
- **Admit hypocrisy:** be a Community marked by attentive listening, courtesy, kindness and the absolute belief that no one is outside the love of God.
- **Pay attention to Power:** Inequality of power can lead to abuse unless everyone reflects continuously on the power they hold and refuses to exploit any perceived or real power over others.

It is key in implementing these principles to: approach all interactions with humility and a willingness to ‘cherish a sense of God at all times (Ps 36.2); to pray for a humble heart and contrite spirit’ that seeks to listen, understand and grow.

This involves an act of the will which will override prejudice, counteract ignorance, limit the impact of fear and hypocrisy and operate irrespective of inequalities of power. To do so does not deny the realities of a situation, rather this approach reflects the reality that although each individual shares a common humanity resulting from bearing the imprint God, we are also each unique, with vastly differing genetic gifting, behavioural preferences and life experience. Similarly, we are all at different points on the journey of growing into the fullness of life for which we are created. Such diversity can lead to seemingly unavoidable disunity, however, as members of the body of Christ, and thus as members of one another, we are called to be united in and by the life and love of the Holy Trinity. To think about others with humility and compassion, seeking understanding, invites us to choose to put to one side the judgemental attitudes and approaches which modern life, including life in the church, can encourage us to adopt.

2.3 Personal responsibility, stability & wellbeing

Each member of the Community will work to develop and maintain their own well-being and stability through the discipline of living out their rhythm of life as agreed with the [Prior](#).

This includes diligence in the practice of contemplative prayer which is at the heart of the prayer of the community and creates that stability, from and with which we move freely and energetically, choosing to live each day to the full.

Members are responsible for engaging positively and prayerfully with tension and challenge, making regular use of the channels of support in place for community members (eg. spiritual director, community meetings), and taking responsibility for expressing their needs for help and support.

2.4 Confidentiality

2.4.1 All Community members will be boundaried and respectful in their communications and will:

- a) Not gossip or disclose personal information given in confidence (other than in giving information in safeguarding situations).
- b) Communicate appropriately and avoid inappropriate disclosure of personal information, both their own and that of others, or defamation of others, via websites, email, social media, other internet apps or other information technology.
- c) Not photocopy, photograph or copy records of personal information identifying individuals of the community without consent. All relevant requirements of the GDPR legislation must be implemented.

2.4.2 Information held by the Standing Council /House Council & other Community Office holders

- a) Members of the Standing Council/ House Council and other Community Office holders may be in possession of sensitive information about community members. This will be held in compliance with GDPR legislation
- b) In cases where sensitive information is disclosed by a community member to a member of the Standing Committee/ House Committee, they should understand that the Standing/ House Committee member may share this with other members of the Standing/ House Committee, on a need to know basis.

2.5 Respectful Communication

- a) All those involved in the community will maintain respectful written and verbal communication in all 1 to 1 situations. This will draw on the principles of assertiveness and avoid passive, indirect and direct aggression.

- b) Similarly, the principles of assertion and respectful communication must be maintained in group situations and meetings, avoiding, indirect and direct aggression.
- c) It is also essential that community members maintain similar appropriately respectful written and verbal communication with everyone outside the community, including in particular officers of the parish and diocese.

2.6 Members will choose to live in a way which honours and respects Christ in one another. They will:

- a) Choose to be punctual
- b) Choose to give apologies, in good time, for any meetings or appointments they are unable to keep.
- c) Choose to put time and effort into respectful, courteous, 'adult' (as opposed to 'parent' or 'child'), communication. Not assume that others will know why they are behaving in a certain way (e.g. why they may be sad or angry). Use humour effectively, but not at the expense of someone else (for example, make themselves the butt of a joke not someone different to them).
- d) Choose a default position of maintaining confidentiality regarding the lives of others fully complying with 2.4 above and responsibilities under the safeguarding policy. This will entail holding and modelling an approach to life which stands in direct opposition to the practise in many church communities and society as a whole.
- e) Choose to look for the good in others, and in every situation, and to name it and give thanks for it.
- f) Choose to operate by Grace rather than Contract.
- g) Choose to forgive rather than resent.
- h) Choose to freely let go of debts / indebtedness rather than holding on to them. "You owe me one", and the underlying attitude, is not appropriate.
- i) Choose to speak and act appropriately when faced with the apparent failing of others.
- j) Choose to face and name fear rather than be held by it. Speaking about it in an appropriate context.
- k) Choose to listen. Choose to listen to, rather than avoid or drown out, the still small voice; choose to amplify it and name the silent pain of others, injustice, and complacency with care and sensitivity.
- l) Choose to accept and hold appropriate responsibility and authority when asked to do so by the Community, including running the risks associated with it but knowing that ultimately this responsibility is shared.
- m) Choose to carry out any roles or responsibilities held within the Community to the highest standard – whether it is cleaning a floor, preparing a meal, or presiding at the Eucharist.
- n) Choose to implement and abide by all the Policies and Procedures of the Community and where appropriate, the Society of the Holy Trinity
- o) Choose to abide by the group decisions made by the Community regarding the operation of the Community House, including fulfilling their responsibilities in any house rotas and in any agreed protocols regarding the use and maintenance of the shared areas of the house (i.e. all areas of the house other than those used as bedrooms, or those not available for community use), for example, drying washing only in the areas designated for this purpose. *Individual Communities may choose to spell these out in this document.*
- p) Choose to keep their own bedrooms tidy at a level which ensures safety and basic cleanliness (washing bedding (sheets, pillows cases and duvet cover) at least fortnightly,

and vacuuming dust at least fortnightly). Choosing to keep themselves in a hygienic condition – bathing or showering at least every three days.

3.0 Failure to meet the expectations of the code

- 3.1 Where a member of the community demonstrates that they are unable or unwilling to express the quality of life reflected in this Code steps must be taken swiftly to try to enable them to do so; appropriate informal action being taken by other community members to ‘nip things in the bud’ wherever possible.

Where concerns still remain after such informal action it may be necessary to implement the Community Discipline Policy.

4.0 Tools

There are a number of tools available to assist with personal self-awareness, and also awareness of the dynamics of groups. The following are suggested as helpful ways to explore some of the causes of interpersonal conflict and how to develop greater self-awareness.

- 4.1 Transactional Analysis
Originally developed by Eric Berne in the famous book “The Games People Play” this helpful approach seeks to help individuals to understand what is going on when there are difficulties in communication and what this reveals for personal development and understanding.
- 4.2 The Enneagram
This is an ancient approach to understanding your individual personality, as well as understanding how varied human personalities are, and how different types of personality often interact with one another. There are many books and courses on the Enneagram and a number of online resources (many people find the book by Richard Rohr particularly helpful).
- 4.3 Myers Briggs
Developed originally for work settings to help teams work with developing an appreciation of difference and working with difference, this approach again aims to increase self-awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses and how these might affect interaction with others in group situations.

** The Six Pastoral Principles are taken from ‘Pastoral Principles for Living Together Well’, The Church of England Pastoral Advisory Group, January 2019*