

I absolutely recommend St Francis College

Melissa Conway, Former Public Servant and Formation Student.

I had been a manager in the public service for many years when I started looking at the priesthood as a possible new vocation. I had had different lay leadership roles up until that point, serving on the parish council, leading lay services, acting as a reader and liturgical assistant and being a warden. My faith community, friends and family saw that I was open about my faith and able to express it to others, as well as sharing my love of scripture, and they encouraged me to consider formation.

I decided to study at St Francis College when I was in the discernment process. I saw it as an opportunity to look at my faith alongside others and found it appealing that the college had many mature students and pitched its courses at adult learning.

Once I began, I really appreciated the small size of the courses. They were small enough that everyone could participate and yet provided the opportunity for lots of meaningful discussion. I enjoyed the debates we had and the fellowship that developed among students. I also delighted in the peacefulness of the College surrounds and how consistent the atmosphere was with the nature of the study. It really is a special oasis in the city.

Studying at St Francis College has strengthened my faith and developed my understanding of the Bible. Early in my studies, it struck me that I could see the narrative across the Bible more clearly. There is a progression from Genesis to Revelation that is harder to understand when you read the books separately. Even though I had read the Bible cover to cover, I had not appreciated the flow between books and how, together, they piece together a story of God's relationship with humanity.

I would absolutely recommend St Francis College and its formation training to new students. It is a special community that is broader than the students who attend, including other people who live on site or who take part in college life. It was wonderful to participate in communal prayer in the Chapel on site and coming together in that way really complemented the study.