Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord

A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry

Tour of the Document prepared by the National Association for Lay Ministry
Agenda

- Background
  "Why we have this document."

- The Document
  Overview
Background

*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* is a publication of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, which was approved in November, 2005 to serve as a resource for guiding the development of lay ecclesial ministry.
Background

“Why we have this document.”

- Theological renewal in understanding church, mission, and ministry.

- Growth of lay ministry.
Vatican II Documents

Prior US Bishops’ Documents

- **Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium**, 1995.
Background

“Why we have this document.”

- Theological renewal in understanding church, mission, and ministry.

- Growth of lay ministry.
### The numbers:

*lay ministers in parish service*

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Source: *Lay Parish Ministers: A Study of Emerging Leadership* by David DeLambo, National Pastoral Life Center © 2005
Agenda

- Background
  “Why we have this document.”

- The Document Overview
Document Overview

INTRODUCTION

PART ONE: FOUNDATIONS
A. Describing and Responding to New Realities
B. Understanding the Realities in Light of Theology and Church Teaching

PART TWO: PASTORAL APPLICATIONS
A. Pathways to Lay Ecclesial Ministry
B. Formation for Lay Ecclesial Ministry
C. Authorization for Lay Ecclesial Ministry
D. The Ministerial Workplace
Purpose of Co-Workers Document

- Resource for diocesan bishops and all others responsible for guiding the development of lay ecclesial ministry.
- Pastoral and theological reflection on the reality of lay ecclesial ministry.
- Affirmation of those who serve in this way.
- Synthesis of best thinking and practice.
- A common frame of reference.
Co-Workers: A resource for guiding the development of lay ecclesial ministry:

- Expresses.
- Suggests.
- Invites.
- Calls.

- Does not propose norms.
- Does not establish particular law.
Lay Ecclesial Ministers

- Serve in parishes, schools, diocesan agencies, and Church institutions.
- Serve in a wide variety of roles identified by many different position titles.
- Is a generic term that permits reflection.
“Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord expresses our strong desire for the fruitful collaboration of ordained and lay ministers who, in distinct but complementary ways, continue in the Church the saving mission of Christ for the world, his vineyard.”

Co-Workers, p. 6.
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D. The Ministerial Workplace
The Call to All Believers

“All Christians in whatever state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity, and this holiness is conducive to a more human way of living even in society here on earth.”  

*Lumen Gentium*, # 40
The Call to the Lay Faithful

- Lay women and men answer the universal call to holiness in the secular realm.
- The secular nature of their calling is a participation in the mission of the church.
- The lay faithful are called to transform the world, most do this in the secular world and some do this by working in the church.
- Laity serve in various ministries, offices, and roles in the church that do not require sacramental ordination, but find their foundation in the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.
The Call to the Lay Faithful

“The laity can also feel called, or in fact be called, to cooperate with their pastors in service of the ecclesial community, for the sake of its growth and life. This can be done through the exercise of different kinds of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord has been pleased to bestow on them.”

_Evangelii Nuntiandi_, no. 73.
The Call to Lay Ecclesial Ministry

Within this large group of lay ministers is a smaller group of women and men whose ecclesial service is characterized by:

- **Authorization** of the hierarchy to serve publicly in the local church;
- **Leadership** in a particular area of ministry;
- **Close mutual collaboration** with the pastoral ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons; and
- **Preparation and formation** appropriate to the level of responsibilities that are assigned to them.
The Call to Lay Ecclesial Ministry

“Lay ecclesial minister” is not itself a specific position title, but is exercised in accordance with the specific lay vocation. The term “lay ecclesial ministry” reflects certain key realities:

- *Lay* because it is a service done by lay persons;
- *Ecclesial* because it has a place within the community of the Church; and
- *Ministry* because it is a participation in the threefold ministry of Christ.

Men and women religious participate in ecclesial ministry by their own title, according to the nature of their institute.
Reality of Lay Ecclesial Ministry

The Church’s experience of lay participation in Christ’s ministry is still maturing. Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord “attempts to ensure that this development will occur in ways that are faithful to the Church’s theological and doctrinal tradition and that respond to current pastoral needs and situations.” Co-Workers, p. 13.
For Your Reflection

In the definition / description of “lay ecclesial ministry” what new insights are helpful for you? Are there some realities that still need further reflection as we live them out?

How does the “secular character” of the laity relate to the work of lay ecclesial ministers? What are some of the concerns, particularly in the process of formation, that ought to be taken into account?

Everyone looks at their watch and comes back in 15 minutes.
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The reality of lay ecclesial ministry:

- Goes beyond the sociological and pastoral context;
- Is not simply a practical, organizational concern;
- Must be contextualized theologically; and
- Must be expressed in faithfulness to the Church’s belief and teaching.
All ministry...

- Finds its place within the communion of the Church.
- Serves the mission of Christ in the Spirit.

Thus, *communion* and *mission* provide the theological foundation for understanding and carrying out lay ecclesial ministry.
The Triune God: Source of the Church’s Mission
Communion and Mission: The one true God is fundamentally relational

A loving communion of Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The mystery of God is one of love:
- the love of Trinitarian *communion*; and
- revealed in *mission*: the divine desire to bring created persons into this communion.
Mission: Creation

Expresses this divine desire to make room for us in the communion of the Trinity through adoptive participation in Christ.

The earth is the LORD’s, and the fulness thereof - Ps. 24
Mission: Jesus Christ

- Revealed God’s love in a personal and definitive way.
- Proclaimed the Good News of the Kingdom of God.
  - a reign of holiness, love, truth, justice, and peace
- Initiated that Kingdom in his own person by his death and Resurrection.
Mission: The Church (The People of God)

- Proclaims this Good News.
- Joins in Christ’s work of bringing God’s Kingdom to realization.
- Is itself, on earth, the seed and beginning of that kingdom.
Mission: The Church

The Sacraments of Initiation allow us to:

- Put on Christ, calling us to holiness befitting disciples of Jesus; and
- Become members of his Body, the Christian community, calling and equipping us to embrace Christ’s mission of salvation by:
  - initiating us into the one priesthood of Christ;
  - giving to us, in different ways, a share in his priestly, prophetic, and kingly work; and
  - confirming us in faith through the gifts of God’s Spirit according to our calling.
Mission: The Holy Spirit

- Acts of the Apostles: fire bursts onto the scene and burns in their hearts propelling them to spread the Good News.
- St. Paul: is present in the many members that make up the one Body of Christ.
- Second Vatican Council: offers special graces to “the faithful of every rank,” by which the Spirit “makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks and offices for the renewal and building up of the church.”

*Lumen Gentium, # 12.*
Mission: The Holy Spirit:

Charisms:

- Gifts or graces of the Spirit that have benefit for the community.
- Tested and guided by pastors, with the assistance of others.
- Ordered “to the building up of the Church, to the well-being of humanity, and to the needs of the world” (*Christifidelis Laici*, no. 34).
Mission: The Holy Spirit:

Thus, a diversity of ministries but a unity of mission grounded in the one God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Church: A Communion for Mission

- Second Vatican Council: the Church finds its source and purpose in the life and activity of the Triune God.

- Pope John Paul II: the Church is “a mystery of Trinitarian communion in missionary tension.”

- The Church is the communion of those called by Christ to be his disciples.
Discipleship is:

- Fundamental vocation in which the Church’s mission and ministry find full meaning.
- Gift - a share in the Trinitarian communion.
- Essence of holiness, living the Trinitarian community in our daily lives.

Discipleship in turn becomes a mission that must shape the whole of Christian life.
In the Church we are all at one and the same time brought into communion and sent on mission. In fact, as Pope John Paul II stated in *Christifidelis Laici*,

“Communion and mission are profoundly connected with each other, they interpenetrate and mutually imply each other to the point that *communion represents both the source and the fruit of mission: communion gives rise to mission and mission is accomplished in communion.*” (no. 32, original emphasis).
Ministry: Serving the Church and Its Mission

- All of the faithful are called in various ways to share in the Church’s mission.
- The Church’s unity expresses the harmonizing of members’ mutual and reciprocal gifts by the Holy Spirit, source of all the gifts that build up Christ’s Body.
Ministry is:

- Service (*diakonia*).
- Means for accomplishing mission in the communion of the Church.
- Participation in and expression of Christ’s ministry.
- Rooted in sacramental initiation.

“Within this broad understanding of ministry, distinctions are necessary. They illuminate the nature of the Church as an organic and ordered communion.”

*Co-Workers, p. 20.*
Ministry is Diverse and Relational

“Every sort of differentiation between the faithful, based on the variety of their charisms, functions, and ministries, including the bishop, is ordered to the service of the other members of the People of God.” Co-Workers, p. 22.
Ministry – Distinctions:

- The ministry of the lay faithful and the ministry of the ordained, a special apostolic calling.
- Uniquely and essentially, the pastoral ministry of the ordained is empowered by the Sacrament of Holy Orders by which the ministry of the apostles is extended.
- The ordained’s *unique role* is not based on merit or rank, but based on:
  - *Sacramental character* given by the Holy Spirit that configures the recipient to Christ the Head and
  - *Particular relationship of service* that Holy Orders brings about between ecclesiastical ministry and the community.
The Bishop and Lay Ecclesial Ministers

- Is the center of communion in the local church.
- Has the primary responsibility for ecclesial communion.
- Exercises the power of governance proper to him in hierarchical communion with the successor of St. Peter and with the College of Bishops.
- Creates structures and venues for fostering communion in his particular church.
The Bishop and Lay Ecclesial Ministers

The relationship of lay ecclesial ministers with the community and its pastors (bishops and priests) is defined by the:

- Sacraments of Initiation and
- Recognition and authorization from these pastors.

Further defining this relationship are Lay Ecclesial Ministers’:

- Significant long-term commitment;
- Leadership roles in certain areas of ministry; and
- Oversight by the bishop.
The Priest and Lay Ecclesial Ministers

- The priest, in union with the bishop whom he represents in the local community, serves to guide the Body of Christ in its mission.

- His ministry is entirely on behalf of the Church and promotes the exercise of the common priesthood of the entire people of God. (John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 16.)
The Priest and Lay Ecclesial Ministers

- While they differ essentially, the ordained and the common priesthood of the faithful are ordered to one another and thus are intimately related.

- Ordained priests are expected to provide leadership in developing collaboration among ministers that is mutually life-giving and respectful.
As ordained ministers, deacons necessarily depend for the exercise of their ministry on the bishop, and “in communion with [priests] are called to serve the People of God.” (Basic Norms for the Formation of Deacons, no. 8).

Diaconal ministry has a distinct sacramental basis that flows from the Sacrament of Orders, marked by a permanent and public vocation and a unique participation in the apostolic ministry of the bishop.
The Lay Faithful and Lay Ecclesial Ministers

“Lay ecclesial ministers are members of the lay faithful, sharing in the common priesthood of all the baptized.”

Co-Workers, p. 25.
The Lay Faithful and Lay Ecclesial Ministers

The further call to lay ecclesial ministry:

- Adds a special grace;

- Entails an explicit relationship of mutual accountability to and collaboration with the Church hierarchy; and

- Defines their relationship to the mission of the Church and to the other ministers who work to accomplish it.
The Lay Faithful and Lay Ecclesial Ministers

The further call to lay ecclesial ministry:

- Requires a genuine love of the whole Catholic Church;
- Demands full communion of heart and mind with the pope; and
- Expects an ecclesial identity shaped by obedience to the bishop of the diocese.
The Lay Faithful and Lay Ecclesial Ministers

The further call to lay ecclesial ministry:

- Is expressed by generous collaboration with other ecclesial ministers; and

- Rejects an elitism that places lay ecclesial ministers above or outside the laity.
“Ministry in the Church continues the ministry of Jesus through the ages and throughout the world. Continually, the Spirit calls forth new ministries and new ministers to serve evolving needs. In our time lay ecclesial ministers have emerged, men and women working in collaboration with bishops, priests, deacons, and other laity, each responding to the charisms bestowed by the Spirit.”

For Your Reflection

- How do the various relationships among ministers described in the document compare to your own experience as a minister? What impact has the rise of lay ecclesial ministry had on the traditional ministries of the ordained?

- What have been, for you, some of the blessings of the partnership of the lay and ordained in ministry? As we continue in the future, what will be the blessings? What might some of the challenges be?

- In what ways could the connection between the bishop/diocese and the lay ecclesial ministers be better strengthened?

Study Guide, p. 5.
LUNCH

Everyone looks at their watch and comes back in 30 minutes.
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The Desire for Lay Ecclesial Ministry

- No typical path exists, only a multitude of examples. Most of the paths are circuitous, few are direct.
  - Reflect on your own calling.

- Personal invitation – especially by bishops, pastors, deacons, and those in lay ecclesial ministry, but also by others who know them – often strengthens the spirit within the prospective minister and encourages the individual to consider beginning formal preparation.

- This invitation is especially important in those communities that are still underrepresented among lay ecclesial ministers and where young people do not see many ministers.
Discernment of a Call to Lay Ecclesial Ministry

- Discernment is a process that requires prayer, dialogue, and evaluation.
- Connections to the Church can provide a supportive environment in which one can decipher, test, and strengthen a call to lay ecclesial ministry.
- Mentoring or spiritual direction can be especially helpful in discerning a call to lay ecclesial ministry.
Discernment of a Call to Lay Ecclesial Ministry

“Lay people with a call to lay ecclesial ministry possess certain dispositions, which are further developed during formation.

- Being in full communion with the Catholic Church, able to minister joyfully and faithfully within the hierarchical communion that is the Church.
- The desire to serve the Church and its mission, which proceeds from love of God and God’s people.
- A commitment to regular personal prayer, frequent participation in the Mass beyond the Sunday obligation and in the other sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Penance.
Discernment of a Call to Lay Ecclesial Ministry (continued)

- Zeal to live a Christian life, and willingness to live and teach as the magisterium teaches.
- Emotional maturity, including the ability to sustain friendships and professional relationships and the management and appropriate expression of both anger and affection.
- The intellectual gifts needed for the specific ministry.
- A commitment to good communication and conflict resolution skills.”

Determination of Suitability for Lay Ecclesial Ministry

“Suitability for public, authorized ministry in the Church is demonstrated in several ways.

- The individual’s dispositions for ministry are practiced within the beliefs and disciplines of the Catholic faith.
  - Prayer that is habitual and enriched by Scripture and the Liturgy.
  - Knowledge of and adherence to Church doctrine in teaching and discussion.
  - Respect and appreciation for Tradition and the traditions of the Church.
  - Regular celebration of the sacraments, especially Eucharist and Penance, and participation in the life of one’s parish community.
  - Ability or potential to direct others in their service.”

*Co-Workers, p. 31.*
Determination of Suitability for Lay Ecclesial Ministry

“The individual evinces psychological and social health.

- Chaste living as a single, celibate, or married person.
- Friendships and collegial relationships that lead to personal and professional growth.
- Mature emotional balance, respect of all within the Church (both ordained and lay) and freedom from personal agenda.
- Willingness and ability to engage in disciplined study, including academic and ecclesial study.
- Appreciation of new ideas, critical thinking ability, and ability to manage stress.”

*Co-Workers, p. 31.*
Determination of Suitability for Lay Ecclesial Ministry

- A gradual process that may include multiple agents.
  - Program directors and staff.
  - References, background check, and various screening instruments.
  - An extensive application form.
  - Psychological screening instruments.

Neither discernment nor determination of suitability is a one-time process, however, it should occur initially to some degree, before a prospective lay ecclesial minister begins any formal program of preparation.
For Your Reflection

- Describe your **pathway** to ministry. When and how did you first become aware of your **call** to ministry? How did it develop and grow? Who was instrumental in helping you to discern that call? Who walked with you? What earlier events or **experiences** in your life planted the seeds?

- Reflect on the list of necessary **dispositions** of lay ecclesial ministers. Which do you feel are the most **important**? Would you add any others to the list?

- What does **faithfulness** to Church teaching mean to you?

*Study Guide, p. 6-7.*
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Code of Canon Law
Canon 231

“Lay persons who devote themselves permanently or temporarily to some special service of the Church are obliged to acquire the appropriate formation which is required to fulfill their function properly and to carry it out conscientiously, zealously and diligently.”
Formation for Lay Ecclesial Ministry

- Human
- Spiritual
- Intellectual
- Pastoral
Document Parallels

- Program of Priestly Formation
- National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons
“Goal: Human formation seeks to develop the lay ecclesial minister’s human qualities and character, fostering a healthy and well-balanced personality, for the sake of both personal growth and ministerial service.”

Co-Workers, p. 36.
Elements of Human Formation

- A basic understanding of self and others.
- Psychological health.
- A mature sexuality.
- Physical health.
- Knowledge of one’s personal gifts and special charisms.
- Recognition of the traits and abilities one lacks.
- Understanding of family systems and dynamics.
- Ability to learn.
- Appreciation and valuing of racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.
- A genuine respect and concern for others.
- Virtues of Christian discipleship.
Methods of Human Formation

- Participation in a small faith community.
- Affirmation and critique.
- Periodic feedback.
- Counseling.
- Fostering of self-reflection and self-awareness.
“Goal: Spiritual formation aims to arouse and animate true hunger for holiness, desire for union with the Father through Christ in the Spirit, daily growing in love of God and neighbor in life and ministry, and the practices of prayer and spirituality that foster these attitudes and dispositions. It promotes and strengthens that fundamental conversion that places God, and not oneself, at the center of one’s life. Openness to this ongoing conversion is a prerequisite for fruitful spiritual formation.”

Co-Workers, p. 38.
Elements of Spiritual Formation

- A living union with Christ.
- Spiritual formation built on the word of God.
- Spiritual formation based on the Liturgy, especially the sacraments.
- An incarnational spirituality of presence, and a paschal spirituality of loving service.
- An awareness of sin.
- A spirituality for suffering.
- A Marian spirituality.
- Love for the Church.
- Devotion to the Eucharist.
- An ecumenical spirit.
Methods of Spiritual Formation

- Daily prayer and spiritual practices.
- Spiritual direction.
- Faith sharing and theological reflection.
- The practice of justice and charity.
- Studying the lives of the saints.
“Goal: Intellectual formation seeks to develop the lay ecclesial minister’s understanding and appreciation of the Catholic faith, which is rooted in God’s revelation and embodied in the living tradition of the Church. It consists chiefly of study of the sacred sciences but draws also upon a wide range of other disciplines: philosophy, literature and the arts, psychology, sociology, counseling, medical ethics, culture and language studies, business administration, leadership and organizational development, law, and so on. While the sacred sciences are the main focus here, we recognize the value of these other disciplines and encourage their study and use whenever relevant for effective ministry.”

Preliminary Considerations

- **Theology for Ministry.**
  - A journey beyond catechesis into theological study to provide a complete and systematic study of the essentials of the faith.

- **An Ecumenical and Interfaith Dimension.**
  - Lay ecclesial ministers have a role in implementing the commitment of the Catholic Church to the restoration of unity among all Christians.
  - Lay ecclesial ministers need an understanding and appreciation of the other religions present throughout the world and in our own society.
Elements of Intellectual Formation

- Scripture and its interpretation.
- Dogmatic theology.
- Church history.
- Liturgical and sacramental theology.
- Moral theology and Catholic social teaching.
- Pastoral theology.
- Spirituality.
- Canon law.
Methods of Intellectual Formation

Adult learners need a variety of learning methods. These methods need to allow adults to learn from one another and to honor prior experiences. Formators should make use of:

- small group process,
- lectures,
- discussions,
- pastoral projects,
- independent research,
- theological reflection, and
- technology.
Pastoral Formation

“Goal: Pastoral formation cultivates the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that directly pertain to effective functioning in the ministry setting and that also pertain to pastoral administration that supports direct ministry.”

Co-Workers, p. 47.
Elements of Pastoral Formation

- Methods for providing formation for others.
- Leading of community prayer and preaching.
- Pastoral ministry skills.
- Family mission and family perspective.
- Effective relationship and communication skills.
- Collaboration.
- Discernment of the signs of the times.
- Gift discernment and volunteer ministry management.
- Change and conflict management skills.
- Basic counseling skills.
- Culture and language studies.
- Administration skills.
- Leadership and organizational development.
- Ministerial code of ethics.
Methods of Pastoral Formation

“The knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for pastoral ministry may be taught in traditional classroom or seminar formats, but that is not enough. The teaching must be supplemented by practical experience in real situations and by mentored reflection on those experiences.”

Co-Workers, p. 49.
“Although the four elements of formation (human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral) have been addressed separately, they must be integrated as a unified whole in the person of the well-formed lay ecclesial minister, which happens best if these elements are integrated in the formation program itself.”

Co-Workers, p. 49.

- Guided pastoral practice.
- Shared formation program vision.
- Actual practice of ministry.
On-going Formation

- “Diocesan, regional, or national conferences, and active participation in the work of diocesan, regional, and national ministerial associations.
- Immersion experiences (e.g., in other cultures).
- Further academic coursework and ministry-specific skill development training.
- Continuing theological reflection on the practice of ministry.
- Diocesan or parish staff workshops, renewal days, short courses, study weeks, or retreats.
- Support groups, study groups, or book clubs.
- A relationship with a mentor and / or spiritual director.”

*Co-Workers, p. 51.*
Agents of Formation

“The Holy Spirit is the principal agent of formation: the Spirit of Jesus, sent by the Father, given in Baptism, poured out anew in Confirmation, bestowing personal gifts and charisms on each of the faithful, to be developed and used in the service of others.”

Co-Workers, p. 52.
Agents of Formation

- Bishop.
- Pastors or supervisors.
- Local community.
- Diocesan formation programs.
- Colleges, universities, and seminaries.
- Formators.
- Self.
“All formation is ultimately self-formation, and lay ecclesial ministers themselves are the pivotal agents in their own formation. We call them to nurture in themselves a deep and powerful hunger for formation, willingness to learn and grow, and desire to serve the Lord with excellence and generosity.”

Co-Workers, p. 53.
<table>
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<th>Core Certification Standards</th>
<th>Sections in <em>Co-Workers in the Vineyard</em> Reference</th>
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| **Standard I:** Personal/Spiritual Maturity | Human Formation & Methods of Human Formation, pp. 33-38  
Spiritual Formation & Methods of Spiritual Formation, pp. 39-41 |
| **Standard II:** Ministerial Identity | Describing and Responding to New Realities, pp. 7-16  
Understanding the Realities in Light of Theology and Church Teaching, pp. 17-26  
Pathways to Lay Ecclesial Ministry, pp. 27-32 |
| **Standard III:** Catholic Theology | Intellectual Formation, pp. 42-46 |
| **Standard IV:** Ministerial Praxis | Pastoral Formation, pp. 47-49  
Integrating . . . Human, Spiritual, Intellectual, & Pastoral Formation, p. 50 |
| **Standard V:** Professional Practice | Pastoral Formation, pp. 47-49  
Integrating . . . Human, Spiritual, Intellectual, & Pastoral Formation, p. 50 |
For Your Reflection

- How could formators (those responsible for the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation) help candidates for ministry better reflect on the ‘lights and shadows’ in our culture and reflect more deeply on those, in the light of the Gospel message?

- How could today’s candidates for ministry be better prepared amid the cultural diversity present in the contemporary Church?

- As you look back at your own formation process, do you now see any area in which additional formation was needed? What suggestions would you make to directors / faculty of lay ministry formation programs?

  *Study Guide, p. 8-9.*
For Your Reflection

- How do those of us in ministry meet the challenge of finding time for prayer, reflection, spiritual reading, and retreat time? What are the particular challenges of that for you? What are the blessings and gifts? What are your secrets for finding time? What other spiritual practices have been or are now especially important for you?

- Of the elements of spiritual formation which have been the most important for you?

- Of the elements of pastoral formation which were done particularly well in your formation program? Which received less emphasis? What have been the effects of these areas of greater or lesser emphasis, as concerns your own ministry?

BREAK

Everyone looks at their watch and comes back in 15 minutes.
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Authorization for Lay Ecclesial Ministry

“Authorization is the process by which properly prepared lay men and women are given responsibilities for ecclesial ministry by competent Church authority.”

Co-Workers, p. 54.
The Role of the Bishop in the Authorization of Lay Ecclesial Ministers

- He ensures the suitability of candidates to take on roles that are critical to the proper care of souls.
- He is rightly attentive to the proper preparation of those who minister in the Church.
- His authorization demonstrates to the community that their work has his confidence and support.
The Role of the Pastor in the Authorization Process

- Organizes parish resources to meet the pastoral needs of the people.
- Selects those who will serve on the pastoral team of the parish.
- Supports lay ecclesial ministry within parish communities.
Specific Roles Covered by the Authorization Process

“A diocese must first identify those roles that, in the judgment of the diocesan bishop, are so essential to collaborating in the pastoral care of people that diocesan policies are needed to ensure that those who are given these roles have the appropriate education, formation, experience, and ecclesial recognition to meet the needs of the community.”

Co-Workers, p. 56.
The Certification of Candidates for Lay Ecclesial Ministry Positions

- Requires a process for deciding that a given candidate has the education, formation, and professional skills necessary to serve in a particular role.
- Bishops have several options for setting certification requirements.
- These requirements should be clearly stated and readily accessible.
- Dioceses may establish programs for candidates.
- Provinces or regions can develop consistent certification standards and procedures so that lay ecclesial ministers might transfer from one diocese to another.
The Appointment of Lay Ecclesial Ministers

- Should be done in writing.
- Use terminology drawn from Canon Law to promote consistency.
  - Mandate is used when a person is appointed for a specific instance.
  - Delegation is used in a situation where a person who has ordinary executive power by virtue of an office permits someone else to exercise that power in general or in specific situations.
- Reserve to the bishop the right to review the credentials of or meet with a candidate prior to the appointment.
- Announce to the community.
Blessings and Rituals in the Authorization Process

- Emphasizes the relationship of the diocesan bishop with the lay ecclesial minister and the community to be served.

- Underscores the importance of this person’s role for the life of the community.

- Provides an opportunity for the lay ecclesial minister and the community to pray together.
Additional Considerations

- A formal process for authorizing lay women and men for key positions of ecclesial ministry can give the diocesan bishop greater confidence that the spiritual needs of the diocese will be met.

- This process will differ from diocese to diocese.

- Provision for accepting experience in lieu of coursework for those whose service predates education and formation requirements should be made.

- Provision should be made for evaluating and recognizing academic credentials and ministerial experience acquired outside the United States.

- Flexibility is needed so that volunteers who have experience within the parish and professional and personal qualities needed in ministry are not excluded from consideration.

- The authorization process can provide occasions for the bishop to demonstrate his support for lay ecclesial ministers of his diocese and model collaboration.
For Your Reflection

Imagine what might be an appropriate **ritual** recognition celebration of lay ecclesial ministry. Have you **experienced** one in the past? What **symbols** were used? If you were **designing** a ritual, what words, actions, symbols, and music would celebrate the reality of today’s lay ecclesial minister?

*Study Guide, p. 12.*
Document Overview

INTRODUCTION

PART ONE: FOUNDATIONS

A. Describing and Responding to New Realities

B. Understanding the Realities in Light of Theology and Church Teaching

PART TWO: PASTORAL APPLICATIONS

A. Pathways to Lay Ecclesial Ministry

B. Formation for Lay Ecclesial Ministry

C. Authorization for Lay Ecclesial Ministry

D. The Ministerial Workplace
Context

- Diversity among dioceses regarding workplace issues.
- Characteristics of a ministerial workplace.
  - Faith community of co-workers.
  - Modern organization.
- Establishing consistent policies and practices which consider the needs of all in the ministry workplace.
  - Gospel values.
  - Best organizational practices.
Some Human Resource Areas in a Comprehensive Personnel System

1. Recruitment and selection.
2. Orientation and support for new lay ecclesial ministers.
3. Evaluation and feedback.
5. Transitions and terminations.
1. Recruitment and selection

- Posting job openings.
- Writing position descriptions.
- Using search committees of people who are trained.
2. Orientation and support for new lay ecclesial ministers

- Understand mission, culture, history.
- Meet other workers.
- Introduce to the particular parish and to the diocese.
- Make reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities.
3. Evaluation and feedback

- Regular performance appraisals.
  - Reflect on performance.
  - Feedback from supervisor, colleagues, and those served.
- Conducted in the context of the mission of the parish.
- Documentation of honest and constructive feedback.
4. Compensation

- Fair compensation.
- Salary plans.
  - Ranges.
  - Benefit plans (health insurance, family leave, child care assistance, funding for ongoing education, etc.).
- Agreed-upon expectations about the time given to ministry.
“With due regard for Canon 230.1, they have a right to a decent remuneration suited to their condition; by such remuneration they should be able to provide decently for their own needs and for those of their family with due regard for the prescriptions of civil law; they likewise have a right that their pension, social security and health benefits be duly provided.”
“Administrators of goods:

- are to observe meticulously the civil laws pertaining to labor and social policy according to Church principles in the employment of workers;
- are to pay employees a just and decent wage so that they may provide appropriately for their needs and those of their family.”
5. Transitions and terminations

- Pastor change.
  - Offer support to departing pastor.
  - Help to orient the new pastor.
  - Assist the new pastor and people to build new relationships.

- Lay ecclesial minister transition.
  - Exit interviews.
  - Outplacement and severance assistance.
6. Grievance procedures

- Use early.

- Make available in the Church workplace.

- Employ an objective process for addressing good faith claims by those who think they have been unfairly treated.
How comprehensive is your personnel system?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Resource Areas</th>
<th>√ yes</th>
<th>√ improvement needed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Recruitment and selection.</td>
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<td>2. Orientation and support.</td>
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<td>5. Transitions and terminations.</td>
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Resources and Outcomes

- **Diocese**
  - Primary support for pastoral ministry.
  - Model for the parishes in human resource administration.
  - Give parishes guidance.

- **National**
  - National Association of Church Personnel Administrators (NACPA).
  - National Association for Lay Ministry (NALM).
Resources and Outcomes

- Improves morale among lay ecclesial ministers.
- Saves time and money.
- Avoids fracturing the community in the resolution of employee disputes.
- Ensures successful recruitment and retention of qualified and committed lay ecclesial ministers.
- Provides a model of integration of Gospel values and best organizational practices.
For Your Reflection

- What are the *opportunities / gifts* within the parish workplace for the lay ecclesial minister? What are the *challenges*?

- What *structures* are there in your diocese to assist the lay minister with terminations and transitions? What *new structures* could be added? What are your greatest *concerns* about this?

- How are we identifying and calling forth *future ministers* from our local parish or ministerial setting? How are we providing formation / support as we help them in their *initial journey*?

Conclusion

Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord:

- Serves as a resource document;
- Does not address every issue or anticipate every possibility;
- Asks each diocese to develop appropriate plans;
- Recommends experiencing the document for five years;
- Encourages a thorough study of our theology of vocation;
- Underlines the need to determine a common title for those people appointed under the Code of Canon Law, canon 517.2.

Let us go forward in hope!
For Your Reflection

- How does a collaborative / relational approach to ministry further the mission of the Church?

- What excites you most about our future as a Church? What concerns you most?

- How do you envision the role of the lay ecclesial minister in ten years? How do you envision ministry in ten years?

- Do you feel affirmed by the document? Challenged? In what way?

- What is your overall response to the document?

For More Information

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Or visit www.nalm.org

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