



Ministries in the Church

LPMI Year of Discernment

Session 6

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What's In A Word?

What do you think of when you hear the word:

Ministry

Church

Laity

Opening Prayer

Where does ministry come from?

“The lay apostolate, however, is a participation in the salvific mission of the Church itself. Through their baptism and confirmation all are commissioned to that apostolate by the Lord Himself. Moreover, by the sacraments, especially holy Eucharist, that charity toward God and man which is the soul of the apostolate is communicated and nourished. Now the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth. Thus every layman, in virtue of the very gifts bestowed upon him, is at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church itself "according to the measure of Christ's bestowal".

“Besides this apostolate which certainly pertains to all Christians, the laity can also be called in various ways to a more direct form of cooperation in the apostolate of the Hierarchy. This was the way certain men and women assisted Paul the Apostle in the Gospel, laboring much in the Lord. Further, they have the capacity to assume from the Hierarchy certain ecclesiastical functions, which are to be performed for a spiritual purpose.” (LG #33; cf. CCC #898-913)

Baptism is the Foundation for All Ministry In the Church

“The laity derive the right and duty to the apostolate from their union with Christ the head; incorporated into Christ’s Mystical Body through Baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through Confirmation, they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord Himself.” *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, Pope Paul VI, November 18, 1965).

Baptismal Rite: (at anointing after Baptism)

“God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth through water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life.”



Orders in the Church

- ✓ Common Priesthood of All Believers
- ✓ Ministerial Priesthood

Sacraments of Holy Orders

- **Bishop**
- **Presbyters (AKA-Priests)**
- **Deacons**

Consecrated Life

- **Evangelical Counsels, Consecrated Life**
 - “Religious Life”
 - Nuns
 - Sisters
 - Brothers
 - Eremitic Life (Hermits)
 - Consecrated Virgins
 - Secular Institutes
 - Societies of Apostolic Life

Laity

Vocation

- *“The faithful, more precisely the lay faithful, find themselves on the front lines of the church’s life; for them the church is the animating principle for human society. Therefore, they in particular ought to have an ever-clearer consciousness not only of belonging to the church, **but of being the church**, that is to say, the community of the faithful on earth under the leadership of the pope, the head of all, and of the bishops in communion with him. These are the church.”* Pope Pius XII

Laity

Communion:

“[A member of the lay faithful] can never remain in isolation from the community, but must live in a continual interaction with others, with a lively sense of fellowship, rejoicing in an equal dignity and common commitment to bring to fruition the immense treasure that each has inherited. The Spirit of the Lord gives a vast variety of charisms, inviting people to assume different ministries and forms of service and reminding them ... that what distinguishes persons is not an increase in dignity, but a special and complementary capacity for service ... Thus the charisms, the ministries, the different forms of service exercised by the lay faithful exist in communion and on behalf of communion. They are treasures that complement one another for the good of all and are under the wise guidance of their pastors.” CFL #20: (JP II states from his homily at end of Synod on the Laity)

Laity

Mission:

“The lay faithful, precisely because they are members of the church, have the vocation and mission of proclaiming the Gospel: They are prepared for this work by the sacraments of Christian initiation and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.” CFL # 33

Laity

Role in Evangelization:

“The lay faithful have their part [in evangelization], not only through an active and responsible participation in the life of the community – in other words, through a testimony that only they can give – but also through a missionary zeal and activity toward the many people who still do not believe and who no longer live the faith received at baptism.”

Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord

Some additional points to consider are (taken from ‘Why and How Lay Ecclesial Ministers Matter by Bishop Kicanas’):

We need your ministry

- A central purpose of the document is to make clear that lay involvement in the Church is important.
- Lay ecclesial ministry is the ‘full flowering of our theology of communion and mission’ (Origins, p. 135)
- Think about the context for lay ministry described in the Decree on the *Apostolate of the Laity*, and *Christifideles Laici*.
- The justification for lay ecclesial ministry has nothing to do with a shortage of clergy and religious. Appeals to a shortage only diminish the role of the laity in the Church.
- The document refers to you as *co-workers*.

Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord

Questions to reflect on:

- a. How do lay people hear and answer the universal call to holiness?
- b. What is lay ecclesial ministry?
- c. How does one explore a call to lay ecclesial ministry?
- d. Is lay ecclesial ministry different than doing volunteer work at a parish? If so, how?
- e. What are some examples of lay ecclesial ministry?
- f. What are the relationships between lay ecclesial ministers and ordained ministers; what about the religious?
- g. Why is it necessary for lay ecclesial ministers to undergo a formal formation program?
- h. What is involved in the formation of lay ecclesial ministers?

Lay Ministry

What It Is-What It Is Not

Lay ecclesial ministers are formally authorized

- One does not independently decide to be a lay ecclesial minister, no more than one independently and unilaterally decides to become an ordained minister or professed religious.
- One discerns such things within the context of a community, which includes those in authority in the Church.
- Authorization involves acknowledging the competence of an individual for a specific ministerial role, appointment to a specific position, announcement of the appointment to the community.
- It is usually the bishop or pastor who authorizes the lay person for a particular ministerial responsibility.

Lay Ministry

What It Is-What It Is Not

Commit to being a true co-worker

- Ministry calls for co-workers who do not see each other as competitors.
- Instead each contributes according to her/his gifts (which are God-given, by the way).
- This document reminds us all of our need to join hands and hearts; it is together that we build the household of God

Formation is important

- Formation involves more than just learning more about the faith (as critical as that is)
- Formation involves the growth of the whole person – intellectually, emotionally, pastorally, and physically.
- Also, practically speaking, “ ... it would be foolhardy to place laywomen and laymen, inadequately prepared, into positions of pastoral leadership. They will falter and fail. They could even harm the faithful they are trying to serve.” (Bishop Kicanas, *Origins*, p. 137)

Closing Questions for Reflection & Response

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

B) What excites you most about our future as a Church?

C) What concerns you most about our future as a Church?

D) How do you envision ministry in 10 years? How do you envision the role of lay ministry in 10 years?

May God Bless You With Grace as You Live Out
Your Baptismal Call!

Thank You For Your Willingness to Discern the
Call of God in Your Life!

If I can be of assistance in any way, do not
hesitate to contact me:

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