C0-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord

Unit I: Origins of the Document
What is a Lay Ecclesial Minister?

Predecessor Documents

- Called and Gifted, USCCB, 1980
- Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium, USCCB, 1995
- Lay Ecclesial Ministry: The State of the Questions (Subcommittee on Lay Ministry, 1999)
- Compare to Plan for Priestly Formation & National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the U.S.

Differences: Co-Workers does not have force of church law, while the other two do.

Prepared by Susan K. Wood, SCL

Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord
USCCB 2005

What?
Respond to new realities present in the Church’s life and Mission:
- Growth and diversification of Catholic population
- Expanded and diversified lay participation
- Emerging groups of laity now perform ecclesial ministries

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How?
Offers theological and pastoral resources to dioceses, programs, and academic institutions
- Offers a theology for an emerging phenomenon
- Offers a view of the church within which this phenomenon occurs
- Situates this phenomenon within other existing ministerial forms.

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Why?
- To support Lay Ecclesial Ministry within the two interrelated terms:

Ministries: those services performed by the church
Ministers: those persons who perform those services. To recognize LEM within the context of how we understand and organize lay and ordained ministries.
For Whom?

- Diocesan bishop
- Those who educate and form LEM
- Lay ministers: see Romans 16:3-16 “my co-workers”

For What?

Guiding, educating, forming, employing, evaluating, and sustaining those laity called to collaborate with priests and deacons.

Lay Ecclesial Ministry

- Lay: Service done by lay persons. The sacramental basis in the Sacraments of Initiation, not the Sacrament of Ordination.
- Ecclesial: This ministry is the ministry of the church.
- Ministry: Participates and continues the ministry of Christ, who is priest, prophet, and king.

Lay Ecclesial Ministry, cont.

- Requiring appropriate formation
- And authorization
- To collaborate with the ordained
- In the work of pastoring the people of God.

Two perspectives

- The ministry – new set of roles and responsibilities that need to be identified and ordered, requiring ecclesial authorization and coordination.
- The minister – needing to be acknowledged, affirmed, supported through public recognition, and clarity about their rights and responsibilities.
Ministry: Serving the Church and its Mission

- Whose ministry is it anyway?
- Announce the reign of God
- Transform the world in the light of Christ

Baptism and Gifts of the Spirit

- Particular way of responding to the baptismal call to further the mission of Christ
- Flows from the charisms given to the Holy Spirit and needed by the church
- Sacramental basis in baptism and confirmation
- Does not require sacramental gifts of holy orders

Three degrees of involvement

- All laity – witness in secular area
- Direct ministries which require short-term preparation, are volunteered, under supervision of the pastor’s delegate
- Further call to make a significant life commitment to work in collaboration with the ordained in their pastoral ministry

Responsibility for Ecclesial Leadership

- Public activity directed toward building up the body of Christ for its mission in the world
- Recognized and affirmed by the church community
- Involves a leadership responsibility for some area of ministry, usually with a relationship of coordination and direction of others in the community

Stable Commitment

- Significant and long-term commitment, not necessarily life-long
- Often marked by employment (full- or part-time) on parish staffs, in diocesan offices, or within church-related organization

A Distinction

- Ministries ordinarily entrusted to the laity because of their baptismal call
- Ministries, ordinarily reserved to the ordained, delegated to the laity by exception in case of need
Characteristics of Lay Ecclesial Ministry

- Authorization by 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
- Preparation and formation appropriate to the level of responsibilities that are assigned to them
- Vocation personally and ecclesially discerned
- Stability because it is on-going ministry rather than occasional ministry

Discipleship vs. Ministry

- Discipleship: Gospel living and a following of Jesus required of all Christians by virtue of their baptism
- Ministry: The work of some Christians who are continue the ministry of Jesus as individuals. May be occasional, does not receive ecclesial authorization
- Lay ecclesial ministry: public ministry in the name of the church, authorized by the church

Church vs. World???

- The Lay Faithful are marked by their place in the secular world.
- Ministry to the church is not a retreat by the laity from their role in the secular realm. They build ecclesial communion precisely to strengthen the community for its mission in the world.

Application of the term LEM

- Not a specific position title
- Responsibility of the bishop to identify the roles that most clearly exemplify lay ecclesial ministry
- Application of the term may vary diocese to diocese

Vocation

- Personal discernment
- Ecclesial discernment and ratification

Discernment of Vocation

- Full communion with the Catholic Church
- Desire to serve the Church and its mission, love of God and God’s people
- Commitment to regular personal prayer, Mass, and sacraments
- Zeal to live a Christian life, live and teach according to the magisterium
- Emotional maturity
Discernment, cont.

• Needed intellectual gifts
• Commitment to good communication and conflict resolution skills
• Knowledge of and adherence to church doctrine
• Respect and appreciation for Tradition and the traditions of the church
• Ability or potential to direct others in their service

Discernment, cont.

• Chaste living as a single, celibate, or married person.
• Friendships and collegial relationships that lead to personal and professional growth
• Mature emotional balance, respect for all, freedom from personal agenda
• Willingness and ability to engage in disciplined study
• Appreciation of new ideas, critical thinking ability, and ability to manage stress

Discernment

What talents, virtues, and limits do I possess that indicate my ability to serve God’s people through a commitment to lay ecclesial ministry?

Vocation

• Discerned within the Church and authenticated by the bishop, or his delegate, who is alone able to authorize someone to service in ecclesial ministry.
• Vocation to build up the church from within in addition to engagement with the world.
• This does not mean that the ministries of LEM are distinctive to lay persons alone.

Appropriate Formation

Lay ecclesial ministry requires a ministerial competence that comes from formation and preparation through a formal degree, certification, informal training, or pastoral experience.

Authorization to Collaborate with the Ordained

• Lay Ecclesial ministry involves such a substantial collaboration with the ordained in their pastoral ministry that it requires authorization by the bishop or his delegate.
• This can take a variety of forms, including a public ritual.
Collaboration

To “collaborate” is not only to work together to get things done, but to be an effective sign of the Trinity of divine persons, whose “co-labor” in creating, redeeming and sanctifying the world is the font of the Church’s identity and mission.

“Working Together in Preparation for Service”
Archdiocese of Milwaukee, 2004

Unit II: Theological Foundations of LEM

- Triune God
- Ecclesiology

Trinity

- Fundamentally relational
- Source of the church’s mission
- Christians baptized in the name of the Trinity
- Grammar of Christian Life
  - Journey to the Father
  - Incorporated into the Son by baptism & eucharist
  - Empowered by the Spirit, gifted with charisms for the upbuilding of the church

Church: A Community for Mission

- Communion ecclesiology

The Term “Communion”

Koinonia

- Participation
- Association
- Fellowship
- Sharing in

Use of the Term

- Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, 1985
- Congregation of Doctrine and Faith: “very suitable for expressing the core of the mystery of the church, key for renewal of Catholic ecclesiology”
- Ecumenically fruitful category
- Theme of 5th world conference on Faith and Order, Santiago de Compostela, 1993
**Scriptural Use**

Christians are called into koinonia with Christ and one another through faith (Phlm 6) and baptism (1 Cor 1:9).

The Eucharist is a koinonia in the body and blood of Christ (1 Cor 10:16-17).

In sharing their material goods (Acts 2:42) and contributing financially to the relief of the poor (2 or 8:4; 9:13) Christians engage in koinonia.

The faithful have koinonia with the Son (1 Cor 1:9), with the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:13), and with the Father himself (1 John 1:3).

The koinonia that the faithful already experience on earth is a foretaste of the perfect unity to be enjoyed in heaven (1 Cor 1:7-9).

**Church Structure: Relational**

- No individual exercising a direct communion with God
- The way to God passes through the neighbor
- Absolute interdependence among all members of the community

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Basic Ecclesial Principle

• A church can never exist in isolation

• A church is only a church in communion with other churches

Corresponding Ministerial Principle

• Ministry serves the communion of the church

• Ministry exists to create communion

Church: Oriented To Mission Rather Than Self-Maintenance

Why we're here? Our Mission...

Retreat House?
Campaign Headquarters for Mission?

Ministers are formed for the sake of this world, for its transformation and salvation. For this attitudes are needed that go out toward and embrace the world, with all its varieties of peoples and their aspirations and gifts, not those that would foster a kind of separateness and exclusivism, or a mentality of privilege and clericalism.

Challenges to the Communion Model of Church (and Ministry!)

FIEFDOMS AND LONE RANGERS

DISENGAGEMENT
- From official church teaching
- From presence to a faith community
- Compartmentalization of faith and life

Future Topics
- Questions concerning formation for lay ecclesial ministry
- Questions concerning a theology of authorization
- Relationship between authorization and certification
- The relationship between a lay ecclesial minister and the bishop, priests, and deacons
- Differences between LEM and ordained ministry
Questions??