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Preparing Lay Ministers in Dominica for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest

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Preparing Lay Ministers in Dominica for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest

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Preparing Lay Ministers in Dominica for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest which is the topic of this Dissertation makes specific reference to *Sacrosanctum concilium*, which was the first document that was promulgated at the Second Vatican Council (1963). This document called for reform of the liturgy in order to facilitate the full, conscious, and active participation of the people of God in the liturgical life of the Church, particularly Mass.

In the Diocese of Roseau, there is a pastoral situation where one priest has to serve as pastor of multiple parishes. Consequently, in some parishes Mass is replaced with a Communion Service every other Sunday. The Mass remains the proper way of celebrating Sunday, but the people must also recognize the presence of important elements of Sunday worship even when Mass cannot be celebrated.

This study presents a systematic analysis of the Vatican II and post Vatican II documents that have seeks to explicate the role of the laity. It is intended to design and implement a model of training for lay ministry which incorporates a four-module course that encompasses liturgical, Eucharistic, scriptural, and preaching components. This will support and provide a basic, holistic approach to guide the ongoing formation of lay ministers. This proposal touches only one aspect of liturgical leadership and has a threefold content: the celebration of

the Eucharist, the celebration of Sunday, and the role of Lay Ministers. It has been designed to ensure, in the best way possible and in every situation, the Christian celebration of Sunday.

This dissertation by Monsignor Reginald La Fleur fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Ministry approved by Michael G. Witzak, S.L.D. as Director, and by James Wiseman, S.T.D., Kurt Martens, J.C.D, as Readers.

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INTRODUCTION

I have chosen to write on the topic “Preparing Lay Ministers in Dominica for Sunday Celebrations in the absence of a Priest” for three reasons. Firstly, it is part of the assignment that has been entrusted to me by the bishop of the Diocese on assuming the responsibility of directorship of the Diocesan Pastoral Center in January 2007. Secondly, it is a reality that exists in the parish where I currently exercise my ministry. Thirdly, the workshop has been designed to cover a wide spectrum of persons, not just in my own parish, but across the whole diocese.

Sacrosanctum concilium (SC), the first document emerging from the Second Vatican Council (1963) is a conciliar document, promulgated by Pope Paul VI. The document called for reform of the liturgy in order to facilitate the full, conscious, and active participation of the people of God in the liturgical life of the Church, particularly Mass.

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people’ (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit; and therefore pastors of souls must zealously strive to achieve it, by means of the necessary instruction, in all their pastoral work (SC #14).

As Christians, we share a common vocation because of our baptism and so are called to continue the work of Christ by proclaiming the reign of God to the entire world. Baptism is the beginning of the journey in which we are empowered by the Holy Spirit, strengthened by the sacraments, and called to active participation in the life of the Church to carry forward

the Church's mission of evangelization. Ministry is the vocation of all believers.¹ When we grow into our baptismal identity, we live out our vocation. Vocation actually refers to a calling. God has given each of us gifts and calls us to use them in a way that pleases and glorifies Him. Our vocation is the way in which we respond to the many gifts God has given us. Not least among the various fields of the lay apostolate is ministry within the Church, in areas such as catechesis, works of charity and, particularly, in liturgy.

As the Catholic Church world-wide faces many new challenges today, this topic "Teaching Lay Ministers in Dominica to conduct Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest" undoubtedly can be deemed as an ubiquitous subject of concern, especially in various dioceses where it has been discussed or studied with the specific intention of addressing this problem. Any attempt to alleviate and remedy such a pastoral situation must, of necessity and at all times, take into consideration the particular setting, background, or context of the individual diocese where the situation exists. Clearly, the backdrop here is within the framework of the diocese of Roseau with its particular set of circumstances, together with the current pastoral conditions that characterize events in this particular locale.

The diocese of Roseau covers a surface area of 289 square miles, encompasses the entirety of the island of Dominica, belongs to the Latin rite of the Roman Catholic Church in the Caribbean, is a suffragan of the Archdiocese of Castries, St. Lucia, and a member of the Antilles Episcopal Conference.² Seventy percent (70%) of the population of seventy-one

¹ I will discuss this more fully in chapter three.

² Its members are Bishops and Archbishops from current and former British, Dutch, and French colonies and dependencies in the Caribbean (excluding Haiti), Central America, and northern South America. The conference's membership includes five archdioceses, fourteen dioceses, and two missions *sui iuris*.

thousand (71,000) are Roman Catholics. Canonically, there are fifteen established parishes with forty- three outstations that are served by some twenty-six priests (three of whom are retired) whose average age is sixty- five years. There are no permanent deacons since the diocese has never had a training program before. However, there are four candidates who are currently in training.

Over the last three to four decades, the Church in Dominica has experienced a decline in the number of priests, as well as in the attendance of the lay faithful at regular Sunday Mass. The pastoral situation is such that in some instances one priest has to serve as pastor of multiple parishes. In some parishes Mass is replaced with a Communion Service every other Sunday led by lay ministers. On the other hand, a typical parish expects Mass every Sunday. “The Mass remains the proper way of celebrating Sunday, but the people must also recognize the presence of important elements of Sunday worship even when Mass cannot be celebrated” (Introduction of *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*, June 2, 1988).

In order to ensure that the lay ministers who are engaged in conducting these liturgical functions are adequately prepared, the bishop has mandated me to design and implement a model of training for lay ministry. The course incorporates a four-module course that encompasses liturgical, eucharistic, scriptural, and preaching components. As a requisite of long term planning and ongoing education, this module on Sunday celebrations supported and provided a basic, holistic approach to guide the ongoing formation of lay

ministers. There are fifteen lay ministers, one per parish, who are of mixed gender and range in age from thirty-five (35) to sixty-two (62) years who were carefully chosen by their priests to attend a series of workshops, which were conducted by me at the Diocesan Pastoral Center.

With this in mind, I have developed a program that consists of five three-hour sessions on consecutive Saturdays that are both theoretical as well as practical by design. Session 1 included (a) an introduction to the program and (b) a general overview of Sunday Celebration. Each of the following sessions focused on a particular component of the rite of the Sunday celebration when no priest is present: Session 2: Introductory Rites; Session 3: Liturgy of the Word and the Singing of the Psalm; Session 4: Act of Thanksgiving; Session 5: Communion Rite and Concluding Rite. In terms of biblical, liturgical, and theological competence, the academic discipline of scripture, liturgy, and theology helped these lay ministers to show the level of doctrinal understanding expected of them as mature lay adults. Through these exercises they were accorded every opportunity to demonstrate the potential to undertake a course of study and ministerial preparation with an open and enquiring mind and with the willingness to cope with the challenges to faith which it may pose.

The second part of each session, which is of a more practical nature, consisted of (a) reflections on the lecture, (b) discussion of experiences of the participants, (c) video-recordings of the participants as they lead various parts of the service, (d) faith sharing using several focus questions, and (e) instructions and questions intended to help the participants deepen and integrate their ministerial self-understanding as lay ministers. The lay ministers were expected both to show the potential to develop skills needed for this specific lay

ministry, and also to show awareness of the need for training in practical aspects of ministerial formation such as preaching and being effective ministers of the Word.

This proposal has intended to design, implement, and evaluate a program which will help the lay ministers to have a sufficient theological knowledge about Sunday and about the Eucharist, as well as to be equipped with sufficient skills for leading Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest. Therefore, it has been designed to ensure, in the best way possible and in every situation, the Christian celebration of Sunday. In an attempt to ensure that these lay ministers have acquired sufficient theological knowledge about Sunday and about the Eucharist, they were evaluated by administering an academic test at the beginning and then again at the end so as to measure how much they had learned on the material presented during the project. Additionally, the gaining of sufficient skills to lead Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest were evaluated by the presenter as each participant demonstrates ritual knowledge and ministerial presence in a practicum session. The contribution of these lay ministers, both to ministry and theological education, was delineated and assessed through analyses of their roles, since such a program provides an opportunity to implement the Second Vatican Council's call for full and active participation of the people of God in the Liturgy. The program offered the participants a theological understanding of the Eucharist and will serve as a model in lay ministry for those in subsequent years.

This project has its primary focus on Sunday Celebration in the Absence of the Priest. In some rural areas, parish communities have supplemented their weekday Masses with other regular public worship which has taken the form of morning or evening prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours, or a liturgy of the Word. These liturgical services are led by a lay

person in the absence of the priest. Lay people are also involved in preparing the rites with the bereaved and in the pastoral care surrounding the funeral. Lay leadership of funeral rites, in whole or in part, is a common experience in the diocese. Oftentimes, the parish priest may not be available and a substitute priest sometimes cannot be found. One can imagine this occurring regularly in parishes when the priest is away on vacation or ill. In these circumstances, it becomes necessary for lay people to assist with the vigil and committal rites.

This proposal, although it touches only one aspect of liturgical leadership, has a threefold content. The first, *The Celebration of the Eucharist*, is dealt with in Chapter One. It is through the celebration of Eucharist that the Church participates in the one sacrifice of Christ. Consequently as a Faith Community we gather each week for this celebration. The second, which is explained in Chapter Two, is entitled *The Celebration of Sunday*. It is the day when the Christian people assemble to offer God thanks and praise and to make present the body of Christ, the Church. The third, covered in Chapter Three, focuses on *The Role of Lay Ministers*. It is in this section that lay persons will be dealt with in light of pre-Vatican II, Vatican II, and post- Vatican II documents. The final chapter, Chapter Four, provides an overview of the development, implementation, and evaluation of the project and how it was experienced by the group of persons.

As I continue my personal journey with these lay ministers in my capacity as the Director of the diocesan Pastoral Center, I have become more and more aware of the fact that as new challenges emerge, the Church of Dominica must be prepared to face various issues such as a declining catholic population, fewer and older priests, and youth and lay leadership

in Liturgy. The normative pattern for Catholic worship will always be for the community to assemble for the celebration of Eucharist each Sunday. Every effort should be made to achieve this ideal. When this is not possible a parish should have trained and delegated lay people available to lead liturgy other than Eucharist. The provisions of the *Directory for Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest* (1988) must be observed.

CHAPTER ONE

CELEBRATING THE EUCHARIST

Introduction

Given the importance and the dignity of the Eucharistic celebration it is imperative to ensure that these lay ministers who have been carefully chosen to be trained to conduct Sunday services in the absence of a priest, do not only acquire necessary skills for leading Sunday worship in the absence of a priest but above all that they themselves have assimilated a thorough understanding of the meaning, centrality, and theology of the Eucharist.

For nearly two thousand years Catholics have been celebrating the Eucharist, the memorial of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the central prayer of the Church and the saving action of Christ. Throughout history, Christians have gathered to celebrate the real presence of Christ among them in the Eucharist.

In the domestic Churches of the early Christians, in the imperial basilicas of the Roman Empire, in the great cathedrals of the Middle Ages, and in the parish churches of today, Christians have gathered to proclaim the death and resurrection of the Lord, in Word and Sacrament. In the assembly of believers, in the proclamation of the Word, and in the breaking of the bread, the community celebrates the presence of the risen Lord.¹

Whilst these early Christians may not have fully understood the ritual activity in the sense we understand Eucharist today, nonetheless those who came together did so with the intention of supporting one another's faith journey, and focusing on the Paschal Mystery. Against this background this chapter will begin by looking at Vatican II documents that

¹ Michael Begolly, *Leading the Assembly in Prayer: A Practical Guide to Lay and Ordained Presiders* (San Jose, CA: Resource Publications, 1997), 71.

present a renewed emphasis upon the Holy Eucharist as the central focus in the Church's prayer life. The chapter will then look at more recent documents that have been greatly influenced by the Council documents and have assisted in shaping and guiding the theology and liturgical life of the church and view the Sunday Eucharist as the church's most fundamental work. After drawing out some theological insights from these documents, the chapter will conclude by looking at the significance and challenges of Eucharist today.

Sacrosanctum Concilium

The *Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum concilium* (SC)¹ (4 December 1963) speaks of the Eucharist in the following way:

For the liturgy, through which the work of our redemption is accomplished, most of all in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist is the outstanding means whereby Christ faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true church (SC #2).

The document sees the liturgy as the summit towards which the activity of the church is directed and at the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows.

Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons and daughters by faith and baptism should come together to praise god in the midst of His church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper (SC #10).

Participation in liturgical celebrations is seen as the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive true Christian spirit.

¹ English translation in *Vatican II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Vol. 1, general editor, Austin Flannery, O.P. (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1992). All subsequent references to conciliar and post conciliar documents will be taken from this edition.

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people' (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism (SC #14).

In describing the most sacred mystery of the Eucharist the document affirms that:

At the Last Supper, on the night when He was betrayed, our Saviour instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of His Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is eaten, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us (SC #47).

The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God's word and be nourished at the table of the Lord's body; they should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they should learn also to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator, they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all (SC #48).

Accordingly the sacred Council has seen fit to decree as follows:

By a tradition handed down from the apostles which took its origin from the very day of Christ's resurrection, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every eighth day; with good reason this, then, bears the name of the Lord's day or Sunday. For on this day Christ's faithful are bound to come together into one place so that; by hearing the word of God and taking part in the Eucharist, they may call to mind the passion, the resurrection and the glorification of the Lord Jesus, and may thank God who "has begotten them again, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto a living hope" (1 Pet. 1:3). Hence the Lord's day is the original feast day, and it should be proposed to the piety of the faithful and taught to them so that it may become in fact a day of joy and of freedom from work. Other celebrations, unless they be truly of greatest importance, shall not have precedence over the Sunday which is the foundation and kernel of the whole liturgical year (SC #106).

Lumen Gentium

The Eucharistic theme will resurface within the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium* (LG) (21 November 1964) which elaborates on the nature, role and structure of the Church. It boldly states that the Eucharistic sacrifice is the source and summit of the Christian life.

Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, the source and summit of Christian life, they offer the divine victim to God and themselves along with it. And so it is that, both in the offering and in Holy Communion, each in his own way, though not of course indiscriminately, has his own part to play in the liturgical action. Then strengthened by the body of Christ in the Eucharistic communion, they manifest in a concrete way that unity of the people of God which this holy sacrament aptly signifies and admirably realizes (LG #11).

Unitatis redintegratio

Another Vatican Council document the *Decree on Ecumenism, Unitatis redintegratio* (UR) (21 November 1964) expresses a correlation between the unity of the church with God and the Eucharist in the following manner:

Before offering Himself up as a spotless victim upon the altar, Christ prayed to His Father for all who believe in Him: ‘that they all may be one; even thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, so that the world may believe that thou has sent me.’ In His Church He instituted the wonderful sacrament of the Eucharist by which the unity of His Church is both signified and made a reality (UR #2).

Christus Dominus

The *Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, Christus Dominus* (CD) (28 October 1965) makes reference to the Eucharist in the following ways:

A diocese is a portion of the people of God which is entrusted to a Bishop to be shepherd by him with the cooperation of the presbyter. Thus by adhering to its pastor and gathered together through the Gospel and the Eucharist in the Holy Spirit, it constitutes a particular church in which the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative (CD #11).

Bishops should take pains that catechetical instruction-which is intended to make the faith, as illumined by teaching a vital, explicit and effective force in the lives of men be given with sedulous care to children and adolescents, youths and adults. In this instruction a suitable arrangement should be observed as a method suited to the matter that is being treated and to the character, ability, age, and circumstances of the life of the students. Finally, they should see to it that this instruction is based on Sacred Scripture, tradition, the liturgy, magisterium, and life of the Church (CD #14).

Therefore bishops are the principal dispensers of the mysteries of God, as well as being the governors, promoters, and guardians of the entire liturgical life in the church committed to them. They should, therefore, constantly exert themselves to have the faithful know and live the paschal mystery more deeply through the Eucharist and thus become a firmly-knit body in the unity of the charity of Christ. "Intent upon prayer and the ministry of the world" (Acts 6:4), they should devote their labor to this end that all those committed to their care may be of one mind in prayer and through the reception of the sacraments may grow in grace and be faithful witnesses to the Lord (CD #15).

Those who cooperate with the diocesan bishop in his pastoral task such as the diocesan clergy are reminded of their responsibilities.

In discharging their duty of sanctifying their people, pastors should see to it that the celebration of the Eucharistic is the centre and culmination of the whole life of the Christian community. They should labor without stint that the faithful are nourished with spiritual food through the devout and frequent reception of the Sacraments and through the intelligent and active participation in the Liturgy (CD #30).

Religious too are subject to the authority of the local Ordinaries.

All Religious, exempt and non-exempt are subject to the authority of the local ordinaries in those things which pertain to the public exercise of divine worship-except where differences in rites are concerned-the care of souls, the sacred preaching intended for the people, the religious and moral education of the Christian faithful, especially of the children, catechetical instruction and liturgical formation (CD #35)

Optatam totius

The *Decree on the Priestly Training, Optatam totius* (OT) (28 October 1965) states that seminarians should be taught to seek Christ in the faithful meditation on God's word, in the active participation in the sacred mysteries of the church, especially in the Eucharist.

They are therefore to be prepared for the ministry of the word: that they might understand ever more perfectly the revealed word of God: that, meditating on it they might possess it more firmly, and that they might express it in words and in example; for the ministry of worship and of sanctification : that through their prayers and their carrying out of the sacred liturgical celebrations they might perfect the work of salvation through the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments; for the ministry of the parish : that they might know how to make Christ present to men, Him who did not "come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many" (mark 10:45; cf John 13:12-17), and that having become the servant of all, they might win over all the more (cf. 1 Cor.9:19) (OT #4).

The document continues and states that:

They should be taught to seek Christ in the faithful meditation on God's word in the active participation in the sacred mysteries of the church, especially in the Eucharist and in the divine office, in the bishop who sends them and in the people to whom they are sent, especially the poor, the children, the sick, the sinners and the unbelievers. They should love and venerate with a filial trust the most blessed Virgin Mary, who was given as mother to the disciple by Christ Jesus as He was dying on the cross (OT #8).

In revision of ecclesiastical studies the document states that "Sacred liturgy, which is to be considered as the primary and indispensable source of the truly Christian spirit, should be taught according to the mind of articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" (OT #16).

In regards to pastoral training it says that:

That pastoral concerns which ought to permeate thoroughly the entire training of the students also demands that they be diligently instructed in those matters which are particularly linked to the sacred ministry, especially in catechesis and preaching, in

liturgical worship and the administration of the sacraments, in works of charity, in assisting the erring and the unbelieving, and in the other pastoral functions (OT #19).

Dei verbum

The *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Dei verbum* (DV) (18 November 1965) is concerned with Divine Revelation so Eucharistic references are scant. However it maintains the scripture is best revealed in the sacred liturgy.

Sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, committed to the Church. Holding fast to this deposit the entire holy people united with their shepherds remain always steadfast in the teaching of the Apostles, in the common life, in the breaking of the bread and in prayers (see Acts 2, 42, Greek text), so that holding to, practicing and professing the heritage of the faith, it becomes on the part of the bishops and faithful a single effort (DV #10).

In regards to Sacred Scriptures in the life of the church it stipulates that:

Therefore, all the clergy must hold fast to the Sacred Scriptures through diligent sacred reading and careful study, especially the priest of Christ and others, such as deacons and catechists who are legitimately active in the ministry of the word. This is to be done so that none of them will become “an empty preacher of the word of God outwardly, who is not a listener to it inwardly” since they must share the abundant wealth of the divine word with the faithful committed to them, especially in the liturgy (DV #25).

Apostolicam actuositatem

The *Decree on the Apostolate of the Lay People, Apostolicam actuositatem* (AA) (18 November 1965) explains the role of the laity in the church such that

Charity, which is, as it were, the soul of the whole apostolate, is given to them and nourished in them by the sacraments, the Eucharist above all. The Holy Spirit sanctifies the people of God through the ministry and the sacraments (AA #4).

It describes the spirituality of the lay people as follows:

Since Christ, sent by the Father, is the source and origin of the whole apostolate of the Church, the success of the lay apostolate depends upon the laity's living union with Christ, in keeping with Lord's words, "He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). This life of intimate union with Christ in the Church is nourished by the spiritual aids which are common to all the faithful, especially active participation in the sacred liturgy (AA # 4).

The apostolate of evangelizing and sanctification is expressed in these words:

The mission of the Church pertains to the salvation of men, which is to be achieved by belief in Christ and by His grace. The apostolate of the Church and of all its members is primarily designed to manifest Christ's message by words and deeds and to communicate His grace to the world. This is done mainly through the ministry of the Word and the sacraments (AA #6).

Regarding individual apostolate in certain circumstances the document reminds us that:

There is a very urgent need for this individual apostolate in those regions where the freedom of the church is responsible infringed. In these trying circumstances, the laity do what they can to take the place of the priests, risking their freedom and sometimes their life to teach Christian doctrine to those around them, training them in a religious way of life and a Catholic way of thinking, leading them to receive the sacraments frequently and developing in them piety, especially Eucharistic devotion (AA #17).

Ad gentes divinitus

The *Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, Ad gentes divinitus* (AGD) (7 December 1965) states that priest are to consecrate themselves to the service of the Holy Eucharist. For through the Eucharist all priest lead the faithful in joining themselves with the Church's missionary zeal:

Priests personally represent Christ, and are collaborators of the order of bishops in that threefold sacred task which by its very nature belongs to the mission of the church. Therefore, they should fully understand that their life is also consecrated to the service of the missions. Now because by means of their own ministry - which consist principally in the Eucharist which perfects the Church - they are in communion with Christ the Head and are leading others to this communion, they

cannot help but feel how much is yet wanting to the fullness of that Body, and how much therefore must be done that it may grow from day to day (AG #39).

The above paragraph summarizes the Eucharistic foundation of the Second Vatican Council, relating this Most Holy Sacrament to the Church's three-fold mission of proclaiming the Gospel, sanctifying the faithful, and governing the order and the discipline of the Church. For through the Eucharist the ministry of the priesthood through which we are sanctified, the hierarchy of the Church by which we are governed, and the missionary action of the Church through which the Gospel is preached, are brought together in order to perfect the Church. In short, the Second Vatican Council summarizes the effects of the Holy Eucharist as the source and summit of the Catholic spiritual life.

Presbyterorum ordinis

The *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priest, Presbyterorum ordinis* (PO) (7 December 1965) reiterates the message that “the Eucharistic sacrifice is the centre and root of the whole life of the priest.” It explains:

No Christian community, however, is built up unless it has its basis and centre in the celebration of the most Holy Eucharist; from this, therefore all education to the spirit of the community must take its origin. This celebration, if it is to be genuine and complete, should lead to various works of charity and mutual help, as well as to missionary activity and to different forms of Christian witness (PO #6).

The document continues by offering us the following insight into the relationship between the Eucharist and all other Catholic action:

The other sacraments, as well as every ministry of the church and every work of the apostolate, are linked with the holy Eucharist and are directed toward it. For the most blessed Eucharist contains the Church's entire wealth, that is, Christ Himself, our Passover and living bread. Through His very flesh, made vital and vitalizing by the

Holy Spirit, He offers life to men. They are there by invited and led to offer themselves, their labors, and all created things together with him (PO #5).

It seems almost inevitable that the above paragraph is a restatement of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*'s radical invitation to make of the Eucharist the source and the summit of our spiritual lives as Catholics. Thus the Council Fathers cannot but conclude as follows:

In this light, the Eucharist shows itself as the source and the apex of the whole work of preaching the Gospel. Those under instruction are introduced by stages to sharing in the Eucharist and the faithful, already marked with the seal of Baptism and confirmation, are through the reception of the Eucharist fully joined to the Body of Christ (PO #5).

The repetition of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*'s language of "source and summit" with regards to the Eucharist seeks to emphasize just how central the Eucharist is to our faith as Catholics. In preaching the Gospel the Church must by necessity, preach the Eucharist. In carrying out any action as Catholics we recall the Eucharist as the end towards which such actions is directed:

Thus the Eucharistic Action, over which the priest presides, is the very heart of the congregation. So priest must instruct their people to offer to God the father the Divine Victim in the Sacrifice of the Mass, and to join to it the offering of their own lives (PO #5).

Through the ministry of the priesthood the Eucharist extends throughout the entire prayer of the Church.

Priest themselves extend to the other hours of the day the praise and thanksgiving of the Eucharistic celebration in praying the Divine Office, offered in the name of the Church for all people entrusted to their care, and indeed for the whole world (PO #5).

Thus what we read in the above excerpt of the Second Vatican Council is a theology of the Eucharist which extends to the Divine Office. This is no small extension as the Divine Office is the Church's public prayer, and thus we return to *Sacrosanctum Concilium*'s

affirmation that the Eucharist is both the source and summit of the Church's spiritual life. What therefore follows is that our churches, as houses of prayer, must center around the Eucharist.

The house of prayer in which the Most Holy Eucharist is celebrated and reserved, where the faithful gather and where the presence of the Son of God, our Savior, offered for us on the altar of sacrifice bestows strength and blessings on the faithful, must be spotless and suitable for prayer and sacred functions. There pastors and the faithful are called to acknowledge with grateful heart the gift of him, who through his humanity constantly pours divine life into the members of his Body (PO #5).

In light of all the above citations from the Second Vatican Council, one sees that the Council's intention was to center the Church around the Eucharist. All of the above-mentioned documents reflect what Vatican II taught about the Eucharist which occupies a central place in the public worship of the Church, in the life of the Church as a whole, and, therefore, in the life of every Christian.

During the years that have elapsed since the Second Vatican Council not only has the *Codex Iuris Canonici (Code of Canon Law) (CIC)*² been promulgated (1983), which of itself would have been sufficient to have brought about modifications in liturgical legislation, but a considerable number of other texts have been promulgated by the Holy See. Some of these texts are *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*³ published initially in 1994 with a second edition in 1997, the Apostolic letter *Dies Domini (DD)*⁴ (5 July 1998), the Encyclical

² *Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983).

³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997), Congregation for Divine Worship.

⁴ http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_05071998_dies-domini_en.html (accessed June 6, 2010).

Ecclesia de Eucharistia (EE)⁵ (17 April 2003), the Apostolic Letter *Mane nobiscum Domine* (MND)⁶ of the Venerable Servant John Paul II (7 October 2004), the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM)⁷ (2003), and the Post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* (SacCar)⁸ of Benedict XVI (22 February 2007).

From their various catechetical, legislative and theological perspectives these documents represent an organic continuity and are all faithful to the theological vision and directives of the Council Fathers. A closer look at these documents reveals the significance and importance that these documents have placed on the Most Holy Eucharist.

Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983).

Since the purpose of this project is pastoral, I will be citing the American English translation as most accessible to the people that I am working with. One of the post conciliar documents that stresses the Eucharist is the revised *Code of Canon Law* (1983). Canons 897-899 among others are devoted to the Most Holy Eucharist. Canon 897 opens the Code's treatment of the Eucharist with a beautiful description of that august Sacrament as the source and summit of the Christian life.

Can. 897 The most August sacrament is the Most Holy Eucharist in which Christ the

⁵http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/special_features/encyclicals/documents/hf_jpii_enc_20030417_ecclesia_eucharistia_en.html (accessed June 6, 2010).

⁶ http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20041008_mane-nobiscum-domine_en.html (accessed June 6, 2010)

⁷ <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/current/revmissalisromanien.shtml> (accessed June 6, 2010).

⁸http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_benxvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis_en.html (accessed June 6, 2010).

Lord himself is contained, offered, and received and by which the Church continually lives and grows. The eucharistic sacrifice, the memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord, in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated through the ages is the summit and source of all worship and Christian life, which signifies and effects the unity of the People of God and brings about the building up of the body of Christ. Indeed, the other sacraments and all the ecclesiastical works of the apostolate are closely connected with the Most Holy Eucharist and ordered to it.⁹

Can. 898 The Christian faithful are to hold the Most Holy Eucharist in highest honor, taking an active part in the celebration of the most august sacrifice, receiving this sacrament most devoutly and frequently, and worshipping it with the highest adoration. In explaining the doctrine about this sacrament, pastors of souls are to teach the faithful diligently about this obligation.¹⁰

Can. 899 §1. The eucharistic celebration is the action of Christ himself and the Church. In it, Christ the Lord, through the ministry of the priest, offers himself, substantially present under the species of bread and wine, to God the Father and gives himself as spiritual food to the faithful united with his offering.

§2. In the eucharistic gathering the people of God are called together with the bishop or, under his authority, a presbyter presiding and acting in the person of Christ. All the faithful who are present, whether clerics or laity, unite together by participating in their own way according to the diversity of orders and liturgical functions.

§3. The eucharistic celebration is to be organized in such a way that all those participating receive from it the many fruits for which Christ the Lord instituted the eucharistic sacrifice.¹¹

According to a commentary made on the above mentioned canons,

Canon 897 and 898 introduce the entire title on the Eucharist including the chapters on Eucharistic reservation and worship and on Mass offerings. Canon 899 is an additional introductory canon for the first chapter on the eucharistic celebration, but is best treated in connection with these two foundational canons. Canon 897 and 898 establish the doctrinal foundations for the disciplinary canons which follow i.e., they are doctrinal in the broad sense, in that they include statements of dogma as well as

⁹ *Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983). English translation from *Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition: New English Translation* (Washington, DC: CLSA, 1998), 293. All subsequent English translations of canons from this code will be taken from this source unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 294.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

authoritative teachings which lack a strictly dogmatic character. The canon manifests an effort to harmonize past doctrine, such as the real presence and the sacrificial nature of the Mass, with Vatican II emphases such as the Eucharist as a meal as well as its celebrational and memorial character. The ecclesial dimension of the Eucharist which were highlighted at the council are also evident: the Eucharist as source and sign of unity of the body of Christ, as source and summit of the Church's life and worship, its nourishment and growth, and as an action of the whole people of God particularly in the sanctifying function of the church and reflecting its hierarchical structure through diverse and distinct liturgical roles and ministries.¹²

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)¹³ (1994; revised edition 1997) which has been influenced by Vatican II documents, also emphasizes the importance of the Eucharist. The significance of the sacrament of the Eucharist was dealt with in the following way. The document states that the Eucharist is the source and summit of ecclesial life.

The Eucharist is one of the seven sacraments and is the source and summit of the Christian life. The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesia ministries and works of the apostolate are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented towards it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch.¹⁴

The Eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the People of God by which the Church is kept in being. It is the culmination both of God's action sanctifying the world in Christ and of the worship men offer to Christ and through him to the Father in the Holy Spirit.¹⁵

Finally, by the Eucharistic celebration we already unite ourselves with the heavenly liturgy and anticipate eternal life, when God will be all in all.¹⁶ In brief, the Eucharist

¹² James A. Coriden, John Huels, in Thomas J. Green, and John P. Beal, editors, *New Commentary on The Code of Canon Law*, (New York, NY/Mahwah, NJ : Paulist Press, 2000), 1096.

¹³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997), Congregation for Divine Worship.

¹⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1997) n.1324.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, n.1325.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 1326.

is the sum and summary of our faith: Our way of thinking is attuned to the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn confirms our way of thinking.¹⁷

The document goes on to reveal what this sacrament is called. The inexhaustible richness of this sacrament is expressed in the different names we give it. Each name evokes certain aspects of it. It is called:

Eucharist because it is an action of thanksgiving to God. The Greek word eucharistein recall the Jewish blessings that proclaim – especially during a meal- God’s works: creation redemption and sanctification.¹⁸

The Lord’s Supper, because of its connection with the supper which the Lord took with his disciples on the eve of his passion, and because it anticipates the wedding feast of the lamb in the heavenly Jerusalem.

The Breaking of Bread because Jesus used this rite, part of a Jewish meal when as master of the table he blessed and distributed the bread above all, at the Last Supper. It is by this action that his disciples will recognize him after his resurrection, and it is this expression that the first Christians will use to designate their Eucharistic assemblies; by doing so they signified that all who eat the one broken bread, Christ enter into communion with them and form but one body in him.

The Eucharistic assembly because the Eucharist is celebrated amid the assembly of the faithful the visible expression of the Church.¹⁹

The Eucharist is also called:

The memorial of the Lord’s passion and resurrection.

The Holy Sacrifice” because it makes present the one sacrifice of Christ the Savior and includes the Church’s offering. The terms holy sacrifice of the Mass, sacrifice of praise, spiritual sacrifice, pure and holy sacrifice are also used since it completes and surpasses all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant.

The Holy and Divine Liturgy, because the Church's whole liturgy finds its center and most intense expression in the celebration of this sacrament; in the same sense we also call its celebration the Sacred Mysteries. We speak of the Most Blessed

¹⁷ Ibid.,n.1327.

¹⁸ Ibid., n. 1328.

¹⁹ Ibid.,n. 1329.

Sacrament because it is the Sacrament of sacraments. The Eucharistic species reserved in the tabernacle are designated by this same name.²⁰

Holy Communion, because by this sacrament we unite ourselves to Christ, who makes us sharers in his Body and Blood to form a single body. We also call it the holy things- the first meaning of the phrase communion of saints in the Apostle's Creed- the bread of angels, bread from heaven, medicine of immortality, viaticum.²¹

Finally it is called Holy Mass (*Missa*), because the liturgy in which the mystery of salvation is accomplished concludes with the sending forth (*missio*) of the faithful, so that they may fulfill God's will in their daily lives.²²

*Dies Domini*²³

The Apostolic letter of Venerable John Paul II to the bishops, clergy and faithful of the Catholic Church entitled *On Keeping the Lord's Day Holy, Dies Domini* (DD) (5 July 1998) appeals to Christians to observe Sunday as the fulfillment of the Sabbath.

Blessed be he who has raised the great day of Sunday above all other days. The heavens and the earth, angels and of men give themselves over to joy. This cry of the Maronite liturgy captures well the intense acclamations of joy which have always characterized Sunday in the liturgy of both East and West. Moreover, historically — even before it was seen as a day of rest, which in any case was not provided for in the civil calendar — Christians celebrated the weekly day of the Risen Lord primarily as a day of joy. "On the first day of the week, you shall all rejoice", urges the *Didascalia*. This was also emphasized by liturgical practice, through the choice of appropriate gestures. Voicing an awareness widespread in the Church, Saint Augustine describes the joy of the weekly Easter: "Fasting, is set aside and prayers are said standing, as a sign of the Resurrection, which is also why the Alleluia is sung on every Sunday" (DD #55).

²⁰ Ibid., n. 1330.

²¹ Ibid., n.1331.

²² Ibid., n.1332.

²³ http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_05071998_dies-domini_en.html (accessed June 6, 2010).

General Instruction of the Roman Missal ²⁴

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) (2003) which is the formal introduction to the Roman Missal and also governs the proper celebration of the Mass speaks of the importance and dignity of the Eucharistic celebration.

The celebration of Mass, as the action of Christ and the People of God arrayed hierarchically is the center of the whole Christian life for the Church both universal and local, as well as for each of the faithful individually. In it is found the high point both of the action whereby God sanctifies the world in Christ and of the worship that the human race offers to the Father, adoring him through Christ the Son of God in the Holy Spirit. In it, moreover, during the course of the year the mysteries of redemption are recalled so as in some way to be made present. Furthermore, the other sacred actions and all the activities of the Christian life are bound up with it, flow from it, and are ordered to it (GIRM #16).

The document continues by stating that:

It is therefore of the greatest importance that the celebration of the Mass - that is, the Lord's Supper—be so arranged that the sacred ministers and the faithful taking part in it, according to the proper state of each, may derive from it more abundantly those fruits for the sake of which Christ the Lord instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of his Body and Blood and entrusted it to the Church, his beloved Bride, as the memorial of his Passion and Resurrection (GIRM #17).

Ecclesia de Eucharistia ²⁵

Ecclesia de Eucharistia, On the Eucharist in its relationship to the Church (EDE) the fourteenth Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II (17 April 2003), offers a deeper reflection on the mystery of the Eucharist in its relationship with the Church. The pope reminds us that:

²⁴ <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/current/revmissalisromanien.shtml> (accessed June 6, 2010).

²⁵ http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/special_features/encyclicals/documents/hf_jpii_enc_20030417_ecclesia_eucharistia_en.html (accessed June 6, 2010).

The Second Vatican Council rightly proclaimed that the Eucharistic sacrifice is ‘the source and summit of the Christian life’. ‘For the most holy Eucharist contains the Church's entire spiritual wealth: Christ himself, our Passover and living bread. Through his own flesh, now made living and life-giving by the Holy Spirit, he offers life to men’. Consequently the gaze of the Church is constantly turned to her Lord, present in the Sacrament of the Altar, in which she discovers the full manifestation of his boundless love (EDE #1).

In the case of parishes that lack a priest and use laity to lead Communion services, the pope emphasizes that:

When, due to the scarcity of priests, non-ordained members of the faithful are entrusted with a share in the pastoral care of a parish, they should bear in mind that – as the Second Vatican Council teaches – ‘no Christian community can be built up unless it has its basis and centre in the celebration of the most Holy Eucharist’. They have a responsibility, therefore, to keep alive in the community a genuine hunger for the Eucharist, so that no opportunity for the celebration of Mass will ever be missed, also taking advantage of the occasional presence of a priest who is not impeded by Church law from celebrating Mass (EDE #33).

The pope describes the Eucharist's particular effectiveness in promoting communion as one of the reasons for the importance of Sunday Mass.

I have already dwelt on this and on the other reasons which make Sunday Mass fundamental for the life of the Church and of individual believers in my Apostolic Letter on the sanctification of Sunday *Dies Domini*. There I recalled that the faithful have the obligation to attend Mass, unless they are seriously impeded, and that Pastors have the corresponding duty to see that it is practical and possible for all to fulfill this precept (EDE #41).

Mane Nobiscum Domine ²⁶

The Apostolic Letter *Stay With Us Lord, Mane Nobiscum Domine* (MND) of Venerable Servant John Paul II for the year of the Eucharist (7 October 2004) makes reference to *Dies Domini* in the following way.

²⁶ http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20041008_mane-nobiscum-domine_en.html (accessed June 6, 2010)

In a particular way I ask that every effort be made this year to experience Sunday as the day of the Lord and the day of the Church. I would be happy if everyone would reflect once more on my words in the Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*. ‘At Sunday Mass, Christians relive with particular intensity the experience of the Apostles on the evening of Easter, when the Risen Lord appeared to them as they were gathered together (cf. *Jn* 20:19). In a sense, the People of God of all times were present in that small nucleus of disciples, the first-fruits of the Church.’ During this year of grace, priests in their pastoral ministry should be even more attentive to Sunday Mass as the celebration which brings together the entire parish community, with the participation of different groups, movements and associations (MND #23).

*Sacramentum Caritatis*²⁷

In the Post-synodal apostolic exhortation *The Sacrament of Charity, Sacramentum Caritatis* (SacCar) of Benedict XVI (22 February 2007), the pope explains in detail the Eucharist and its importance to liturgies and relevance to the life of the Church. This document consists of three major sections.

The first section begins with the Mystery of the Eucharist. The Mystery of the Eucharist is illustrated with reference to its Trinitarian origins which assure the permanent character of the gift.

Jesus Christ, who ‘through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God’ (*Heb* 9:14), makes us, in the gift of the Eucharist, sharers in God's own life. This is an absolutely free gift, the superabundant fulfillment of God's promises. The Church receives, celebrates and adores this gift in faithful obedience. The ‘mystery of faith’ is thus a mystery of Trinitarian love, a mystery in which we are called by grace to participate (SacCar #8).

The Exhortation examines in depth the centrality of the Eucharist in the seven sacraments.

²⁷http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_benxvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis_en.html (accessed June6, 2010).

The fact that the Church is the universal sacrament of salvation shows how the sacramental economy ultimately determines the way that Christ, the one Savior, through the Spirit, reaches our lives in all their particularity. The Church receives and at the same time expresses what she herself is in the seven sacraments, thanks to which God's grace concretely influences the lives of the faithful, so that their whole existence, redeemed by Christ, can become an act of worship pleasing to God (SacCar #16).

With reference to the various sacraments the Exhortation states the following: “the Holy Eucharist brings Christian initiation to completion and represents the centre and goal of all sacramental life” (SacCar #17). With regard to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the Holy Father insists on the need for “a reinvigorated catechesis on the conversion born of the Eucharist and of encouraging frequent confession among the faithful” (SacCar #21). The Anointing of the Sick and the holy Viaticum will give the faithful a possibility of being united “with Christ's self-offering for the salvation of all, so that they too, within the mystery of the communion of saints, can participate in the redemption of the world” (SacCar #22). The pope reflects on the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Holy Orders and priestly spirituality in the following way: “the intrinsic relationship between the Eucharist and the sacrament of Holy Orders clearly emerges from Jesus’ own words in the Upper Room:” ‘Do this in memory of me’ (SacCar #23). The Eucharist, as nuptial sacrament “inexhaustibly strengthens the indissoluble unity and love of every Christian marriage. By the power of the sacrament, the marriage bond is intrinsically linked to the Eucharistic unity of Christ the Bridegroom and his Bride, the Church” (SacCar #27).

The second section considers the Eucharist as a Mystery to be celebrated. In this section the doctrine of the Church is placed in the context of the worship of the Church, with

the examination of the connection between *lex orandi* and *lex credendi* and stressing the primacy of liturgical action.

The Synod of Bishops reflected at length on the intrinsic relationship between eucharistic faith and eucharistic celebration, pointing out the connection between the *lex orandi* and the *lex credendi*, and stressing the primacy of the *liturgical action*. The Eucharist should be experienced as a mystery of faith, celebrated authentically and with a clear awareness that "the *intellectus fidei* has a primordial relationship to the Church's liturgical action" (SacCar #34).

In speaking of the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on active and full participation of the People of God in the eucharistic celebration, the pope reminds us of the following:

Certainly, the renewal carried out in these past decades has made considerable progress towards fulfilling the wishes of the Council Fathers. Yet we must not overlook the fact that some misunderstanding has occasionally arisen concerning the precise meaning of this participation. It should be made clear that the word "participation" does not refer to mere external activity during the celebration. In fact the active participation called for by the Council must be understood in more substantial terms, on the basis of a greater awareness of the mystery being celebrated and its relationship to daily life (SacCar #52).

Eucharistic adoration is simply the natural consequence of the Eucharistic celebration, which is itself the Church's supreme act of adoration.

Receiving the Eucharist means adoring him whom we receive. Only in this way do we become one with him, and are given, as it were, a foretaste of the beauty of the heavenly liturgy. The act of adoration outside Mass prolongs and intensifies all that takes place during the liturgical celebration itself. Indeed, 'only in adoration can a profound and genuine reception mature. And it is precisely this personal encounter with the Lord that then strengthens the social mission contained in the Eucharist, which seeks to break down not only the walls that separate the Lord and ourselves, but also and especially the walls that separate us from one another' (SacCar #66).

In the third and final section 'the mystery 'believed' and 'celebrated' contains an innate power making it the principle of new life within us and the form of our Christian existence.

By receiving the body and blood of Jesus Christ we become sharers in the divine life in an ever more adult and conscious way' (SacCar #70).

All the Christian faithful are called to live their lives as a vocation on the solid foundation of the Eucharist. Of the lay faithful the exhortation states

And because the world is "the field" (*Mt* 13:38) in which God plants his children as good seed, the Christian laity, by virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, and strengthened by the Eucharist, are called to live out the radical newness brought by Christ wherever they find themselves. They should cultivate a desire that the Eucharist have an ever deeper effect on their daily lives, making them convincing witnesses in the workplace and in society at large (SacCar #79).

In regards to priests:

The eucharistic form of the Christian life is seen in a very special way in the priesthood. Priestly spirituality is intrinsically eucharistic. The seeds of this spirituality are already found in the words spoken by the Bishop during the ordination liturgy: 'Receive the oblation of the holy people to be offered to God. Understand what you do, imitate what you celebrate, and conform your life to the mystery of the Lord's Cross' (SacCar #80).

Those called to the consecrated life:

The relationship of the Eucharist to the various ecclesial vocations is seen in a particularly vivid way in 'the prophetic witness of consecrated men and women, who find in the celebration of the Eucharist and in eucharistic adoration the strength necessary for the radical following of Christ, obedient, poor and chaste.' Though they provide many services in the area of human formation and care for the poor, education and health care, consecrated men and women know that the principal purpose of their lives is 'the contemplation of things divine and constant union with God in prayer.' The essential contribution that the Church expects from consecrated persons is much more in the order of being than of doing (SacCar #81).

Every Christian's existence is seen by *Sacramentum Caritatis* as a humble and glad response to the Father's exalting call. Finally the Holy Father reminds us that "from Mary we must learn to become men and women of the Eucharist and of the Church and thus to present

ourselves, in words of St. Paul, holy and blameless before the Lord, even as he wished us to be from the beginning” (SacCar #96).

All of the above recent church documents speak of the Sacrament of the Eucharist as the source and summit of the Christian life and reiterate what was previously recognized in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* as the source and the summit of the spiritual life. The repetition of the language of "source and summit" with regard to the Eucharist seeks to emphasize just how central the Eucharist is to our faith as Catholics. Therefore, in order to understand the theology of the Eucharist it is necessary to take as a starting point the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* of the Second Vatican Council *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, in which fundamental theological truths were described by the Council Fathers. They are given here as part of a description of the essential framework of the reform of the liturgy of the Roman rite and trace their influence on these same rites throughout the GIRM. The three theological truths are:

1. The Celebration of the Eucharist is Christ-centered.

This means that Mass is a participation in the action of Christ himself, of his sacrifice for us, of his paschal meal, as shared originally with his apostles, and of his very Passover from death to life. The re-enactment of the Paschal Mystery of Christ in the Liturgy is founded upon the mystery that “it was from the side of Christ as he hung upon the Cross that there issued forth the sublime sacrament of the whole Church” (SC #5).

In the Eucharist, our participation - whether as lay or ordained - is a joining in the death and resurrection of Christ. As we share in the simplest of everyday foods - bread and

wine - we are given the means of everlasting life. When we proclaim Christ's death and resurrection which happens at the Eucharist, the Church finds herself bound to Christ and taken into his death, only to be raised up with him in his resurrection. In this mysterious bond, we discover, as followers of Jesus, our true identities, as our inner selves are filled with grace.

The Eucharist helps to build not only our relationship with God, but with each other and with our own selves. Through his mystical body, Christ draws each of us to himself, transforming us to become a part of himself. To be centered on Christ at the Eucharist, then, is not merely to join ourselves with his actions; not only to participate in his self-offering and self-sharing, but indeed it is to become one with Christ, and by extension, with each other. To be Christo-centric at the Eucharist means to be ecclesial. It is to realize our fullest membership in the Church; for by our eating and drinking of the Lord's body and blood, we become one, in our union with Christ and each other.

2. Full, Conscious and Active Participation in Liturgy.

The second theological insight that can be drawn from the Council Fathers is that of full, conscious and active participation. This full, conscious and active participation is founded on an essential part of ecclesiology and the theology of the Christian Assembly. Active participation is both a duty and a right of every individual in consequence of baptism. One of the effects of baptism is to make us members of the People of God, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people.

This active participation of all in the liturgical celebration is founded on the sacramental structure of the Church and on the Priesthood of Christ. It is guided by liturgical norms which have their roots in theology. Active participation on the part of the faithful in the liturgy must be understood as far more than the distribution of functions and community and responsorial singing. There is a variety of gifts in the Church, and it has to be recognized that not all are able to fulfill certain functions no matter how willing they may be.

The active participation desired by the Church is not just a matter of roles in a liturgical celebration, but rather a fundamental disposition which flows into a way of life; those who take an active part in the liturgy should go from the assembly conscious of their responsibility to proclaim the message which they have celebrated.

This notion of active participation stems from the Church's ancient understanding of baptism, whereby those who are baptized into Christ are thereby called to his table (SC # 9) and made his children, entitled to eat and drink with the family of the Lord. What the Council sought was to restore to the baptized their rightful role in the liturgical assembly, whether through song or silence; kneeling or standing; processing or sitting; reading or responding. As a result, there is no one activity which in itself can be defined as "active participation." Instead, such participation is a constellation of worship acts through which every believer must develop a full engagement with the liturgical action.

In the GIRM, this notion of participation taken from the Council is evident in many places as the undergirding of ritual action. Often, when the GIRM mentions the participation of the faithful, it does so by linking a ritual action to the baptismal theology which grounds it, as in the offering of the general intercessions (GIRM # 69), in which "the people respond in

some way to the Word of God which they have welcomed in faith, and exercise the office of their baptismal priesthood, offering prayers to God for the salvation of all.”

The GIRM often speaks of full participation by the faithful as the motive and goal for the revision of various parts of the Roman rite. The use of the vernacular itself (GIRM, #12), the reception of communion under both kinds (GIRM, #13-14), the introduction of Masses for various needs and occasions (GIRM #15), the involvement of the laity in the planning of liturgical celebrations (GIRM #18), the adaptation of gestures within the rites (GIRM #24), and the renewed forms specifically of celebrating the penitential rites, the profession of faith, the general intercessions and the Lord’s Prayer (GIRM #36) are all to be understood as fostering increased participation, demanded by “the nature of the celebration...and for the Christian people, [they are] a right and duty they have by reason of their baptism” (GIRM #19). Perhaps nowhere is this theology of participation more dramatically stated than in (GIRM #78), describing the eucharistic prayer: “The meaning of the prayer is that the entire congregation of the faithful should join itself with Christ in confessing the great deed God has done and in the offering of sacrifice.”

The revised GIRM can be seen to have embraced and, even more, developed thoroughly the implications of the conciliar restoration of a theology of lay participation in the liturgy. In turn, this theology is based upon a retrieval of the best of the Christian tradition on the meaning of sacrifice as a function of the baptized as we will see below.

3. The Sacrament of the Eucharist : Source and Summit of Christian Life

The whole liturgical life of the Church revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments.

The Eucharist is the heart and the summit of the Church's life, for in it Christ associates his Church and all her members with his sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered once for all on the cross to his Father; by this sacrifice he pours out the graces of salvation on his Body which is the Church.²⁸

Baptism and Confirmation are the first two sacraments of Christian initiation, and they find their fulfillment and perfection in the source and summit of the Christian life: the Most Holy Eucharist (PO #5). At the heart of the Holy Eucharist are the bread and wine that, by the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, truly and substantially become the Body and Blood of the risen and glorified Lord Jesus.

At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet 'in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.'²⁹

In the first mention of bread and wine in the Old Testament we have the King of Righteousness, Priest of the Most High God and King of the City of Peace (Melchizedek), offering it to Abram, with whom God was creating a covenant that would bless all mankind. Through this event, bread and wine became the traditional covenant meal, shared as part of the complex ceremony that established a covenant relationship.

²⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n.1407.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, n. 1323.

In the Old Covenant bread and wine were offered in sacrifice among the first fruits of the earth as a sign of gratitude to God, but they also received a new meaning by the Exodus of Israel from slavery in Egypt. The unleavened bread of Passover recalls the haste of departure on pilgrimage to the Promised Land, and manna in the desert testifies that God always fulfills His promise to sustain His people. Moreover, blood is the sign of fidelity to God's covenant with Israel and of sorrow for sins which violate God's law. The cup of blessing at the end of the Jewish Passover meal transforms the simple human joy in wine into a sign of God's saving action in history: the messianic expectation of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. All of these meanings were taken up and transformed by the Lord Jesus, the true Lamb of God, when He instituted the Holy Eucharist and commanded the Church to celebrate this sacrifice until He comes again in glory.

Just as each sacrament is a saving encounter with God, so the Eucharist, as the central sacrament provides the encounter with the living God. The church reminds us that the Eucharist is a mystery, the saving mystery of God's saving plan. Inclusive in that mystery is the reality of the Eucharist as a continuation of the sacrifice of the cross, a memorial of the death and resurrection of Christ and an action of Christ and the Church.

Liturgy is by definition a work of the people. The sacraments are works of Christ and the people of God, the Church. Together with Christ, the Church celebrates God's saving love for us. *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* encourages the members of the church to participate fully in the Church's liturgical life (SC #14). Participation in the Eucharist is a sign of communion, recognition of our common journey which we share with others. Full participation in the Eucharist includes partaking of the body and blood of Christ. We share in

that sacred banquet which gives us strength for the journey in life. On this journey in life we are reminded of the fruit of Holy Communion. Holy Communion augments our union with Christ. The principle fruit of receiving the Eucharist in Holy Communion is an intimate union with Christ Jesus.³⁰

What material food produces in our bodily life, Holy Communion wonderfully achieves in our spiritual life. Communion with the flesh of the risen Christ, a flesh given life and giving life through the Holy Spirit, preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace received at Baptism. This growth in Christian life needs the nourishment of Eucharistic Communion, the bread for our pilgrimage until the moment of death, when it will be given to us as viaticum.³¹

Holy Communion separates us from sin. The body of Christ we receive in Holy Communion is "given up for us," and the blood we drink "shed for the many for the forgiveness of sins." For this reason the Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without at the same time cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future sins.³²

As bodily nourishment restores lost strength, so the Eucharist strengthens our charity, which tends to be weakened in daily life; and this living charity wipes away venial sins. By giving himself to us Christ revives our love and enables us to break our disordered attachments to creatures and root ourselves in him³³

“The Eucharist makes the church” and constantly renews, strengthens and deepens our incorporation into the church.³⁴ “The Eucharist also commits us to the poor”³⁵ and is a means of “unity among Christians.”³⁶

Since the Christian life is essentially a spiritual life, equally it can be said that the Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian spirituality. Implicit in this saying is that

³⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1391.

³¹ *Ibid.*, n. 1392.

³² *Ibid.*, n. 1393.

³³ *Ibid.*, n. 1394.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, n. 1396.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, n. 1397.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 1398.

first, Christian spirituality flows from the Eucharist as its source, and second, Christian spirituality is supremely realized in and ordered to the Eucharist as its summit or highpoint – that to which all of our actions should ultimately be directed. Christian spirituality then, leads us from the Eucharist as our starting point out into the world of daily life and it takes us back home to the Eucharist after our sojourn in the world.

The Eucharist is a channel of grace because the Eucharist is Christ Himself, who is the Author of grace. In the other six sacraments, God gives us a gift of grace; in the Holy Mass He gives us the gift of Himself. That is why the Holy Eucharist is the sacrament of sacraments, the mystery of mysteries. As a channel of grace it is the sacramental representation of Christ's saving Sacrifice on the Cross.

The Eucharist serves as a source of repentance. The fruitful and reverent reception of the Holy Eucharist requires one to examine himself spiritually before coming to the Eucharistic banquet and, if conscious of grave sin, to receive the sacrament of reconciliation before receiving Holy Communion.

Any one who desires to receive Christ in the Eucharistic communion must be in the state of grace. Anyone aware of having sinned mortally must not receive communion without having received absolution in the sacrament of Penance.³⁷

The Eucharist also helps us grow in the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity which are essential to the spiritual life because they "dispose Christians to live in a relationship with the Holy Trinity."³⁸

³⁷ Ibid., n. 1415.

³⁸ Ibid., n. 1812.

It nourishes and strengthens our faith by what it signifies: the wisdom, love and power of God manifested to us by Christ in His Real Presence and in His Sacrifice. In this respect, the Eucharist is the sacramental "sign of the covenant" par excellence, beckoning us to enter into communion with God by accepting in faith God's saving deeds on our behalf – supremely, the death and resurrection of His Son.

As a source of hope the basis of this hope is the salvation won by the death and resurrection of Christ and the gift of His Holy Spirit poured out in our hearts (cf. Romans 5:5-11; 8:23-25; Titus 3:6-7), which is sacramentally present in the Eucharist. The Eucharist gives us hope in God for the grace to live in His friendship in this life and to inherit eternal life in heaven.

The Eucharist is the pledge of the glory to come. "There is no surer pledge or clearer sign of this great hope in the new heavens and new earth 'in which righteousness dwells' than the Eucharist"³⁹. The Catechism closes with a reference from Saint Ignatius of Antioch, "Every time this mystery is celebrated, 'the work of our redemption is carried on' and we 'break the one bread that provides the medicine of immortality, the antidote for death, and the food that makes us live forever in Jesus Christ.'⁴⁰ The Eucharist nourishes our hope, at once pointing back to God's salvific deeds, especially Jesus' death and resurrection, which provides the firm ground for our hope; and forward to what we hope for, the coming of the kingdom and eternal life of communion with the Triune God.

³⁹ Ibid. , n. 1405.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

In his Holy Thursday letter to Priests *On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist Dominicae Cenaе* (DC)⁴¹ (1980), Pope John Paul II wrote: "Christian life is expressed in the fulfilling of the greatest commandment, that is to say, in the love of God and neighbor, and this love finds its source in the blessed Sacrament, which is commonly called the sacrament of love. The Eucharist signifies this charity, and therefore recalls it, makes it present and at the same time brings it about" (DC #5).

Let us summarize what we have considered. The Eucharist is both the source and summit of Christian spirituality in that, as Christ Himself and as the sacramental representation of Christ's Sacrifice on the cross, the Eucharist is God's gift of Himself to us in Christ through the Spirit to us. We receive this gift by grace and, through grace, grow in communion with God by turning from sin and increasing in faith, hope and charity, to which the Eucharist, as a sacramental sign, gives rise in us. The Eucharist, then as the sacrament of sacraments and as the central prayer of the church, provides us with a way of understanding our lives in the light of the Paschal mystery thus enabling us to respond to the ongoing challenges and crises of life.

The Significance and Challenges of the Eucharist Today

John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation *The Church in America, Ecclesia in America* (EA)⁴² (1999) teaches us:

⁴¹ http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_24021980_dominicae-cenae_en.html (accessed June 6, 2010).

⁴² http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_22011999_ecclesia-in-america_en.html (accessed June 6, 2010).

The Eucharist is the outstanding moment of encounter with the Living Christ. For this reason, by their preaching and catechesis, the Pastors of the People of God in America must strive to give the Sunday Eucharist celebration new strength, as the source and summit of the Church's life, the safeguard of communion in the Body of Christ and an invitation to solidarity expressing the Lord's commandment: 'Love one another as I have loved you' (Jn 13.34) (EA #35).

His words should help all of us, bishops, priests, deacons, men and women in consecrated life and faithful lay women and lay men, to renew our commitment to thank God for the extraordinary gift of Jesus' presence in the Eucharist. With his great fervor for the Eucharist, Pope John Paul II proclaimed 2005 to be the Year of the Eucharist in order to remind us that the Eucharist is the source and summit of the life of the Church (*Stay with us Lord*) (*Mane Nobiscum Domine*) (MND)⁴³ (2004). It is a central moment in our life of faith, as it is what Jesus left us so that we may remember him – "Do this in memory of me".

For many Catholics the Sunday Eucharist continues to be the focal point of their ongoing spiritual journey. It provides direction and clarification, nourishing them as they struggle with their faith. Unfortunately, for many people, the significance of this celebration of the Eucharist (the Mass) has been lost, so that it is often experienced simply as an obligation or duty, which is mostly boring, and from which they are very happy to be dispensed. For others the Eucharist is an obligation, and not a very attractive celebration which seems to have little to say to their day to day experiences. How, then, can we understand and experience the Eucharist so that it becomes something desirable and meaningful in our lives?

⁴³ http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20041008_mane-nobiscum-domine_en.html (accessed June 6, 2010)

While debates will continue to rage around the real meaning of the Eucharist, whether we are promoting the Latin Mass or promoting the charismatic Mass or the children's Mass, we should never lose sight of its fundamental unifying and transforming purpose in remembering Jesus. Care should therefore always be taken, and maybe a degree of flexibility allowed, to ensure that the celebration of the Eucharist will not provoke discriminatory division nor prevent the conversion and healing of those participating. The Eucharist will always remain as the source and summit of our faith which makes present Jesus who responds to our deepest desires and our search for meaning.

CHAPTER TWO

CELEBRATING SUNDAY

Since the context of this project is that of the Commonwealth of Dominica, the chapter will look internally at the situation as it exists in the Diocese of Roseau. In the Diocese of Roseau, pastoral reality raises some questions about the role of the Sunday Eucharist. The history of the Church presents Sunday Mass as the center of Christian life, but the lack of priests means that many Christian communities on Dominica must gather without the celebration of the Mass. This chapter will explore the origin and the interpretation of Sunday, Sunday and the Easter event, the names for Sunday and will then go on to elaborate on the practice of Sunday in the early church. In light of the practice of Sunday in the early church, it then focuses attention on the significance of Sunday today. "Sunday today" can sometimes mean "Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest," which poses a pastoral problem that is addressed by the *Directory for Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest*. Taking into consideration the fact that lay ministers are to conduct Sunday services in the absence of a priest, the directory thus ensures that these lay ministers are familiar with the structure of Sunday celebration when no priest is present. Such an exercise is one that lends itself to liturgical catechesis as well as an evaluation of Sunday in which the role of the lay ministers is more clearly understood.

The Origin and Interpretation of Sunday

The New Testament has a good deal to say about the Paschal Mystery as the central act of salvation and about the resultant incorporation of baptized believers into the new people of God and of the body of Christ. It tells us of liturgical gatherings of

Christians which have as their focal point the celebration of the Lord's supper (1Cor 11: 20ff); in this "the cup of blessing" and "the bread which we break" become a participation in the body and blood of Christ (1(Cor 10:16). The New Testament says nothing about the Christian feasts and does not even make it clear whether the apostolic communities were already celebrating the Jewish feast of Passover and Pentecost as Christian feasts because of the saving events that had occurred on these occasions. The New Testament does, however, present us with the first component of a liturgical year that will develop only very gradually. This component is the celebration of Sunday the first day of the week.¹

Sunday and the Easter Event

In his analysis of the historical development of Sunday Pierre Jounel says "the history of Sunday begins with the resurrection of Christ, and it may be asserted that the Christian Sunday acquired its definite form from well before the Council of Nicaea" (325).² In describing the Easter event he goes on to state that

It was in the morning of the first day of the week (Matt 28:1; Mark16:9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1) that the Lord rose from the dead and showed himself to his disciples. After appearing to the holy women and then to Peter, he showed himself "that very day" to the two disciples of Emmaus and made himself "known to them in the breaking of the bread" (Luke 24:35). He then presented himself in the midst of his assembled apostles, ate with them (Luke 24: 41-43) and told them: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." After this he breathed on them and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven" (John 20: 21-23).

The resurrection of Christ from the dead, his appearance in the assembly of his disciples, the messianic meal that he took with them, the gift of the Spirit, and the missionary mandate of the church: all these comprise the Christian Passover in its full form. Such is the central event of salvation history, and it has left its mark for good on the first day of the week. The entire mystery which Sunday celebrates was already

¹ Adolf Adam, *The Liturgical Year: Its History & Its Meaning After The Reform of Liturgy* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1981), 35-36.

² Pierre Jounel, "Sunday and the Week," in *The Liturgy and Time*, volume IV of *The Church at Prayer*, New Edition, edited by A. G. Martimort (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1986), 12.

present on Easter day. Sunday is simply the weekly celebration of the Paschal mystery.³

The Names for Sunday

Early Christians attached different names to Sunday. Following Jewish and Roman Empire custom Sunday is “the first day of the week.” This was the day of the Lord’s resurrection. As Christians we believe that Christ was raised on the first day of the week after the Sabbath was over. The evangelists make mention of “the first day of the week” that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead and showed himself to his disciples. A close analysis of the scriptures does reveals that there are many biblical passages that make specific reference to the first day of the week.

1. Jesus appeared to the disciples on the first day of the week (John 20:19).
2. The Holy Spirit came on Pentecost, the first day of the week (Lev.23:16; Acts 2: 1).
3. The first sermon was preached by Peter on the first day of the week (Acts 2: 14).
4. Three thousand converts joined the church on the first day of the week (Acts 2:41).
5. The Christians assembled broke bread on the first day of the week (Acts 2:46).
6. The Christians of Troas also heard a message from Paul on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).
7. Paul instructed the churches to put aside contributions on the first day of the week (1Cor. 16:2).

Another name for Sunday is that of “the day of the Lord.”

³ Ibid., 12.

This expression is found in Revelation 1:10. We have seen that it appears in the *Didache* in a context that is clearly connected with worship. The ‘day of the Lord’ calls to mind, especially, the day of resurrection, because the Lord is a title of Jesus as raised by the Father (cf. Rom 1:4; 10:9; Phil 2:11). On the day of Pentecost, Peter proclaimed that Christ was risen from the dead and had sent the Holy Spirit. He ended by saying, ‘therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified’ (Acts 2: 36).⁴

In his description of Sunday, Adolf Adam makes the following remarks:

We find a specifically Christian name used in Revelation 1:10 and very frequently from then on: ‘Lord’s day’ (*kyriake hemera*); in other words, the day that is especially associated with Christ the Lord (*Kyrios*). The name immediately suggests a reference to the resurrection of Jesus which gave the first day of the week a particular significance. But there are good reasons for thinking that this name was in fact inspired by the older term “Lord’s Supper (*kyriakon deipnon*), i.e., the Eucharist that was celebrated as the central action of the Christian assembly.”⁵

Among the expressions that the ancient Christians used to name Sunday, ‘the eighth day’ has a particularly intense significance.

The name seems to be found in the New Testament. It might come, in fact, from the account of the appearances of the Risen One in John 20: 26: Eight days later his disciples were together again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you.⁶

Another name first used by Tertullian is “the day of the Lord’s resurrection.” This name is later used by many Greek writers in the form of “resurrection day” and makes it clear that Sunday is a weekly celebration of the Pasch.⁷ In conclusion, the various names that are

⁴ Matias Augé, “The Liturgical Year in the First Four Centuries,” in *Liturgical Time and Space*, Volume V of *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, edited by Anscar J. Chupungco (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000), 141-142.

⁵ Adolf Adam, *The Liturgical Year: Its History & Its Meaning After The Reform of Liturgy* (New York : Pueblo Publishing Company, 1981),40.

⁶ Matias Augé, “The Liturgical Year in the First Four Centuries,” in *Liturgical Time and Space*, Volume V of *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, edited by Anscar J. Chupungco (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000), 143.

⁷ Adolf Adam, *The Liturgical Year: Its History & Its Meaning After The Reform of Liturgy* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1981), 42.

ascribed to Sunday reveal that Sunday itself is highly symbolic. “The apostolic generation immediately grasped the importance of the first day, connected as it was with the memory and presence of the crucified and risen Jesus.”⁸

Christians traditionally have their primary worship events on Sunday, and so it seems that the Mosaic Sabbath regulations might have been gradually transferred to Sunday among the vast majority of Christian communities. Sunday celebration by Christians is not just a transferrable action of the Jewish Sabbath to another day. It is the sacrament of the Risen Lord: it is the day of Resurrection, of the Risen One's appearance and of the Spirit's coming. At the same time, it is a sacrament of the Church because Sunday is when the Church is formed afresh as the Body of Christ united with its Head. It is the tradition of the church that Sunday, the Assembly and Eucharist are inseparable.

Sunday and the Early Church

One of the earliest Christian documents is the *Didache*, known as the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, which probably dates from the first century. Chapters 9 and 10 deal with the Eucharist [Gk. *Eucharistias*] and prayers of thanks which allude to the Mass. The *Didache* describes the Christian assembly of that age in the following way:

Come together on the Lord's Day, break bread and give thanks, having first confessed your sins so that your sacrifice may be pure. Anyone who has a quarrel with a fellow Christian should not gather with you until the two are reconciled, lest your sacrifice be profaned.⁹

The early Church Fathers such as Ignatius of Antioch (ca. 107) made the observance of

⁸ Pierre Jounel, “Sunday and the Week,” in *The Liturgy and Time*, volume IV of *The Church at Prayer*, New Edition, edited by A. G. Martimort (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1986), 13.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

Sunday as the sign *par excellence* of a Christian. Those who use to live according to the older order of things have attained to a new hope and they observe no longer the Sabbath but Sunday, the day on which Christ and his death raised up our life.¹⁰

Ignatius also commented on the Eucharist:

They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our savior Jesus Christ, flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father, in his goodness, raised up again. Let that be considered a valid Eucharist which is celebrated by the bishop, or by one whom he appoints. Wherever the bishop appears, let the people be there; just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church (*Epistle to the Smyrneans*).¹¹

Take heed, then, to have but one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to show forth the unity of His blood; one altar; as there is one bishop, along with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants: that so, whatsoever you do, you may do it according to the will of God (*Epistle to the Philadelphians*).¹²

Also in the second century, we have the witness of St. Justin Martyr (150 AD) for the basic lines of the order of the Eucharistic celebration. This basic structure has stayed the same until our own day for all the great liturgical families. St. Justin wrote to the pagan emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161) around the year 155, explaining what Christians did:

On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place. The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as much as time permits. When the reader has finished, he who presides over those gathered admonishes and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things.

Then we all rise together and offer prayers for ourselves and for all others, wherever they may be, so that we may be found righteous by our life and actions, and faithful to the commandments, so as to obtain eternal salvation.

When the prayers are concluded we exchange the kiss. Then someone brings bread and a cup of water and wine mixed together to him who presides over the brethren.

¹⁰ St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Magnesios 9*, ed. P. Th. Camelot, Sources Chrétiennes 10; 2nd ed. (Paris: Cerf, 1951), 102-103.

¹¹ <http://www.infpape.com/concordance/eucharist.htm> (accessed June 6, 2010).

¹² *Ibid.*

He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and for a considerable time he gives thanks (in Greek: *eucharistian*) that we have been judged worthy of these gifts.

When he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all present give voice to an acclamation by saying: Amen. When he who presides has given thanks and the people have responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the 'eucharisted' bread, wine and water and take them to those who are absent [St. Justin, *Apol. 1*, 65-67: PG 6, 428-429] (Catechism of the Catholic Church #1345).

Justin reiterated,

We call this food Eucharist, and no one else is permitted to partake of it, except one who believes our teaching to be true and who has been washed in the washing which is for the remission of sins and for regeneration and is thereby living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread nor common drink do we receive these; but since Jesus Christ our Savior was made incarnate by the word of God and had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so too, as we have been taught, the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by him, and by the change of which our blood and flesh is nourished, is both the flesh and the blood of that incarnated Jesus (*First Apology of Justin # 66*).¹³

Christians have kept Sunday, the Lord's Day, by celebrating the Eucharist, which the Lord gave us as an everlasting memorial of his saving death and resurrection. In light of this practice by the early Christians is it not appropriate to ask, "What then is the significance of Sunday today?"

The Significance of Sunday Today

The Lord's Day is the day of the resurrection when the Church celebrates the paschal mystery. It is the day when the Christian people assemble to offer God thanks and praise and to make present the body of Christ, the Church. Adolf Adam explains the evolution of the church seasons and individual feasts, solemnities and memorials in clear, concise and

¹³ <http://www.infpag.com/concordance/eucharist.htm> (accessed June6, 2010).

thorough language with special emphasis on the liturgical reforms which began under Pius XII and were completed by Vatican II:

Vatican II reminds us in keeping with an apostolic tradition which originates on the day of Christ resurrection, the paschal mystery is celebrated on Sunday. On this day, 'Christ faithful are bound to come together into one place, They should listen to the word of God, and take part in the Eucharist, thus calling to mind the passion, resurrection, and glory of the Lord Jesus, and giving thanks to God. The Lord's Day is the original feast day, and it should be proposed to the faithful and taught to them so that it may become in fact a day of joy and of freedom from work. Sunday is the foundation and kernel of the liturgical year (SC #106; Flannery, pp 29-30).¹⁴

Pierre Jounel says, "Sunday begins at sunset on Saturday evening in accordance with customs of Christian communities that originated in Judaism."¹⁵ He tells us:

The Eucharistic assembly is the specific character of Sunday according to the overwhelming testimony of the tradition and teaching of Vatican II. In the Western Church, all of the faithful are obliged to take part in the Sunday Eucharist. They have a duty to attend the entire celebration and they are urged to receive Communion during it.¹⁶

Like every mass Sunday Mass contains a Penitential Rite, the Liturgy of the Word, and the Eucharistic Liturgy.¹⁷ In Latin rite dioceses, Sunday is a day observed as holy and of obligation. This practice of the Christian assembly dates from the beginnings of the apostolic age. The Letter to the Hebrews reminds the faithful "not to neglect to meet together, as is the habit of some, but to encourage one another" (Hebrews 10:25).

The paschal mystery is the life, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ the central theological realities of every liturgical celebration which are most

¹⁴ Adolf Adam, *The Liturgical Year: Its History & Its Meaning After The Reform of Liturgy* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1981), 46.

¹⁵ Pierre Jounel, "Sunday and the Week," in *The Liturgy and Time*, volume IV of *The Church at Prayer*, New Edition, edited by A. G. Martimort (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1986), 19.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 19-20

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

especially experienced by the Christian community on Sunday the day of the resurrection. It is a requirement that everyone attends Mass in person, rather than just watches it on television or listens to a live broadcast over radio. According to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy

it is the liturgy through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, 'the work of our redemption is accomplished', and it is through the liturgy, especially, that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ (SC #10).

As Catholics we gather each Sunday as a Church, we profess our faith in God's mystery of salvation, and are fed with abundant graces: first, as nourished by the Word of God and secondly, as privileged to receive Christ in the Eucharist. It is through the celebration of Eucharist that the Church participates in the one sacrifice of Christ. The Mass is normative on Sunday because in it we share in Christ's Passover from death to life. This is much more than just receiving Holy Communion.

We firmly believe that our Lord is truly present in the Holy Eucharist and that the Holy Eucharist unites us intimately with the Lord, as well as with one another. The Eucharist makes present the living mystery of the Lord's Passover from death to life, and our participation in the Mass gives us a unique share in the Passover of Christ. It is no wonder that the Church teaches us that the Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life" (LG 11) and that

The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch (CCC 1324).

So important is the liturgy for our lives as Christians that the Church has always taken great care about where and how the liturgy is celebrated.

A parish is the place where all the faithful can be gathered together for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. According to canon 515

A parish is a certain community of the Christian faithful stably constituted in a particular church, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor (*parochus*) as its proper pastor (*pastor*) under the authority of the diocesan bishop.¹⁸

The parish initiates the Christian people into the ordinary expression of the liturgical life: it gathers them together in this celebration; it teaches Christ's saving doctrine; it practices the charity of the Lord in good works and brotherly love: Whilst the day-to-day life of a parish varies greatly from one community to another, the one thing that all Catholic parishes hold in common is the celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday, the Lord's Day. This is the gathering point for all parishioners, the time when everyone comes together. The table of God's Word and the table of the Eucharist feed and nourish the community, refreshing the people and sending them on into yet another week of work and struggles, joys and successes, and many opportunities to spread the Kingdom of God. In speech and song, symbol and gesture, we unite our praise and thanksgiving to Christ's perfect self-offering on the cross.

However, in many areas the lack of priests makes it impossible to celebrate the day of the Lord, to celebrate the Eucharist every Sunday. Today a growing number of Catholic communities are no longer assured of the regular presence of a priest to preside at the Sunday

¹⁸ *Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983), 168-169. English translation from *Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition: New English Translation* (Washington, DC: CLSA, 1998), 168-169.

Eucharist. It is assumed that the problem flows in part from the impact of the increase in the number of Catholics on parish life and in part from a shortage of ordained clergy. Various forms of celebration already exist in different continents that suffer from a lack of priests. In order to address this situation, at the specific request of John Paul II, the Congregation for Divine Worship published a *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*.

Directory for Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest¹⁹

The *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* (DSCAP) (June 2, 1988) is a response to the convergence of several factors.

The first of these is the fact that it is not everywhere and always possible to have a complete liturgical celebration of Sunday. A second factor is the request over the past few years from several conferences of bishops that the Holy See issue guidelines for this de facto situation. A third factor is a matter of experience: in the light of the actual situation and its circumstances the Holy See and many bishops in their local Churches have already turned their attention to Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest. The *Directory* has profited from such experience in regard to its assessment of the advantages and at the same time the possible limitations of the sort of celebration in question. The fundamental point of the entire *Directory* is to ensure, in the best way possible and in every situation, the Christian celebration of Sunday. This means remembering that the Mass remains the proper way of celebrating Sunday, but also means recognizing the presence of important elements even when Mass cannot be celebrated. (Introduction to the *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*)

The intent of the *Directory* was “not intended to encourage, much less facilitate unnecessary or contrived Sunday assemblies without the celebration of the Eucharist. The intent is simply

¹⁹ *Directory for Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest*, 1988, in *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*, (Washington, D.C: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2007.) pp.369-401.

to guide and to prescribe what should be done when real circumstances require the decision to have Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest” (DSCAP #21-22).

This document recognizes the need for previously unforeseen pastoral arrangements to be made in order to sustain the community which assembles on Sunday. While such celebrations are seen as necessary in the circumstances and in themselves have a positive value, the Church can never accept as inevitable or desirable, the situation which gives rise to them. Where communities are deprived of the ability to celebrate the Eucharist because of the lack of priests, the Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest must always be viewed only as an interim measure and never as a permanent solution.

Because the Celebration of Sunday Eucharist is at the heart of the life of the church, any discussions of Sunday celebration in the absence of a priest must emphasize the fact that these celebrations are exceptions to the norm. When there is no reasonable opportunity to provide for the celebration of the Mass local bishops may judge it necessary to provide for the Sunday celebration in the absence of a priest, so that the best way possible, the weekly gathering of the faithful can be continued and the Christian tradition regarding Sunday preserved. (See *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, no.164.)²⁰

The Roman document, in recognizing the importance of the Sunday assembly as essential to the continuing life of the Church, provides guidelines for the decisions that must be made in regard to such celebrations taking place.

The *Introduction to Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* makes it clear that certain conditions must be met before it is permissible to hold Sunday celebration in the absence of a priest. When these conditions are met and the bishop has authorized the celebration of Sunday celebration in the absence of a priest, the celebration must take the form of either the Liturgy of the Hours, or Liturgy of the Word. In both cases, the community celebrates the presence of the risen Lord in the liturgical

²⁰ *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*, 10 in Michael Begolly, *Leading the Assembly in Prayer: A Practical Guide for Lay and Ordained Presiders* (San Jose, CA: Resource Publications, 1997), 93.

assembly and in the proclamation of the Word, and in both instances the ritual text also makes provision for the distribution of Holy Communion.²¹

In his post synodal exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*²² on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission, (Sac Car) (2007), Pope Benedict XVI summarizes and reflects upon the Year of the Eucharist, which began in October 2004 with the International Eucharistic Congress, held in October in Guadalajara, Mexico, and concluded in October 2005 with the Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome. Pope Benedict has approached the subject at hand first, with an examination of orthodoxy - the theological truths - and then a consideration of orthopraxy - how those truths are lived, practiced, and comprehended in the concrete day-to-day life of the Christian. So, for example, on Sunday assemblies in the absence of a priest he cautions:

Rediscovering the significance of the Sunday celebration for the life of Christians naturally leads to a consideration of the problem of those Christian communities which lack priests and where, consequently, it is not possible to celebrate Mass on the Lord's Day. Here it should be stated that a wide variety of situations exists. The Synod recommended first that the faithful should go to one of the churches in their Diocese where the presence of a priest is assured, even when this demands a certain sacrifice. Wherever great distances make it practically impossible to take part in the Sunday Eucharist, it is still important for Christian communities to gather together to praise the Lord and to commemorate the Day set apart for him. This needs, however, to be accompanied by an adequate instruction about the difference between Mass and Sunday assemblies in the absence of a priest. The Church's pastoral care must be expressed in the latter case by ensuring that the liturgy of the word – led by a deacon or a community leader to whom this ministry has been duly entrusted by competent authority – is carried out according to a specific ritual prepared and approved for this purpose by the Bishops' Conferences.

²¹ Ibid.

²²http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_benxvi_exh_20072222_sacramentum-caritatis_en.html (accessed June6, 2010).

I reiterate that only Ordinaries may grant the faculty of distributing Holy Communion in such liturgies, taking account of the need for a certain selectiveness. Furthermore, care should be taken that these assemblies do not create confusion about the central role of the priest and the sacraments in the life of the Church. The importance of the role given to the laity, who should rightly be thanked for their generosity in the service of their communities, must never obscure the indispensable ministry of priests for the life of the Church. Hence care must be taken to ensure that such assemblies in the absence of a priest do not encourage ecclesiological visions incompatible with the truth of the Gospel and the Church's tradition. Rather, they should be privileged moments of prayer for God to send holy priests after his own heart. It is touching, in this regard, to read the words of Pope John Paul II in his Letter to Priests for Holy Thursday 1979 about those places where the faithful, deprived of a priest by a dictatorial regime, would meet in a church or shrine, place on the altar a stole which they still kept and recite the prayers of the eucharistic liturgy, halting in silence "at the moment that corresponds to the transubstantiation," as a sign of how "ardently they desire to hear the words that only the lips of a priest can efficaciously utter." With this in mind, and considering the incomparable good which comes from the celebration of the Eucharist, I ask all priests to visit willingly and as often as possible the communities entrusted to their pastoral care, lest they remain too long without the sacrament of love (Sac Car #75).

The guidelines from the Congregation for Divine Worship (*Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*) recommend that members of those communities that are unable to celebrate the Eucharist go elsewhere to join in its celebration if that is possible. The guidelines also offer a second option of gathering for a Sunday celebration in the priest's absence in order to be nourished by the word, by common prayer and sacramental communion if possible.

James Dallen, commenting on the options that are given, thinks "the first recommendation- to go elsewhere for the Eucharist- diminishes the local community and its witness to others, and fails to appreciate the need of those who are unable to travel. More significant it ignores the paramount role of the local faith community."²³ Although he

²³James Dallen, *The Dilemma of Priestless Sundays* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1994), 31.

prefers the second option of Sunday worship in the absence of a priest (SWAP) which includes a communion service if possible, James Dallen is very critical about the entire situation and makes the following observations and raises an important question: “While the communion service itself has been permitted for about thirty years now, it is a new dimension of SWAP. Can it prevent the erosion of community that has occurred in churches forced to find replacement for the Sunday Eucharist?”²⁴ He notes that the recommended structure of SWAP closely parallels the structure of the traditional Sunday celebration of the word and sacrament, even though the document warns against confusion with the Eucharist and calls for appropriate catechesis.

The source of confusion, however, is inherent in the structure of SWAP in that its liturgy of the word may be celebrated in the usual manner and that its communion service consists of an act of thanksgiving and the usual communion rite. This leaves the impression that that SWAP differs from Mass only in the absence of the priest and the institution narrative. Even beyond that the communion service is especially problematic, particularly for those whose participation in the liturgy of the eucharist has been limited to receiving communion.²⁵

In light of the Holy Father’s cautious approach to the above mentioned situation as well as James Dallen’s analysis, I have found it most fitting at this juncture to examine the situation in the Diocese of Roseau in order to elucidate the reality of the pastoral situation in that context.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 32.

The Situation in the Diocese of Roseau in reference to Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of the Priest.

The Eucharist is the very centre of the Church's life, and the tradition of the Church has constantly upheld the necessary link between the celebration of the Eucharist and the ministry of the ordained priesthood. While the Eucharist is and will always be the proper manner of celebrating Sunday for the Catholic Community, present circumstances force us to acknowledge that there are occasions in Diocese of Roseau when there cannot be a priest available for the weekly celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday, both in emergency and ongoing situations. Due to the phenomenon of the priest shortage, there are extraordinary occasions when a priest is not available to celebrate a Mass on Sunday. The priest shortage leads to a sacramental and pastoral deficiency for the faithful of a certain area. The distances which must be covered for the celebration of the Eucharist and other sacraments like baptism, etc., become ever longer, since the reduced number of priests understandably leads to a reduced number of services. The reality of the diocese is one where most parishes are manned by a single priest, without an assistant. In some parishes within the diocese, even if the priest is physically present in the parish on a Sunday, there are so many out-stations attached to the main parish church that it is impossible for the priest to be able to celebrate the Eucharist in every worshipping community every Sunday. There are no permanent deacons in the diocese of Roseau. In the absence of the priest, laymen and women or religious brothers and sisters are called to lead the Sunday prayer of the community. While such celebrations are seen as necessary in the circumstances and in themselves have a positive value, the Church can never accept as inevitable or desirable the situation which

gives rise to them. Where communities are deprived of the ability to celebrate the Eucharist because of the lack of priests, Sunday celebrations must always be viewed only as an interim measure and never as a permanent solution.

The Roman document (*Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest*), in recognizing the importance of the Sunday assembly as essential to the continuing life of the Church, provides guidelines for the decisions that must be made in regard to such celebrations taking place. The Directory leaves the task of determining the criteria and procedures of these celebrations to the bishop of each Diocese. “The individual bishop himself, may, in view of the conditions of the place and the people involved, determine more precisely the details of the celebration, using resources prepared by the national or diocesan liturgical committee” (DSCAP #41). In the Diocese of Roseau the bishop assisted by the work of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission, the Council of Priests and the Staff of the Diocesan Pastoral Center have designed guidelines for Lay Leaders of Prayer.

Criteria for Implementation of Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest in the Diocese of Roseau.

Introduction

While the Eucharist is and will always be the proper manner of celebrating Sunday for the Catholic Community, present circumstances force us to acknowledge that there will be some occasions in this Diocese when there can not be a priest available for the weekly celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday, both in emergency and on-going situations. In such situations, the option of a Sunday Celebration in the absence of a Priest, as presented by the

Congregation for Divine Worship in the *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* (June 2, 1988 - Vatican City), (DSCAP) has been adopted, in accord with the conditions stated in that Directory and according to the Diocesan details called for by the Directory (DSCAP #41). In the diocese of Roseau, such celebrations are known as Communion Services, and those who conduct these services are known as Lay Associates in Pastoral Care.

Principles Concerning Communion Services.

1. The norm and the ideal for the gathering of the local community on a Sunday is the celebration of the Eucharist.
2. The centrality of the Eucharist for the Catholic community requires that in the event of a priest of the parish being unavailable for the celebration of the Sunday Mass, a reasonable attempt is made to obtain the services of a supply priest.
3. While Sunday Mass is of paramount importance the law of the Church stipulates that no priest is to celebrate more than three Masses on a Sunday (which includes a Saturday Vigil Mass) [cf. 1983 code c.]

Can. 905 §1. A priest is not permitted to celebrate the Eucharist more than once a day except in cases where the law permits him to celebrate or concelebrate more than once on the same day.

§2. If there is a shortage of priests, the local ordinary can allow priests to celebrate twice a day for a just cause, or if pastoral necessity requires it, even three times on Sundays and holy days of obligation.²⁶

²⁶ *Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983). English translation from *Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition: New English Translation* (Washington, DC: CLSA, 1998), 296.

4. The continuance of the local community, both liturgically and pastorally, should be the aim of any change in liturgical and pastoral situations.
5. The principle of shared leadership underpins leadership of such celebrations. This is in the spirit of the Directory which states that “a lay person who leads the assembly acts as one among equals...” #39.
6. Whilst observing the directives of the Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, every effort must be made to distinguish such celebrations from the celebration of the Eucharist. The Liturgy of the Hours and Liturgy of the Word Services provide appropriate alternatives to the Liturgy of Word and Communion.
7. Such celebrations must always take place in expectation of the return of weekly Sunday Eucharist and must be linked to Eucharistic celebrations of the wider Church.
8. Leadership of the Sunday Celebration may also lead to leadership in other liturgical situations, particularly Vigils, Funerals and Burials and celebrations of the liturgical year other than Sundays.

Criteria for Ongoing Communion Services

Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest may be celebrated regularly by a local community when:

1. Sunday Mass will not be available in the local community weekly, but will be available at least once a month.
2. There is no Sunday Mass available at Parish Churches or in the Outstations.
3. Members of the Parish community will be seriously disadvantaged by the absence of a Sunday celebration. Such disadvantages could be in regard to the elderly, sick and

housebound, those to be initiated, and the Catholic presence and identity within the wider community.

4. The Parish has sufficient resources for the necessary liturgical ministries and on-going support for such celebrations.
5. An appropriate programme of formation, education and consultation of the local community has taken place prior to their implementation.
6. There is a designated group within the Parish community called Lay Associates in Pastoral Care who bear the responsibility for the preparation and leadership of such celebrations.
7. This group must have undertaken a programme of initial formation and have been officially commissioned for such leadership by the Bishop of the Diocese.
8. On-going formation in Scripture and liturgical principles is to be provided as a necessary part of leadership for Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest.
9. Each Liturgical Assembly is to be preceded by a time of preparation for leaders and ministers.

Appointment and Term of the Lay Associates in Pastoral Care

Upon completion of the course of formation and with the recommendation of the parish priest, the bishop will appoint the Lay Associate in Pastoral Care to minister in his or her own parish of the diocese for a period of one year in the first instance.

1. Their appointment to serve in the role as Lay Associates in Pastoral Care is to be made known to the community by a commissioning ceremony which takes place at

- the annual Chrism Mass of Wednesday of Holy Week. This occasion will provide an opportunity to catechize the community on the nature of Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest.
2. Lay Associates in Pastoral Care should bear a responsibility for continuing personal growth through prayer and study beyond the formation period. They will need to root themselves ever more deeply in the mystery of Christ. Of special value will be retreats and days of recollection, parish adult formation programs and workshops sponsored by the diocese that address the needs of sacred worship. The reading of periodicals and books on liturgy and prayer, and the study of Scripture will nourish these ministers and those they serve.
 3. Parish priests and the community should be responsive to the needs of those appointed as Lay Associates in Pastoral Care to assist them in their ongoing personal growth through prayer and study beyond the formation period.
 4. The parish priest through the Diocesan Pastoral Center will notify the office of the bishop of the names of persons in their parish(es) who have been appointed to lead Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest and the date the appointments expire.
 5. When the term of the Lay Associate in Pastoral Care is about to expire, the Diocesan Pastoral Center will notify the parish priest of the expiration date and send an evaluation form. A process of evaluation involving the community, parish priest and the Lay Associate in Pastoral Care will be the basis for ongoing formation and possible renewal of service. Following the evaluation, the parish priest may recommend that the bishop reappoint the Lay Associate in Pastoral Care for another

three-year term. The bishop may also terminate the service of the Lay Associate in Pastoral Care at any time.

6. Lay Associates in Pastoral Care are not allowed to run for public office as long as they are appointed to serve in that ministerial area.

Liturgical Roles and Ministries

Lay Associates in Pastoral Care are to avoid ritual elements proper to a priest or deacon, such as greetings and blessings, as designated in the rite *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*. When they serve in their capacity as Lay Associates in Pastoral Care they shall not assume roles customarily assigned to other liturgical ministers e.g., lectors, cantors, musicians, servers. Adequate liturgical ministers are essential for vital faith communities.

Music

Music and sung participation on the part of the assembly are integral to the celebration of the Mass or Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest. Parishes and faith communities are responsible to include music and foster sung participation as Sunday is celebrated.

Particular Concerns

The ambo is reserved for the Liturgy of the Word. The Scripture readings are those designated in the *Lectionary for Mass* by the liturgical calendar. They are to be read from the *Lectionary*. The altar is used only when the Eucharistic Bread which was consecrated earlier

is placed on it before the distribution of Holy Communion, when Communion is included in the celebration.

Vesture

Lay Associates in Pastoral Care shall not vest in an alb for *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*.

Lay Associates in Pastoral Care and Preaching

Lay Associates in Pastoral Care having the requisite training and skill are permitted not only to share their reflections on the readings but also to preach at *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*. Preaching is one of the principal means by which the Church carries out its responsibility for the ministry of the Word of God. Together with catechetical formation, preaching holds primary place in the proclamation of the Christian faith. According to canon 761 of the revised Code of Canon Law

The various means available are to be used to proclaim Christian doctrine: first of all preaching and catechetical instruction, which always hold the principle place, but also the presentation of doctrine in schools, academies, conferences, and meetings of every type and its diffusion through public declarations in press or in other instruments of social communication by legitimate authority on the occasion of certain events.²⁷

Preaching the Word of God is an exercise of Christ's prophetic office, in which all Christian believers share (LG # 12). Through their baptism and confirmation, all have received the commission of the Lord to "make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19). Enlivened by the Spirit of truth, the people of God partake in a true ministry of the Word of God by the

²⁷ *Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983). English translation from *Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition: New English Translation* (Washington, DC: CLSA, 1998), 250.

witness of their persevering faith and ceaseless charity with praise of God always on their lips (LG #12).

Since the Second Vatican Council, there has been a broadening of those permitted to preach the Word of God. The Council reminded us that there is a widespread need for more persons to preach - persons who are committed to the ministry of the Word, trained in the scriptures and theology, and skilled in communication. The Revised Code of Canon Law states that lay persons may be permitted to preach in churches in certain cases of necessity or of usefulness. Canon 766 states that

Lay persons can be permitted to preach in a church or oratory, if necessity requires it in certain circumstances or it seems advantageous in particular cases, according to the prescripts of the conference of bishops and without prejudice to canon 767.1²⁸

The Structure of Sunday Celebration in the Absence of the Priest

In order to enhance the proper celebration of the Communion Services the second form for the Sunday celebration in the absence of the priest, which is the option of the Liturgy of the Word, is what has been adapted in the diocese of Roseau. It consists of the following elements:

Introductory Rites: The celebration begins without a procession. As the assembly and ministers gather a gathering song is played and sung. When all have taken their places, the reader reads the introduction to the celebration. All stand and make the sign of the cross as the leader says “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 251.

Greeting: The leader greets the people with scriptural text: “Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God forever.” All respond: “Blessed be God forever.”

Opening Prayer: The leader with hands extended in the *orans* position then invites the people to pray.

Liturgy of the Word: The Liturgy of the word takes place as at Mass and the readings are those assigned in the *Lectionary for Mass* for that particular Sunday.

Responsorial Psalm: After a period of silent reflection, the responsorial psalm is sung.

Gospel Acclamation: The Gospel acclamation is sung before the proclamation of the Gospel. The lay leader omits the greeting. “The Lord be with you.”

Homily: After the homily, there is a period of sacred silence for reflection on the word of God. Then the leader returns to his chair.

The Profession of Faith: The Nicene Creed is used for the profession of faith.

Prayers of the Faithful: The prayers of the faithful are either recited or sung.

Communion Rite: The leader goes to the Tabernacle, genuflects, takes the ciborium containing the Body of the Lord and places it on the Altar.

The Lord’s Prayer: The lay leader returns to his or her own chair and introduces the Lord’s Prayer.

Invitation to Communion: The leader returns to the altar genuflects, takes the host, shows it to the people and recites the invitation to Holy Communion.

Communion: Next, the leader and other ministers distribute Holy Communion to the members of the assembly. After Holy Communion, the rest of the consecrated Hosts are brought to the tabernacle. All spend time in silent prayer.

Act of Thanksgiving: The leader invites all to an act of thanksgiving in which the people praise the glory and mercy of God through a psalm, a canticle, litany of praise or prayer.

Concluding Rite: This includes the announcements, the collection of the monetary offering, the blessing and the sign of peace. Without using a gesture the lay leaders says “May the Lord bless us, protects us from evil and bring us to everlasting life.” Then the closing hymn is sung.

Commentary

Although the aforementioned service is not a Mass, everyone is encouraged to attend. It remains important for the faithful to gather on Sunday as a community of faith. Assemblies of this kind are celebrated not to take away but rather to increase the desire of the faithful to take part in the celebration of the Eucharist whenever it is available. Although these liturgical practices have been ongoing for well over thirty years in the diocese, yet there is a need for proper liturgical catechesis of Sunday Celebration in the Absence of the Priest since such celebrations can never replace the Mass as the primary, privileged and preferred form of worship for any Catholic community. A systematic treatment of liturgical catechesis requires appropriate criteria although liturgists, catechists, religious educators, and theologians have not always been in agreement over the nature and purpose of liturgical catechesis.

Liturgical Catechesis in the Context of the Diocese of Roseau

Since Vatican II, all official documents on Roman Catholic liturgy call for liturgical catechesis to serve the conciliar goal of active participation in the liturgy, a goal that above all consists in interior participation in the paschal mystery. Today, in Roseau liturgical catechesis is largely ignored or dismissed perhaps because it is not understood. Some liturgical celebrations frequently lack the vitality capable of leading people into the depth of the sacred mysteries they celebrate. Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest are no exceptions to the church's teaching on liturgical catechesis. Little attention has been given to the liturgical catechesis of the Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest (1988).

Veronica Rosier presents a systematic treatment of the modern church's teaching on liturgical catechesis. She begins with an analysis of major magisterial conciliar and postconciliar documents promoting and supporting liturgical catechesis, from the Second Vatican Council to *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1997) and its companion, the *General Directory for Catechesis*²⁹ (1997).

The analysis begins with the liturgical documents mainly *Sacrosanctum Concilium* because it is the foundational source for understanding the path of contemporary liturgical catechesis onto which the Council launched the Church in the modern era. This can be seen from the purposes of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* which culminates in the missionary focus.³⁰

²⁹http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html (accessed June 6, (2010).

³⁰ Veronica Rosier, *Liturgical Catechesis of Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 23.

A typical example (SC 48) which formulates more precisely the pastoral liturgical intention of the reform already presented in the constitution. As cited by Rosier, Jungmann points out for instance: “The common priesthood is stressed here with the greatest vigor.”³¹

The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God's word and be nourished at the table of the Lord's body; they should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they should learn also to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in (SC #48).

Like other texts, SC #48 speaks of a double requirement of participation and formation in the rites and prayers. Following a first enunciation in SC #19, the accent in SC #48 is on the mode of interior participation in the mystery.³²

In terms of liturgical catechesis with reference to the diocese of Roseau, it must be noted that the liturgical language of “Sunday celebration in the absence of the priest is an expression that is never used. The term that is always used in that context is that of “Communion Service”. Nor are the leaders who conduct these communion services ever referred to as lay leaders of worship. In the diocese, the designation for these leaders is that of Lay Associates in Pastoral Care. What is needed in terms of liturgical catechesis is an ongoing education formation in some of the following areas where relevant questions have constantly been raised by members of the laity who attend these communion services. Parishes shall catechize the faithful about the primacy of Sunday, the role of Eucharist, the

³¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

³² *Ibid.*

nature and importance of community and the nature of the Sunday obligation as indicated in *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* (DSCAP #1-9).

Why is Sunday the Day of the Lord?

The faithful of the diocese need to be constantly educated about Sunday as the Lord's Day. By a tradition handed down from the apostles, Sunday has its origin from the very day of Christ's resurrection. On this day Christ's faithful gather so that, by hearing the Word of God and taking part in the Eucharist, they may call to mind the Paschal Mystery and give thanks to God who has restored a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

What is a Communion Service?

A Communion service is a Catholic liturgy that may be celebrated when no priest is available to celebrate Mass. It includes the readings of the day and the distribution of the Eucharist. It is not a Mass. Recognizing the primary duty of priests and deacons to distribute the Most Holy Eucharist, if no priest is available to celebrate Mass; it is permissible for a Communion service to be conducted by a deacon. In the absence of a deacon, a Communion service may be celebrated by one of the lay faithful. It is necessary that the person celebrating a Communion service have proper approval by lawful ecclesiastical authority and follow the norms of law for the liturgical rite. Finally, a Communion service does not fulfill the obligation for Holy Days and Sunday Masses. Communion services are intended to link the faithful attending them to the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist of a parish community. It is not meant to be a replacement or substitute for the Sunday or weekday mass. It is important to be aware that the Communion service will have some striking similarities to a

Mass, especially if a deacon celebrates the liturgy. It is therefore necessary to exercise caution before assuming that a Mass is being celebrated by some one other than a priest. If a person other than a priest does offer the Eucharistic prayer, it is important to note that the bread and wine are not consecrated; only a priest has the power to consecrate the Eucharist.

How does this rite differ from Mass?

The fundamental difference is “the sacrifice”. The Mass is an action. The priest (who takes the place of Christ) offers Mass on behalf of the people. Through it, we are united to the eternal sacrifice of Christ on the cross. By offering the bread and wine which is transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ, we offer anew Christ crucified, the perfect sacrifice that redeems us and the whole world. A communion service is neither an “action” nor is it “sacrifice”. Though we receive the Body of Christ, we do not take part in the salvific act of Christ (the sacrifice offered by our priest).

Another primary way in which this rite differs from Mass is that, even though communion may be distributed at this rite, the Eucharistic prayer (which includes Jesus’ words of institution of the Eucharist and the consecration) is absent. The complete memorial of the Lord’s sacrificial offering, as he commanded, is absent. Missing from this celebration are:

- the priest, who acts in the person of Christ
- the presentation of the offertory gifts of bread and wine
- the Eucharistic prayer
- the Eucharistic actions of taking, giving thanks, and the breaking of the bread

- the greetings and blessings proper to a priest

An Evaluation of Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of the Priest

A critical evaluation of the situation of Sunday celebrations in the absence of the priest presents us as a Church with a challenge and an opportunity; it is a grace moment in which to rethink our vision of spiritual leadership. This ministry is open to both men and women, who have been fully initiated and trained, are practicing Catholics in good standing with the parish community and possess a love of the Eucharist. As the reliance on lay ministers increases, the study of the lay leader becomes crucial. Kathleen H. Brown in *Lay Leaders of Worship* explores the possibilities and requirements for lay ministers by incorporating personal experience, Scripture, and expert studies. Brown describes the ministerial identity of a lay leader of worship in terms of authority, spirituality, relationships and skills.

The identity of any minister begins with a sense of one's authority to minister. Authority is the right to exercise leadership or power. For many people the word authority carries a negative connotation of authoritarianism, domination and coercion. Here the word is used in a positive sense. The authority that concerns us here is the authority to proclaim the word, reflect publicly on the word and lead a community in prayer. It is a charism, a calling, a gift of spiritual leadership of a community.³³

Each day of our human journey, we confront the questions "who is God?" and "Who am I?" Our spiritual life is the intersection, the ever changing, ever evolving interplay of our answers to these questions. Our spirituality is our disposition of our heart that results, the integration of our everyday human life and our life of faith. Because ministry is more than doing, because it involves all of who a minister is, the spirituality of a minister is of the utmost importance³⁴

³³ Kathleen Hope Brown, *Lay Leaders of Worship: A Practical and Spiritual Guide* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2004), 5.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

Ministry is by its very nature relational. It makes no sense in isolation. Just as ministry cannot be separated from the spiritual life of the minister, it cannot be separated from the relationships that it involves. Ministry necessarily calls us out of our selves and into relationship with others. It is not simply about function, but about who we are as individuals and as a community. The kingdom of God is brought about not just in and through people, but in and through the connections among people.³⁵

In reference to ministerial skills, she asserts, "The skills demanded by the ministry of presiding should be learned, practiced and honed in order for the community to be well served. Effective leadership, done with professionalism, is both a gift to the community and something that the community has the right to expect."³⁶ She is of the view that the Formation of Lay Leaders of Prayer, are "Approaches to Adult Spiritual Formation," "A Model Formation Program," that attempts to incorporate some of each of the six dimensions of adult faith formation that the bishops of the United States outlined in *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us* and "A Renewed Vision of Spiritual Leadership."

By virtue of their baptism, the faithful have various roles as they actively participate in Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest. The assembly actively participates through singing, responding, listening, reflecting and praying. A deacon leads the assembly in prayer because by the nature of his office the deacon has been given orders to proclaim and preach the Gospel. If a community does not have the service of a deacon, then trained lay leaders may lead the gathered assembly. In the Diocese of Roseau lay persons are called forth, appointed, trained and commissioned as leaders of prayer in their parish community. In light of this reality the following chapter will then help us to understand much clearer the role of lay ministers who have been commissioned for ministry in today's Church.

³⁵ Ibid., 47-48.

³⁶ Ibid., 61.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROLE OF LAY MINISTERS

Introduction

In an attempt to understand the role of lay ministers, chapter three begins by defining two terms that are both interrelated and connected, namely, ministry and laity. It then goes on to look critically at the ministry of Jesus which is viewed as a model of all ministries, as well as the various kinds of ministries that have emerged in other segments of the New Testament such as the writings of Paul and the Acts of the Apostles. It then examines ministry within the church from the perspective of Vatican II, and continues to analyze new developments that have taken place since Vatican II. Among some of the areas where such developments have taken place are in the 1983 Code of Canon Law, the 1987 Synod of Bishops on the Laity, and John Paul II's post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (1988). The other documents which have also dealt with this subject are the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and the Roman instruction entitled "*Some Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in Priests' Sacred Ministry.*" It will highlight the exploration of the contemporary development, "the explosion of ministry,"¹ and will carefully carry out an analysis of the new phenomenon "lay ecclesial ministry" as described by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. It concludes by making some general observation and remarks about ministry today.

¹ Thomas F. O'Meara, *Theology of Ministry*, Revised Edition (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 7.

The Meaning of Ministry.

One of the most influential books in recent times that has adequately dealt with the subject matter of ministry has been Thomas O'Meara's *Theology of Ministry* which appeared in 1999.

In that work, O'Meara makes the following assertion:

Ministry is a horizon within the life of the Christian Community. A woman, a man is baptized not into an audience or a club but into a community, which accepting a vision of humanity and faith in unseen divine presence, is essentially and unavoidably ministerial. Just as Christian faith is communal, so Christian community is ministerial. Churches are clusters of people with a world to save.¹

He acknowledges that the word has been viewed as a "Protestant" word, but now it is *de rigueur* for everyone to be in the ministry. O'Meara is himself aware of the difficulties when later he comes to define ministry, for when everything is ministry, after short-term exuberance, nothing is ministry. "Not all human activity is ministry, but all baptized men and women are called at times to some precise ministry for the reign of God. That call comes from baptism and then it comes too, throughout life, from the Spirit."² He defines Christian ministry as "public activity of a baptized follower of Jesus Christ from the Spirit's charism and an individual personality on behalf of a Christian community to witness, to serve and realize the Kingdom of God."³ O'Meara arrives at this definition by his well-articulated six characteristics of ministry.

Ministry is (1) doing something; (2) for the advent of the kingdom; (3) in public ; (4) on behalf of a Christian community; (5) which is a gift received in faith, baptism and

¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, 150.

ordination; and which is (6) an activity with its own limits and identity within a diversity of ministerial actions.⁴

A critical analysis of his definition proves a useful measure for viewing church history because it reflects both the long, dialectically rich development of ministry in the past two thousand years, whilst also illuminating the “primal” model of ministry from the New Testament and patristic periods revived by Vatican II. The embodiment of his concept also reveals that he has defined ministry in a way that is neither too narrow nor too broad in its outlook since he does not limit “ministry” to those who are ordained. Therefore, it is not realistic to speak of ministry as though it denoted a particular kind of ministry which contains or exhausts the fullness of ministry. Finally, it is clear for O’Meara that ministry is grounded in baptism and is the responsibility of all Christians. Having thus defined the term ministry, I think that it is also of importance to explore the true meaning of the laity.

The Meaning of Laity

Before the last half of the nineteenth century, the church had no authoritatively defined or formerly posited theology of the laity. “The theology of the laity that has emerged in our times must be seen in the context of the dominant ecclesiology that developed after Trent, largely in response to the sixteenth century Reformers. The laity therefore were seen as passive subjects in the Church.”⁵

They were viewed as helpers to ordained ministers. The term Catholic Action, as employed by the Church in past times, was a rather technical one and meant the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Church’s hierarchy. Pius XI tended to restrict the term to

⁴ Ibid., 141.

⁵ Zeni Fox, “Laity, Ministry, and Secular Character,” in *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry*, edited by Susan K. Wood (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 123.

(1) action or work of the laity which was (2) organized, (3) apostolic, and (4) done under a special mandate of the bishop.⁶ In the decades before Vatican II, some used Catholic Action in its narrow sense to refer only to those official organizations of laity mandated by the bishop. Others used the term more exclusively to refer to any action or activity of a lay person inspired by his or her faith. In his description of Catholic Action, Hahnenberg makes the following observation:

In many theologies of Catholic Action it was unclear whether or not the laity engaged in activity that belonged to them by virtue of their baptism. The mandate given by the bishop seemed to be a delegation, a way of sharing some of his ministry with the laity. Moreover, it was unclear exactly what the laity contributed to the mission and the ministry of the bishop and priest. While promoting education and pursuing social and moral issues Catholic Action did not enter into the central ministries of the church in a significant way.⁷

A similar outlook regarding the laity was also reflected in the 1917 code which listed the rights of clerics (cc. 118-144), religious (cc. 592-631), and the holders of certain offices. There was no description in the above mentioned code of just what rights all Catholics possessed in the Church.

However, in order to understand the development in the theology of the laity that was later expressed in the council documents, it is necessary to place it in the context of baptism and the common priesthood of all the faithful. Now that we have clearly defined the two concepts of ministry and laity, we will take a closer look at the ministry of Jesus, as well as at different patterns of ministries that have emerged during the New Testament period.

⁶ Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries: A Relational Approach* (New York: The Crossword Publishing Company, 2003), 104.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 105-106.

The Ministry of Jesus

Several studies of ministry in the New Testament seem to indicate that it is next to impossible to give a clear factual description of the state of ministries in that era. Much of the information comes from certain episodes told in the Gospels, whilst others are scattered in Paul's letters and throughout the Acts of the Apostles.

The four Gospels provide most of the information that we have concerning the ministry of the historical Jesus of Nazareth from whom all ministries emerge, and who can be described as the eschatological prophet. One may begin with the Old Testament, which understands a prophet to be a person who, "because he is conscious of having been specially chosen and called, feels forced to perform actions and proclaim ideas which, in a mental state of intense inspiration or real ecstasy, have been indicated to him in the form of divine revelation."⁸ The Old Testament also looks forward to the coming of an eschatological prophet. This teaching has its origin from the Deuteronomistic tradition of Moses found in Deut. 18:15, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me (Moses) from among you, from your brethren – him you shall heed." Moses was a prophet, a proclaimer of the word, a mediator between God and the people (Deut. 5:5) and sometimes a suffering mediator (Deut. 1:37; 4:21; cf., Num. 12:6-8 and Exod. 33:11).

A second image that has often been used to describe the ministry of Jesus has been that of the Servant of the Lord. If we look at the life and ministry of Jesus, he appears to us as the servant of God, who brings salvation to the people, heals them, frees them from their iniquity, and wishes to win them to himself not by force but by goodness. The Gospels, especially that of Matthew, frequently refer to the Book of Isaiah, whose prophetic

⁸ J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962), 46.

announcement is fulfilled in Christ. For example, Matthew narrated that "when it was evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, 'He took our infirmities and bore our diseases'" (Mt 8:16-17; cf. Is 53:4). And in another place: "Many followed him, and he healed them all.... This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: 'Behold my servant...'" (Mt 12:15-21). At this point, the evangelist quoted a long passage from the first song of the servant of the Lord. Therefore, "the ministry of the Servant of Yahweh was first of all to proclaim God's word for justice. His second function was to suffer and to offer his suffering as an intercession for the sins of the people. This suffering would bring about the healing of the people, free them from their sins and restore them to wholeness."⁹ According to the New Testament, Jesus fulfilled these prophecies, and so the frame of reference for understanding the ministries of Jesus is that of a prophet and the servant of the Lord. With an eye on the unique role of the prophet and the servant of the Lord, William J. Rademacher has outlined six aspects of Jesus' ministry.

One of the first ministries that Jesus undertook was healing. In his healing ministry Jesus does not limit his care to the body. He is concerned for the whole person. In unconquered confidence, Jesus welcomed those who were blind and crippled, those suffering from leprosy, and even the dead into his presence. He had compassion for them all. His healing symbolized His success in the spiritual warfare between Himself and Satan. He guaranteed the ultimate glory of the human body through His personal resurrection, but

⁹ William J. Rademacher, *Lay Ministry: A Theological, Spiritual and Pastoral Handbook* rev. ed. (Eugene; OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002), 14.

forecast that restoration by healing twisted, shrunken, blinded limbs and organs. The paralytic's restoration is but one of many such examples (Mark 2:1-12).

A second ministry performed by Jesus was exorcism. In the gospels, Jesus is engaged in an eschatological activity that heralds the coming of the Kingdom of God. His ability to cast out spirits is described as being dependent upon the power of God, and this, in turn, is dependent upon the faith of those around him. The message would have been clear to the audiences of the gospel authors: with sufficient faith, people will be able to partake of the power of God to drive evil out of the world, vindicate true believers, and help establish the Kingdom of God over all the Earth (Mk.1:21-28).

A third ministry performed by Jesus was teaching. During his earthly ministry, Jesus astonished the people with his teaching. He astonished them in the synagogues (Matt 12: 21-22, 6:2), He astonished them in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 7: 28-29). What impressed the people most was the fact that, unlike the Scribes, he spoke and taught them with authority (Matt.5:22). Another principal feature of Christ's method was His love for people, which is exemplified in John 8:1-11. Figurative language was another important characteristic of Christ's teaching. Jesus often made use of metaphors (Matthew 16:11), hyperboles (Matthew 7:3), and parables that are earthly stories with a heavenly meaning. In his parables Christ taught varied themes such as: the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Lost Son (Luke 11: 1-32); forgiveness (Matthew 18:23-24), generosity (Luke 12:16-22); humility (Luke 14:7-14); judgment (Matthew 25:1-14); the kingdom (Matthew 13:3-8, 1-23; Mark 4:3-8, 14-20; Luke 8:5-8, 11-15); mercy (Luke 10:30-37) and prayer (Luke 11:5-8).

A fourth ministry through which Jesus announced the reign was by his reconciling ministry. Reconciliation brings people of opposing ideals and desires together. Paul

summarizes Jesus' ministry as follows: "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." (2 Cor 5:18-19). "The ministry of reconciliation assumes that before Christ people were in a state of alienation and estrangement from God and from each other."¹⁰ Paul writes, "for if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more now, that we are reconciled to himself by all things, whether on earth or in heaven making peace by the blood of the cross" (Col 1:19-20). For Jesus, forgiveness was the means to reconciliation. Reconciliation is used of the activity of the Lord Jesus Christ as High Priest in making reconciliation for His people, Heb. 2:17. Rom. 5:6-11 points out that the whole world needs to be reconciled with God.

A fifth ministry that Jesus offered to the world was that of peacemaker. Jesus was a peacemaker. Peacemaking seeks to produce right relationships between persons. He referred to the peacemakers as being blessed and called them sons of God. In the New Testament, peace includes harmony and good order in society, and in addition the health and welfare of the individual. This is a gift that Jesus brings. We sing it on Sunday: "Peace I leave with you my friends, peace the world cannot give."¹¹ Peace is not an earthly achievement, nor is it merely the fruit of human ingenuity. It is a blessing of the reign. "for the kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace" (Rom 14: 17).

A sixth ministry through which Jesus announced the reign was the liberating ministry. Jesus himself announced his ministry in the Synagogue of Nazareth when he was handed the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah. He proclaimed: "The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me.

¹⁰ Ibid., 16.

¹¹ Ibid., 17.

He has anointed me to bring the Good News to the poor; to tell prisoners that they are prisoners no more; tell blind people that they can see; set the down trodden free and to proclaim a year of favor for the Lord” (Luke 4: 18- 19). What was liberating about the historical Jesus was that he cut through all the barriers of the society of his day, associating with prostitutes, having lunch with tax collectors, providing healing services to anyone without a fee. He proclaimed a new way for society that he called "The Kingdom of God" which would be characterized by compassion rather than purity, guilt and obligation.

Concerning these six aspects of Jesus’ ministry Rademacher has made the following remarks:

The purpose in outlining the foregoing ministries of the historical Jesus is not to reduce the ministries of Jesus to exactly six. For one thing there is a considerable overlapping among the ministries. Then, too, we could understand Jesus’ ministries as one ministry with six aspects. Besides that, Jesus’ ministry, which dealt with the injustices of his society, had considerable social and political implications. We could see that part of his work as a social justice ministry. Listing and naming Jesus’ ministry does not run the risk of reductionism. Nevertheless, this review of some of the ministries of Jesus is meant to stimulate reflection and evaluation with respect to continuing redefinition of today’s ministries. These six ministries represent a good part of the work and mission of Jesus. As such, they challenge all those who commit themselves to live as disciples ministering in the name of the same Jesus¹²

The dominant theme in the gospel and the central message of Jesus’ proclamation was the “reign of God.” This one phrase sums up his whole ministry and his whole life’s work. Every thought and saying of Jesus was directed and subordinated to one single thing: the realization of the reign of God on earth. Through the various ministries of Jesus, He proclaimed the message of “the reign of God” rather than the church.

The kingdom of God is the source of the milieu, the goal of ministry. The presence of God in our complex world enables ministry, gives ministry its life and its freedom. The Church, rather than being the dispenser of ministry, stands with ministry in the

¹² Ibid., 19.

kingdom as something derivative, fragile, secondary and temporary. At the end of time ministry and church will have been absorbed into our life in God.¹³

In the New Testament we read of the Pharisees having disciples (Matthew 22: 15-16). John the Baptist too had disciples. (Mark 2: 18). In these relationships, disciples were understood to be individuals committed to a particular person who was their teacher or master. This commitment was to learn the person's teaching or way of life, and then to follow a particular pattern of life, whether by living in a certain way, passing on the teaching to others or engaging in political or religious activities.

This concept of discipleship was established as the basis on which he would teach and pass on his message. Jesus initially called twelve to be his disciples. They were called and they followed. They needed to count the cost. They were committed to Jesus.

The ministry of his disciples was to continue and extend the ministry of Jesus. They were to preach the gospel (Mk16:15); to heal the sick (Mk 6:13); to expel demons (Lk.10:17); to forgive sins (Jn.20:22). Implicitly at least they were commissioned to feed the hungry to serve like their master "who came not to be served but to serve" (Mk10:45). The disciples were to be ready to embrace suffering and even death as part of their ministry.¹⁴

Ministry comes from the Holy Spirit, and is a participation in the diakonia of Jesus Christ, and by that same token a sharing in his power to heal and to save. It has to be integrated into a Church, which finds in the twelve disciples a model of those who share in the messianic kingdom of God's blessing. Women too are included in his ministry.

¹³ Ibid., 20.

¹⁴ Ibid., 22.

Ministries in Paul and Acts of the Apostles

In Paul's letters, the Spirit is not only the source of ministry but also the architect of its external forms. Paul uses three words namely: charisms, services, and energies to describe the spiritual gifts that are revealed in the various outward forms of ministry. Basic to the understanding of the biblical theology of ministry is the recognition that all Christian service is grounded in the Spirit who gives new life. It is this new life in the Spirit that gives birth to ministry. Beginning with baptism, the Spirit empowers and indeed propels the new Christian to ministry.

Ministry results from the Spirit and its freedom gained in baptismal initiation. Not only freedom but action! Paul saw that the freedom of the Spirit is...a contact which flows into activity. The mission of the spirit bears in it a drive towards activity, and this service- a being sent to serve- flows out of the freedom of the community of Christians.¹⁵

A summary of Paul's charismatic ministry shows the following principles:

(1) charisms are not limited to a particular group; (2) they are given to all the baptized according to the measure of faith; (3) they are not given primarily for possession by an individual, but for the upbuilding of the community; (4) they are not necessarily permanent; (5) they cannot be separated from the body of the community; (6) within the body they are interdependent; (7) within the body the ministries give life to each other; (8) it is not the nature of the work but the degree of the love which inspires that work, that makes it ministry; (9) ministry is a function not a state of life; (10) charismatic ministries are ordinary, not extraordinary; (11) charismatic ministry becomes useful and fruitful through the power of the Spirit, not through appointment, installation or ordination.¹⁶

In Acts of the Apostles, the ministry of deacons was created for handling the benevolence ministry. The biblical account is quite clear and nowhere does the scripture reject its purpose:

¹⁵ Ibid., 31.

¹⁶ Ibid., 35.

Now about this time, when the number of the disciples was greatly increasing, complaint was made by the Hellenists (the Greek-speaking Jews) against the [native] Hebrews because their widows were being overlooked and neglected in the daily ministrations (distribution of relief). So the Twelve [apostles] convened the multitude of the disciples and said, 'It is not seemly or desirable or right that we should have to give up or neglect [preaching] the Word of God in order to attend to serving at tables and superintending the distribution of food. Therefore select out from among yourselves, brethren, seven men of good and attested character and repute, full of the [Holy] Spirit and wisdom, whom we may assign to look after this business and duty (Acts 6:1-3).

From a brief survey of Acts of the Apostles, it would seem that the early church continued the main ministries of Jesus. There is an abundant sense of the miraculous as it becomes obvious after Pentecost that the powers of Jesus Christ are being exercised through His body the Church, which now teaches and heals in His Name and does mighty miracles and exorcisms through public prayer. This healing power starts with the apostles, and then moves to the deacons via the laying on of hands.

Ministries emerge against the background of Christian community, which have to be seen in their relation to God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Charisms contribute to the building of the body, the Church, which is a living witness to the kingdom of God in this world. Underpinning the above is a theology of Trinity, which involves a radical equality of persons, with distinct identity in relation, and connected to each other, resulting in a mutual sharing of life, truth and love. The same elements present in the Trinity are also in the Church. Though we all are distinct in relationship, we belong to each other, and are called to communion, which is a mutual sharing in which there is a radical equality of ministers and ministries.

The first example of structure in Christian ministry belongs to the churches of the first half-century after Pentecost. The house church is evidence that the typical early Christians' community was personal- people knew each other and helped each other.

Perspective from Vatican II: Ministry in the Church.

A discussion of the laity and ministry occurs frequently in the documents of Vatican II. There is a ready acceptance in *Sacrosanctum concilium* (SC), the Constitution on the Liturgy, the first document to be debated, that lay people are liturgical ministers.

Servers, lectors, commentators, and members of the choir also exercise a genuine liturgical function. They ought, therefore, to discharge their office with the sincere piety and decorum demanded by so exalted a ministry and rightly expected of them by God's people (SC #29).

This paragraph from the Liturgy Constitution is an example of the accepted degree of interchange between the lay and clerical spheres of activity. Expounding further on this document, Susan K. Wood quotes Zeni Fox in *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood-Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministers* and makes the following observations:

The identification of diverse roles in the worshipping community can be seen as an expression as well of the ongoing life of the People of God as a ministering community. Although the decree is neither a commentary on the varied ministries of the community, nor even an invitation to their emergence, the full, conscious and active participation of laity at the Eucharist, with some having particular roles and functions, can be seen as an early sign of what has unfolded in the church today.¹⁷

The Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad gentes divinitus* (AGD) reflects on those who undertake missionary work. Whether they are priests, religious or lay persons they have a special vocation:

They are assigned with a special vocation who, being endowed with a suitable natural temperament, and being fit as regards talent and other qualities, have been trained to undertake mission work; or be they autochthonous or be they foreigners: priests, religious, or laymen. Sent by legitimate authority, they go out in faith and obedience to those who are far from Christ. They are set apart for the work for which they have been taken up (cf. Acts 13:2), as ministers of the Gospel, "that the offering up of the Gentiles may become acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:16) (AGD #23).

¹⁷ Zeni Fox, "Laity, Ministry, and Secular Character," in *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry*, edited by Susan K. Wood (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 135.

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium* (LG) has three overarching themes: the image of the Church as the People of God; the universal call to holiness; and the understanding of the Church as a pilgrim community. The theological discussion on the laity revolves around four principal ideas: the priority of baptism, the priesthood of the laity, the specific character of lay ministry, and the solidarity of laity and pastors. The document affirms that what is said in the second chapter about the People of God is valid for the Clergy, Religious and the Laity.

Everything that has been said above concerning the People of God is intended for the laity, religious and clergy alike. But there are certain things which pertain in a special way to the laity, both men and women, by reason of their condition and mission (LG #30).

The document defines the laity as those who are neither in Holy Orders nor those called to a Religious state of life approved by the Church.

The term laity is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in holy orders and those in the state of religious life specially approved by the Church. These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the People of God; they are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ; and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world (LG #31).

Their vocation is to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs.

But the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. In this way they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity. Therefore, since they are tightly bound up in all types of temporal affairs it is their special task to order and to throw light upon these affairs in such a way that they may come into being and then continually increase according to Christ to the praise of the Creator and the Redeemer (LG #31).

The people of God (clergy, religious, laity) being one, through one Lord, one faith and one baptism, have different functions to build up the Body of Christ, the Church.

By divine institution Holy Church is ordered and governed with a wonderful diversity. For just as in one body we have many members, yet all the members have not the same function, so we, the many, are one body in Christ, but severally members one of another. Therefore, the chosen People of God is one: "one Lord, one faith, one baptism"; sharing a common dignity as members from their regeneration in Christ, having the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection; possessing in common one salvation, one hope and one undivided charity (LG #32).

The lay apostolate, to which one is commissioned by baptism and confirmation, is described as "participation in the salvific mission of the Church itself." Eucharist which is the expression of Christ's selfless love for all humankind becomes both the driving force and the nourishment of the Lay Apostolate.

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 (LG #33).

Quoting 1 Peter 2, 5, the document affirms the priesthood of all the faithful as regards their mission in the world, i.e., "to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

For besides intimately linking them to His life and His mission, He also gives them a sharing in His priestly function of offering spiritual worship for the glory of God and the salvation of men. For this reason the laity, dedicated to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvelously called and wonderfully prepared so that ever more abundant fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them (LG #34).

They share in the prophetic office proclaiming Christ by word and by example of their lives, sometimes doing "all they can to provide sacred services" when ministers are lacking and devoting themselves entirely to apostolic work.

Consequently, even when preoccupied with temporal cares, the laity can and must perform a work of great value for the evangelization of the world. For even if some of them have to fulfill their religious duties on their own, when there are no sacred ministers or in times of persecution; and even if many of them devote all their energies to apostolic work; still it remains for each one of them to cooperate in the external spread and the dynamic growth of the Kingdom of Christ in the world. Therefore, let the laity devotedly strive to acquire a more profound grasp of revealed truth, and let them insistently beg of God the gift of wisdom (LG #35).

They share Christ's kingly function, witnessing to the growth of the kingdom through their secular competence and personal activity.

The laity are, in the first place, exhorted to grasp the deeper meaning and purpose of creation and live holy lives so that the world and society may be permeated by the values of the Kingdom. Thus their work and technical skills along with the cultural heritage will benefit all mankind in an equitable way, in accordance with the will of the Creator of all things (LG #36).

Laity have the right to expect from their pastors the Service of Word and Sacrament for the nourishment of their spiritual life. Because of their competence in dealing with realities of the world they could have a voice in the temporal affairs of the Church. This is to be done through institutions set up for the purpose, but in truth, prudence and charity.

The laity have the right, as do all Christians, to receive in abundance from their spiritual shepherds the spiritual goods of the Church, especially the assistance of the word of God and of the sacraments. They should openly reveal to them their needs and desires with that freedom and confidence which is fitting for children of God and brothers in Christ. By reason of the knowledge, competence or outstanding ability which they may enjoy, they are permitted and sometimes even obliged to express their opinion on those things which concern the good of the Church (LG #37).

Finally, each member of the laity, witnessing to the message and the Resurrection of the Lord, ought to infuse into the world Christian values, especially those that animate the poor, the meek and the peace-makers.

Each individual layman must be a witness before the world to the resurrection and life of the Lord Jesus, and a sign of the living God. All together, and each one to the best of his ability, must nourish the world with spiritual fruits (cf. Gal. 5:22). They must diffuse in the world the spirit which animates those poor, meek and peace-makers

whom the Lord in the Gospel proclaimed blessed (cf. Mt. 5:3-9). In a word: 'what the soul is in the body, let Christians be in the world (LG #38).

The Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops *Christus Dominus* (CD) advocates that the laity are said to share the ministry of governance with the bishops.

Priests and lay people who belong to the diocesan curia should realize that they are making a helpful contribution to the pastoral ministry of the bishop.

The diocesan curia should be so organized that it is an appropriate instrument for the bishop, not only for administering the diocese but also for carrying out the works of the apostolate.

It is greatly desired that in each diocese a pastoral commission will be established over which the diocesan bishop himself will preside and in which specially chosen clergy, religious and lay people will participate. The duty of this commission will be to investigate and weigh pastoral undertakings and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them (CD #27).

The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam actuositatem* (AA) opens by suggesting three reasons why the church needs widened and deepened apostolic activity on the part of the laity. First, the world itself has become far more populous and complex, while at the same time it has become a global village through the communication explosion, and in large measure the laity are better equipped to respond to the technological complexities of today's world. Secondly, moral and religious values do not play the same central role in the world as they did in the past, and this lends an urgency to the task of the lay apostolate. Thirdly, priests are often scarce or are deprived of their freedom in many places, and without lay ministry the Church could not make her presence felt.

“Lay people, too, share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ” (AA #2).

The foundation of this lay apostolate is the Lord himself.

Lay people derive the right and duty to the apostolate from their own union with Christ the head; incorporate into Christ 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. (AA #3).

Later in *Apostolicam actuositatem* the laity are said to share in the ministry of the word and sacraments.

The mission of the Church pertains to the salvation of men, which is to be achieved by belief in Christ and by His grace. The apostolate of the Church and of all its members is primarily designed to manifest Christ's message by words and deeds and to communicate His grace to the world. This is done mainly through the ministry of the Word and the sacraments, entrusted in a special way to the clergy, wherein the laity also have their very important roles to fulfill if they are to be "fellow workers for the truth" (3 John 8). It is especially on this level that the apostolate of the laity and the pastoral ministry are mutually complementary (AA #6).

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes* (GS) takes for granted everything that has been said in all the previous documents and addresses the role of ecclesial activity in and dialogue with the world outside the Church. While it does not distinguish lay and clerical ministry very much, it is primarily describing the Church's relationship with the secular and is thus taken up with the ambit of lay ministry properly understood.

Ministry is used to denote the ordinary activities of human life carried out by those people called by the Holy Spirit, and not only the baptized.

Now, the gifts of the Spirit are diverse: while He calls some to give clear witness to the desire for a heavenly home and to keep that desire green among the human family, He summons others to dedicate themselves to the earthly service of men and to make ready the material of the celestial realm by this ministry of theirs. Yet He frees all of them so that by putting aside love of self and bringing all earthly resources into the service of human life they can devote themselves to that future when humanity itself will become an offering accepted by God (GS #38).

In this final sense ministry is seen as the continuing action of God in the world to which all are called. Zeni Fox, in her summary of the conciliar documents that have dealt with the issue of laity, has made the following comments:

According to the conciliar documents, it is not simply the fact of the laity being situated in the world, but rather their relationship to secular affairs or temporal realities that give their vocations its uniqueness. In terms of the mission of the laity, the secular character is not simply a form of the apostolate, but is instead something that qualifies the whole life of the laity in the church and in the world.¹⁸

Developments since Vatican II.

One of the major characteristics of Catholicism today is its emphasis on the active role of the laity in the mission and ministries of the church. The *1983 code* and the 1987 Synod of bishops on the laity¹⁹ together with Pope John Paul II's subsequent apostolic exhortation *Christifideles laici* have presented the most extensive treatment of the role of the laity. The other documents which have also dealt with this subject are the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and the Vatican instruction on the non-ordained entitled "*Some Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Nonordained Faithful In Priests' Sacred Ministry*" (August 15, 1997).²⁰ A close look at these documents reveals the following:

a) 1983 code

In the revised code of 1983, canons 208-223 deal with the rights and duties of all believers whilst canons 224-231 constitute one of the most extensive sections of the law to deal exclusively with the laity. Since the Code's promulgation in 1983 many of these issues originally raised by these canons have continued to evolve. The 1983 Code contains several lists of rights as well as obligations which are located in Book II on the People of God. Among them are the right to:

¹⁸ Zeni Fox, "Laity, Ministry, and Secular Character," in *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry*, edited by Susan K. Wood (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 160.

¹⁹ "Message to the People of God," *Origins* 17 (November 12, 1987) 385-387.

²⁰ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/laity/documents/rc_con_interdic_doc_15081997_en.html.

1) Mission

Canon 225

§1. Since, like all the Christian faithful, lay persons are designated by God for the apostolate through baptism and confirmation, they are bound by the general obligation and possess the right as individuals, or joined in associations, to work so that the divine message of salvation is made known and accepted by all persons everywhere in the world. This obligation is even more compelling in those circumstances in which only through them can people hear the gospel and know Christ.

§2. According to each one's own condition, they are also bound by a particular duty to imbue and perfect the order of temporal affairs with the spirit of the gospel and thus to give witness to Christ, especially in carrying out these same affairs and in exercising secular functions.²¹

A commentary on the above canon states that:

The mission of the laity is derived from their incorporation into the Church through the sacrament of initiation. The role of the laity in society, whether with their families or as individuals, are viewed as instrumental in bringing others to the church. This canon is divided in two sections, paragraph one notes the obligation of individuals or groups to evangelize the world through the gospel, and paragraph two highlights the special duty of the lay faithful to transform the world through the gospel.²²

2) Official Positions

Canon 228

§1. Lay persons who are found suitable are qualified to be admitted by the sacred pastors to those ecclesiastical offices and functions which they are able to exercise according to the precepts of the law.

§2. Lay persons who excel in necessary knowledge, prudence, and integrity are qualified to assist the pastors of the Church as experts and advisors, even in councils

²¹ *Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II, promulgatus* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983). English translation from *Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition: New English Translation* (Washington, DC: CLSA, 1998), 66. All subsequent English translations of canons from this code will be taken from this source unless otherwise indicated.

²² Diane L. Barr, "Title II: The Obligations and Rights of the Lay Christian Faithful [cc. 224-231], in *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, edited by John P. Beal, James A. Coriden, and Thomas J. Green (New York: Paulist Press, 2000), 293.

according to the norm of law.²³

The CLSA commentary makes the following remarks about canon 228.

This canon recognizes the ability of the laity to hold ecclesiastical office or cooperate in the exercise of such office. The canon must be examined within the broader context of canons 129, 145, and 274, paragraph 1 on lay sharing in ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the elements of an ecclesiastical office and eligibility for offices requiring orders or jurisdiction”. All of these complex issues continue to be debated by canonist and others. The first paragraph of the canon refers to the lay person’s suitability and capacity actually to hold an office or exercise specific function, while the second paragraph is concerned with lay person’s ability to give council or other assistance to the pastors of the church, especially in various conciliar processes.²⁴

3) Liturgical Functions

Canon 230

§1. Lay men who possess the age and qualifications established by decree of the conference of bishops can be admitted on a stable basis through the prescribed liturgical rite to the ministries of lector and acolyte. Nevertheless, the conferral of these ministries does not grant them the right to obtain support or remuneration from the Church.

§2. Lay persons can fulfill the function of lector in liturgical actions by temporary designation. All lay persons can also perform the functions of commentator or cantor, or other functions, according to the norm of law.

§3. When the need of the Church warrants it and ministers are lacking, lay persons, even if they are not lectors or acolytes, can also supply certain of their duties, namely, to exercise the ministry of the word, to preside offer liturgical prayers, to confer baptism, and to distribute Holy Communion, according to the prescripts of the law.²⁵

Zeni Fox commenting on canon 230 has made the following remarks:

²³ *Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II, promulgatus* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983). English translation from *Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition: New English Translation* (Washington, DC: CLSA, 1998), 67.

²⁴ Diane Barr, in James A. Coriden, Thomas J. Green, and John P. Beal, editors, *New Commentary on The Code of Canon Law*, (New York, NY/Mahwah, NJ, : Paulist Press, 2000), 296.

²⁵ *Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II, promulgatus* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983). English translation from *Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition: New English Translation* (Washington, DC: CLSA, 1998), 68.

Canon 230 treats the lay ministries of lector and acolyte, the offices of lector, commentator, cantor, and others and the possibility of serving as ministers of the Word, presiding at liturgical prayer, conferring baptism, and distributing communion. Other canons allow for additional non ordained ministries: chancellor, notary, procurator-advocate, promoter of justice, defender of the bond, judge, diocesan business managers, extra-ordinary ministers of the Eucharist, canonically missioned teachers, theology, missionaries, and catechists.²⁶

4) Formation and Remuneration for Church Services.

Canon 231

§1. Lay persons who permanently or temporarily devote themselves to special service of the Church are obliged to acquire the appropriate formation required to fulfill their function properly and to carry out this function conscientiously, eagerly, and diligently.

§2. Without prejudice to the prescript of can. 230, §1 and with the prescripts of civil law having been observed, lay persons have the right to decent remuneration appropriate to their condition so that they are able to provide decently for their own needs and those of their family. They also have a right for their social provision, social security, and health benefits to be duly provided.²⁷

Concerning canon 231 Barr states that :

This first paragraph obliges the lay person who wishes to serve the Church, either permanently or temporarily, to acquire the proper training and skills to accomplish that work. It is not specified whether the education should be obtained prior to commencing the task.²⁸

This second paragraph of this canon is grounded in the Church's social justice teaching on a just wage and also specifies certain implications of that teaching regarding employment benefits. Such benefits would include appropriate wages that respect civil requirements as well as the right to social provisions such as health, disability, and retirement insurance that people need to provide decently for themselves and their families.²⁹

²⁶ Zeni Fox, *New Ecclesial Ministry: Lay Professionals Serving the Church*, Revised and Expanded Edition (Lanham, Md: Sheed and Ward 2002), 255- 256.

²⁷ *Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II, promulgatus* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983). English translation from *Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition: New English Translation* (Washington, DC: CLSA, 1998), 68-69.

²⁸ Diane L. Barr, "Title II: The Obligations and Rights of the Lay Christian Faithful [cc. 224-231], in *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, edited by John P. Beal, James A. Coriden, and Thomas J. Green (New York: Paulist Press, 2000), 301.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 302.

In summary it can be said that the above mentioned canons recognize and promote the right and stress the obligation of all the faithful to participate in the apostolate of the Church. For the laity, this participation is rooted not in the assignment of responsibility by ecclesiastical authority, but as a consequence of sharing in the Sacraments of Initiation.

Christifideles Laici (CFL)

The 1987 synod of the bishops on the laity together with John Paul II's subsequent postsynodal apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici*³⁰ have presented the most extensive postconciliar treatment of the role of the laity. Both reaffirm the importance of the laity and highlight the theoretical and practical implications of baptism in the Church. Translated into English as "The Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World," it was published early in 1989. It is divided into five chapters; the first of which responds to the synod's call for a definition of the lay faithful vocation and mission in a positive term that is, not simply as not clergy. There follow chapters on lay participation in the life of the church, participation in the missionary activity of the church, forms of vocation, and finally formation. Zeni Fox has described the document in the following words:

A lengthy document, it can clearly be traced to the dialogue at the Synod; both themes from the speeches of the bishops and the majority of the final proposition are found in its pages. Overall, the exhortation explores the participation of the laity in the Church's life, in her communion, in the church's mission, and in the importance of their formation.³¹

She continues her analysis of the document by stating that:

³⁰http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jpii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici_en.html (accessed June 19, 2010).

³¹ Zeni Fox, *New Ecclesial Ministry: Lay Professionals Serving the Church*, Revised and Expanded Edition (Lanham, Md: Sheed and Ward 2002), 262.

The pope affirms that a diversity of ministries, gifts and ecclesial tasks exist in the Church today even as they did in the period of the New Testament. These ministries are the gift of the Spirit, and even in their variety of forms a participation in Jesus' ministry as the good shepherd who lay down his life for the sheep.³²

In his exploration of the ministry of the laity, the pope commends the role of the laity in the liturgy and its preparation. However, he states that because of pastoral necessity lay people may be entrusted with certain offices and roles such as the distribution of communion that are connected to the ministry of the pastor. Whenever lay persons act in this way, they do so only because of the official deputation given by the pastors under the guidance of ecclesiastical authority.

The pope places the specificity of the lay state in a secular character. For the laity the secular world is where they are called by God. "The world thus becomes the place and the means for the lay faithful to fulfill their Christian vocation, because the world itself is destined to glorify God the Father in Christ." (CL#15) Thus it is in the world that the laity will fulfill their Christian vocation. It is in the world that their call to holiness must be lived out.

John Paul II listed five trends in "lay" ministry which are to be avoided:

In the same Synod Assembly, however, a critical judgment was voiced along with these positive elements, about a too-indiscriminate use of the word "ministry", the confusion and the equating of the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood, the lack of observance of ecclesiastical laws and norms, the arbitrary interpretation of the concept of "supply", the tendency towards a "clericalization" of the lay faithful and the risk of creating, in reality, an ecclesial structure of parallel service to that founded on the Sacrament of Orders (CFL #23)

Although the document outlines the principle of the essential difference between the ordained and common priesthoods, it does allow the term "ministry" as a description of lay

³² Ibid.

activity. However, it distinguishes the source of these ministries, basing lay ministry in baptism and confirmation and ordained ministry in holy orders. On a positive note, the ecclesiological principle of the document is key to its understanding and presentation of ministry. This principle is based on an understanding of the church as having one mission, which is realized not only by clergy, but also by the laity who, by virtue of their baptismal vocation, act as a bridge to the world. Although the document does refer to the “ministries of laypersons,” it is also evident that there is a need to assert the distinctiveness of the ordained priesthood, that, in turn, leads to the trend that would result, within a decade, in the restriction even of the term “ministry” to the ordained priesthood.

b) Catechism of the Catholic Church

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*³³ (CCC) (1994; revised edition 1997) has defined the term laity to mean:

All the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state approved by the Church. That is, the faithful who by Baptism are incorporated into Christ and integrated into the People of God and are made sharers in their particular way, in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, and have their own part to play in the mission of the whole Christian people in the church and in the world.³⁴

In the Catechism’s describing the vocation of the lay people we are reminded that:

By reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to god’s will. It pertains to them in a special way so to illuminate and order all temporal things with which they are closely associated that these may be effected and grow according to Christ and may be the glory of the Creator and Redeemer.³⁵

Concerning the participation of the lay people in Christ’s priestly, prophetic and kingly office, the Catechism states the following:

³³ http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/ccc_toc.htm (accessed June 19, 2010).

³⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n.897.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Hence the laity, dedicated as they are to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvelously called and prepare so that even richer fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them. For all their works, prayers and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit- indeed even the hardships of life if patiently born- all these become spiritual exercises acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.³⁶

Lay people also fulfill their prophetic mission by evangelization that is the proclamation of Christ by word and testimony of life. For lay people, this evangelization acquires a specific property and particular efficacy because it is accomplished in the ordinary circumstances of the world.³⁷

The laity can also feel called, or be in fact called to cooperate with their pastors in the 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.³⁸

In summary *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* has given the reader a clearer understanding of the meaning of the term laity by describing their vocation in the temporal sphere, in which by virtue of their baptism they participate in Christ's priestly, prophetic and kingly office.

(d) Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests (OCQ 1997).³⁹

The Vatican instruction on the non-ordained entitled *Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests* (OCQ 1997) addresses issues of concern regarding the role of the laity in relation to that of the ministerial priesthood. There are two theological presuppositions which determined the document's orientation. The first is the distinction between the ministry of the baptized and

³⁶ Ibid., n. 901.

³⁷ Ibid., n. 905.

³⁸ Ibid., n. 910.

³⁹ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/laity/documents/rc_con_interdic_doc_15081997_en.html (accessed June 19, 2010).

the ministry of the ordained, conceived in terms of a unique possession of sacred power by the ordained. The Instruction draws on the understanding of ordination as conferring a *sacra potestas* on the ordained.

The second is a theology of the laity, which, while affirming the laity's full participation in the life and mission of the church, stresses the ultimately secular character of the lay vocation. The document calls for a full recovery of the awareness of the secular nature of the mission of the laity, citing both (LG #31) and (CFL #15). However, as has already been underlined, the Council did ascribe ministry to the laity and, most importantly, moved beyond a pre-conciliar conception of a passive laity towards an understanding of both the laity and the ordained being fully responsible for the life and mission of the church. What seems evident here is a reversion to a pre-conciliar 'two realm' theory of the mission of the church. In other words, by stressing the sacred dimension of the ordained priesthood as being for the church, and stressing the purely secular dimension of the laity, as being in the world, this document has reverted to the pre-conciliar teaching.

A Survey of Contemporary Developments.

A survey of contemporary developments portrays a new facet of ministry that many theologians and authors have designated as an "explosion in ministry." Among the authors who have made this remarkable observation is O'Meara who goes on to note the "explosion" of ministry in the changing parish model which occurred following Vatican II and the social upheavals of the 1960's and which was not dictated by the Council or even the churches.

Very rapidly within the years after the council, the patterns of parish and diocesan ministry changed. They changed because of the increase of the number of Catholics, and they changed by expanding into ministries of education, liturgy and social justice. The ministries of peace, justice and social service emerged in a new variety and

frequency while campus ministry and health care ministry changed in their format and breath; finally there was a development of diocesan offices directing ministries. If we focus on the basic place of ministry, the parish, from 1965 to 1975, parishes changed in terms of which ministries were done and in terms of who did them: the “parish plant” was no longer an accurate architectural symbol of the community- the Church, school, rectory and convent. The ministerial staff, like the ministry itself worked beyond the buildings. The priests were joined not only by principal and teachers of schools, but by colleagues working in adult education, liturgy, family care and social action. The liturgy of deacons, lectors, cantors and communion bearers illustrated the expansion of ministry outside of Sunday morning.⁴⁰

William J. Rademacher in his book *Lay Ministry: A Theological, Spiritual and Pastoral Handbook*, provides a valuable exploration of lay ministry in the Catholic Church. This is a very accessible text, offering an overview of biblical themes, historical trends, theological insights and pastoral perspective, in a fashion that encourages reflection and application to the experience of today's lay ministers. He is of the opinion that:

This unprecedented growth in ministry is due to a wide variety of factors; the growing shortage of priests; the greater awareness of Vatican II teaching that the Holy Spirit “distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank”; the new phenomena in our U.S culture of second, and third careers; a greater appreciation of baptism as a ministerial sacrament, conferring a share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of Christ; the movement of religious women into social ministries.⁴¹

Edward Hahnenberg's *Ministries: A Relational Approach*, with its new vision of Church Ministry for the twenty-first century, interweaves historical and theological data that is interesting and pertinent to the student of theology and the student of ministry. He speaks of the expansion of ministry in the following way:

Ministries are expanding. More people are engaged in more kinds of ministry in the Catholic Church today that at any other time in its history. The baptized have taken up their call to actively serve the reign of God, and their numbers are multiplying. The ordained priest has been gradually moving into a new, more challenging position; from the standing at the apex of the pyramid that was the parish to serving at the

⁴⁰ Ibid.,6.

⁴¹ William J. Rademacher, *Lay Ministry: A Theological, Spiritual and Pastoral Handbook*, rev. ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002), 2.

centre of an active community, from the minister to becoming a ministerial leader and coordinator of many ministers. The past reveals both expansion and contraction in ministry, periods of development and periods of decline. The present is a time of transition, a time of diversification and growth.⁴²

This explosion in ministry has been a worldwide phenomenon and has affected cultures and churches differently. This postconciliar period touched ministry in four ways. First, there was much more happening both at the parochial and diocesan levels in which new forms of education appeared especially in the field of theology. Secondly, there was the emergence of new ministries in areas of health care and social justice. Thirdly, many more persons entered into various areas of ministry, which were once reserved for the ordained.

Today, most theologians and bishops now agree that this explosion has been the result of a dramatic shift in ecclesiology. The Second Vatican Council had acknowledged the presence of ministerial charisms in all baptized members of the church, not just the hierarchy and ordained clergy. During the final quarter of the twentieth century, lay ministry in North America – for such it was called here from the beginning – had grown tremendously. In the United States there were two church organizations which had been promoting lay involvement in the apostolate namely; the Bishops Committee on the Laity and the Lay Secretariat of the Bishops Conference. Through their tireless efforts the bishops produced a brief report entitled *Called and Gifted: The American Catholic Laity*⁴³ (1980) which has been treated as a blueprint for successive documents that would deal with the new emerging phenomena of lay ecclesial ministry.

Zeni Fox has reminded us that

⁴² Edward P. Hannenberg, *Ministries: A Relational Approach*. (New York Crossroad Publishing Company, 2003).

⁴³ http://www.usccb.org/laity/called_and_gifted.pdf (accessed June 19, 2010).

in 1980 the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of the proclamation of the *Decree of the Apostolate on the Laity* by issuing their fairly short but significant reflection on the role of the laity. The document opens with a prayer of praise for what is happening among the laity, and the statement of their desire to describe what they have been experiencing and learning from the laity. In light of the focus of this book, it is significant to note that one of the four calls of laity named is the call to ministry. The call is rooted in charisms received; baptism and confirmation empower all believers to share in some form of ministry. The ministry is both Christian service in the world and ministry in the church. The bishops expressed gratitude to the many volunteers and part time workers who serve the parishes and diocese.⁴⁴

The bishops then added the following remarks:

Growing numbers of lay men and women are also preparing themselves professionally to work in the church. In this regard religious sisters and brothers have shown the way with their initiative and creativity. Ecclesial ministers i.e. lay persons who have prepared for professional ministry in the church, represent a new development. We welcome this as a gift to the church. There are also persons who serve the church by witness of their lives and their self sacrificing service and empowerment of the poor in works such as administration, housing, job development and education. All these lay ministers are undertaking roles which are not yet clearly spelt out and which are already demanding sacrifices and risks of them and their families. As lay persons increasingly engage in ecclesial ministry, we recognize and accept the responsibility of working our practical difficulties such as the availability of positions, the number of qualified applicants, procedures for hiring, just wages and benefits.⁴⁵

Zeni Fox adds that

To commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the *Decree of the Apostolate of the Laity* and the fifteenth of *Called and Gifted* the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) issued a new pastoral statement in which they revisited the four calls of their previous document and update them in light of Church teaching pastoral practice, and changing conditions in the world.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Zeni Fox, *New Ecclesial Ministry: Lay Professionals Serving the Church*, Revised and Expanded Edition (Lanham, Md: Sheed and Ward 2002), 271.

⁴⁵ *Called and Gifted: The American Catholic Laity*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1980), 1, 4-5. In Zeni Fox, *New Ecclesial Ministry: Lay Professionals Serving the Church*, Revised and Expanded Edition (Lanham, Md: Sheed and Ward, 2002), 271.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 272.

The Four Calls

The four calls are (1) a call to adulthood; (2) a call to holiness, (3) a call to ministry and (4) a call to community, in which we are responsible for one another. The call to adulthood, say the bishops, “which flows from baptism and confirmation,” is a call to lay people to behave within the church with precisely the same “mature independence and practical self direction” that characterize them in other areas of life. The lay call to holiness is “a unique call requiring a unique response.”

It is characteristic that lay men and women hear the call to holiness in the very web of their existence, in and through the events of the world, the pluralism of modern living, the complex decisions and conflicting values they must struggle with, the richness and fragility of sexual relationships, the delicate balance between activity and stillness, presence and privacy, love and loss.⁴⁷

The call to ministry examines both the Christian service ministry in the world, and the ministry in the Church. The laity have the right and responsibility to engage in Christian service in the world as they bring their special competence to bear on the challenges presented in the contemporary world.

The call to community identifies the experience of community as the center of that which fosters an individual’s faith life. In both the domestic church and the parish church, men and women are able to express their faith and grow in unity with God and others, while continuing the saving mission of Christ. It is in these small communities that one finds the faith, wisdom, and courage to move out of one’s self into the wider community and transform it by the power of the Gospel. This experience of the Small Christian Community is the root of the Church’s new evangelization, which focuses on sharing the good news of

⁴⁷ *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium*, (Washington, D.C: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1995), 4.

Jesus by being actively engaged with the world. The bishops concluded with the following remarks:

We are convinced that the laity are making an indispensable contribution to the experience of the People of God and that the full import of their contribution is still in a beginning form in the post Vatican II church. We have spoken in order to listen. It is not our intention rigidly to define or to control, to sketch misleading dreams, or to bestow false praise. We bishops wish simply to take our place and exercise our role among the people of God. We now await the next word.⁴⁸

Lay Ecclesial Ministry.

In their document *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*⁴⁹ (November 2005) the bishops stated that previous documents from their Conference have called such women and men “lay ecclesial ministers” and their service “lay ecclesial ministry.”⁵⁰ The bishops in the United States first officially recognized this development as they observed growing numbers of the lay men and women preparing themselves professionally to work in the church. “Indeed the pastoral needs of this moment are being ably and generously served by many kinds of lay ecclesial ministers.”⁵¹

Lay ecclesial ministry refers to the professionally-trained, otherwise properly-prepared women and men, including vowed religious, who are in positions of service and leadership in the Church. Lay ecclesial ministers serve in such capacities as director of religious education, pastoral associate, youth minister, campus chaplain, hospital chaplain

⁴⁸ Ibid., 8.

⁴⁹ <http://www.usccb.org/laity/laymin/> (accessed June 19, 2010).

⁵⁰ See USCCB Subcommittee on Lay Ministry, *Lay Ecclesial Ministry: The State of the Questions* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1999), 7-8; USCCB, *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1995), 16-17; and USCCB, *Called and Gifted: The American Catholic Laity* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1980), 3-4.

⁵¹ *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium*, National Conference of Catholic Bishops (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1995) pp1, 16, 17. Note the change in nomenclature, from ecclesial ministers in the 1980 document to ecclesial lay ministers in 1995. One reason is that priests, of course, are also ecclesial ministers.

and director of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. There are also those laity who provide daily pastoral leadership of a parish in the absence of a resident pastor. (Canon 517

Conclusion

In our own day, some persons are called to lay ecclesial ministry as a vocation of full time Church service in response to the needs of each local community. This must be distinguished from the vocation of all the baptized to advance the reign of God through their commitment to marriage, family, workplace and social responsibility as well as from the many other lay ministries that flourish for the building up of the Church and the transformation of the world. Many roles once filled and functions once performed almost exclusively by priests, sisters and brothers are now being exercised by lay people. This is a unique vocation, a call to serve in the name of the Church, and does not describe one kind of service or work, but refers to the ministries of committed persons, women and men, married or single, which are exercised in a stable, public, recognized and authorized way. This is ministry in the strict and formal sense. It emerges from a personal call, requires appropriate formation, and is undertaken with both the support and authorization of competent Church authority.

One's understanding of ecclesiology affects one's understanding of ministry. An appreciation of the mission of the Church is essential, when speaking about all ministries, including lay ecclesial ministry. Special charisms of the Holy Spirit which flow from the sacrament of initiation equip lay ecclesial ministers for their special task within the Church. The Church as a sign and instrument, continues the mission of Christ, which is directed towards the salvation of humanity and the transformation of the world. Mission is

accomplished in communion, which recognizes an equality of persons and differentiation of roles (CFL # 52; AA #10).

Yet, there are instances where the Church is still struggling to find ways to fully express the laity's share in the mission of the Church, and not all signs are positive. As we saw above recent Vatican documents have sought to limit again the terms minister and ministry to the ordained, and the Church has yet to develop a ritual of institution for lay ecclesial ministers. Post Vatican II reflection, especially the writings of John Paul II, identified essential differences between the ordained ministry and lay ministry. He reemphasized a difference within unity, a difference that underlines the fact that the other cannot do what the one does. The result is a diversity of service, but a unity of purpose.

While the number of priests is declining and their average age is rising, the number of Catholics is increasing. The gifts of the laity have been flourishing in unprecedented numbers and in wondrous ways.

All the laity in the Church, by virtue of baptism, are called to holiness and ministry in the home, family, parish, neighborhood, workplace and wider community. But there is the growing phenomenon of lay men and women (including vowed religious) serving in full time pastoral roles as faith formation directors, youth ministers, liturgical coordinators, family life ministers, business managers, musician, RCIA coordinators, pastoral associates and parish life directors, just to name a few.⁵²

Given these circumstances, mere adjustment and small shifts in practice will not suffice. We need a major orientation in our thinking about ministry as well as our ministerial practice. We must recognize that lay ecclesial ministry is rooted in the priesthood of all the baptized, and is not a stopgap measure. However, there is need for clarity at both a local and

⁵² Bishop Hubbard Howard, "Lay Ministry is a Sign of Health in Catholicism," *The Evangelist. The Official Publication of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany*, Nov.13, 2003.
<http://www.evangelist.org/archive/htm4/1113bish.htm> (accessed June 19, 2010).

diocesan levels for uniformity in terms of the language to be employed in reference to lay ministry, clear policies and guidelines addressing issues such as recruiting, job descriptions, ministerial agreements, formulation of wages and benefits, and the establishment and evaluation and grievance procedures.

There is urgency for a greater collaboration and inclusiveness in ministry in the Church in this new millennium; for while collaboration is to be the hallmark of ministry, it must include a deeper understanding of collaboration between the ministries of the ordained and the non-ordained. There must be a clearer understanding of the nature of lay ecclesial ministry, on the part of the baptized and those who have received the Sacrament of Orders, as well as a common foundational theology as a basis of all ministries.

In his apostolic exhortation, *Ecclesia in America*,⁵³ Pope John Paul II stated that “the renewal of the Church in America will not be possible without the active presence of the laity. Therefore, they are largely responsible for the future of the Church” (EA #44). While the declining number of priests has been an important factor in the great increase in the number of lay ministers, it is not the only factor, and it would be a mistake to conclude that lay ministry is simply laity filling in for the absence of priests.

⁵³http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jpii_exh_22011999_ecclesia-in-america_en.html (accessed June 19, 2010).

CHAPTER FOUR

DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT IN MINISTRY

Prior to designing and implementing a four-module course that encompasses liturgical, eucharistic, scriptural, and preaching components, I knew that I would be required to design a module that will support and provide a basic, holistic approach to guide the ongoing formation of lay ministers. From the outset, I also knew that the participants were going to be adults and therefore I would have to acquaint myself not only with the basic principles of adult education but more specifically adult education within a religious context and environment. Additionally, it became evident to me that not only was I the designer, but also the educator. I remembered that, compared to children and teens, adults have special needs and requirements as learners. Therefore, an adult learning program like the one that I was asked to design had to accommodate this fundamental aspect.

Since this project is aimed at an adult audience, in this final chapter I have integrated some basic principles of adult education as outlined by three different authors namely: K. Patricia Cross' *Adults As Learners*, Jane E. Regan's *Toward an Adult Church: A Vision of Faith Formation* and Thomas H. Groome's *Christian Religious Education: Sharing our Story and Vision*, each with his or her own varied approach to the subject matter. Following this overview, I began the process of development, implementation, and evaluation of the project in ministry, during which I gave the implications, relevance and significance of the different adult educational theories as they related to the practical aspect of my thesis proposal. I

concluded this project in ministry by giving an assessment and evaluation looking at some key outcomes in light of future application of this workshop.

Principles of Adult Education

A summary of the basic insight of each of these authors is as follows: The basic insight of K. Patricia Cross is that adult learning theory mainly focuses on how adults learn. It is based on the assumptions that adult learners focus more on the processes than on the contents. This is because adults bring in real life experiences to the learning environment. Thus, strategies like collaborative learning, role-play, simulations, case study and self-evaluations are useful to help facilitate adult learning. On the other hand Jane E. Regan's research and teaching focus primarily on adult faith formation, bringing adult learning theory, adult spiritual development, and the theoretical and pastoral applications of total community catechesis into dynamic conversation. Groome's approach is that of Christian religious education by shared praxis which can be described as a group of Christians sharing in dialogue their critical reflection on present action in light of the Christian Story and its Vision toward the end of lived Christian faith.

In *Adults As Learners*, Cross attempts to explore all facets of bringing education to adults and bringing adults to education in plain simple and interesting language, together with incisive observations that go beyond a culling together of learning theories already out there. She quotes Malcolm S. Knowles, a very influential figure and champion of andragogy, self-direction in learning, and informal adult education. Knowles defines andragogy as "the

art and science of helping adults learn,” and contrasts it with pedagogy, which is concerned with helping children learn.¹

Andragogy is premised on at least four assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners that are different from the assumptions about child learners on which traditional pedagogy is premised. These assumptions are that, as a person matures, (1) his self concept moves from one of being a dependent personality towards one of being a self directing human being, (2) he accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning, (3) his readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his social roles, and (4) his time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject centeredness to one of problem centeredness.²

Knowles's theory of andragogy specifically emphasizes the problem-centered orientation to learning which he has identified as one of the basic assumptions about adult learning.

The adult, on the other hand, comes into an educational activity largely because he is experiencing some inadequacy in coping with current life problems. He wants to apply tomorrow what he learns today, so his time perspective is one of immediacy of application. Therefore, he enters into education with a problem-centered orientation to learning.³

Knowles also believes that adults are self-directed and expected to take responsibility for decisions. Self-directed learning is a deliberate learning, in which the person's primary intention is to gain certain definite knowledge and skills. It is probably the most overlooked avenue of activity in the whole field of adult education.

One of the frequently touted advantages of self-directed learning is that, since almost everyone does it, it is free of the socioeconomic bias shown in “organized

¹ Malcolm S. Knowles, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy versus Pedagogy* (New York: Association Press, 1970), 39; quoted in K. Patricia Cross, *Adults as Learners* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1981), 222.

² *Ibid.*, 222-223.

³ *Ibid.*, 189.

instruction,” which serves the already well educated out of their proportion to their numbers in the population.⁴

Cross has drawn the following general conclusion about self directed learning:

Participation in self-directed learning is almost universal; the typical adult spends about one hundred hours on each learning project, conducting five projects per year, for a total of one hundred hours per year; and almost three fourths of learning projects of adults are completely self directed.⁵

Finally, since the role of the teacher is crucial in adult education, Patricia Cross sees the role of the educator as that of a challenger.⁶

If one accepts a hierarchy of developmental stages, and if one believes that the role of educators is to help each individual to develop to the highest possible levels, then the role of educators is to challenge the learner to move into increasingly advanced stages of personal development. This may mean creating the motivation for learning through making the learner uncomfortable in her present assumptions. She is thus forced to examine her present assumptions and to redefine and reshape them at increasingly higher levels of development.⁷

In her book *Toward an Adult Church: A Vision of Faith Formation*, Jane Regan explores the current structure of parish catechesis in which “the picture of religious education in most parish settings, and indeed, in the common consciousness of the Church at large has as the focal point children and youth. The children and youth stand in clear focus, often in the center of the picture.”⁸ In her analysis of the parish structures, she raises the critical question “as it stands right now, in most settings the prime question asked in thinking about and planning for catechesis within the parish community is what do children and youth need to continue to grow in their faith?”⁹ She introduces a secondary question which involves

⁴ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 63-64.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 240.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 240.

⁸ Jane A. Reagan. *Towards An Adult Church: A Vision of Adult Faith Formation* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2002), 10.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

looking to the adults in the community, a question often expressed in terms of children and youth. “What do adults need in order to enhance the formation of their children and youth?”¹⁰ Basing her ideas on contemporary theory and traditional practice, Regan sets forth an intriguing argument: the vitality of the Church depends on establishing a new education paradigm—one that is focused on adults. “I am proposing that the prime question be changed in order to focus on adults. We might begin with a question like: what do adults within the community need in order to grow in their faith?”¹¹ She re-imagines the religious education endeavor from the perspective of faith formation of the adult community and, in light of that, the formation of children and youth. This new approach, however, raises some serious questions such as, how can parishes design a framework for adult catechesis? Will such programs be accepted by local church communities? Where does children’s faith, like all education faith formation fit into the new structure?

Regan answers these questions and offers ideas for developing a balanced approach to religious education—one that addresses the ongoing faith life of adults. She speaks of a central concept that has dominated adult education theory over the past two decades, namely, transformative learning which is commonly traced back to the research of Jack Mezirow and Paulo Freire.

Mezirow’s work attends primarily to personal transformation, recognizing social change as a possible though not necessary component of transformative learning, the fundamental concern reflected in Freire’s work is the process of social transformation founded on the disclosure of systems of power and oppression.¹²

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 76.

These two approaches to transformative learning form the basis for the process which she proposes. “My proposal is that these theories of transformative learning can serve as helpful resources in constructing an effective approach to adult faith formation and the task of fostering an adult Church.”¹³

In her description of the modes of learning, she is of the view that all learning is rooted in experience. “It is through experience – understood as engagement with one’s social and cultural environment – that learning takes place. Experiences that educate provide the person with insights, understandings and perspectives.”¹⁴ Reagan is of the belief that learning involves “attending to and reflection on an experience which results in some present or future change in one’s behavior, knowledge, attitude, belief or skills.”¹⁵ She has identified three modes of learning, namely, “technical knowledge - knowledge of cause and effect, and how one relates to and influences environment,”¹⁶ “practical or communicative learning with its focus on communication - understanding others and having other understands us”¹⁷ and “emancipatory learning which is rooted in critical reflection that brings into question the foundations of one’s personal and social perspective. In critical reflection people are encouraged to think contextually, that is, to become aware of how social and cultural environments affect how they think.”¹⁸

For Reagan “this process of transformative learning is a movement through four moments, each of which is closely related to the others (1) questioning the present

¹³ Ibid., 77.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 77.

¹⁷ Ibid., 78.

¹⁸ Ibid., 79.

perspective, (2) exploring alternatives, (3) applying the transformed perspective, and (4) reintegrating and grounding of the new perspective.”¹⁹ Taking some of the core concepts of adult education theory, Reagan utilizes them to construct a vision of adult faith formation that would awaken the adult community. “Adult education theory provides categories that can be valuable in our continuing conversation about forming an adult church.”²⁰

In describing Christian religious education, Thomas Groome offers an interesting and extensive approach to this subject matter in *Christian Religious Education: Sharing our Story and Vision*. He prefers the term Christian religious education to religious education or catechesis. He is of the view that “the term religious education accurately describes the general investigation of the religious dimensions of life and the common human quest for a transcendent ground of being.”²¹ The word catechesis comes from the “Greek verb katechein, which means ‘to resound,’ ‘to echo’ or ‘to hand down’ Thus the etymology of the word implies an oral instruction.”²²

In spite of the vivid distinction that he has made in regards to the usage of the different terms, Groome still recognizes that there are problems which remain as well as inadequacies. However, within a more positive framework of analysis he is able to identify some of the important advantages, and thus candidly describes Christian religious education, as follows:

Christian religious education is a political activity with pilgrims that deliberately and intentionally attends with them to the activity of God in our present, to the story of

¹⁹ Ibid., 87.

²⁰ Ibid., 104.

²¹ Thomas H. Groome, *Christian Religious Education* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982), 24.

²² Ibid., 26.

the Christian faith community, and to the Vision of God's Kingdom, the seeds of which are already among us.²³

He continues by stating that "in that description the specificity of what Christian religious educators do derives from the Christian communities' Story, with its primordial expression in Jesus Christ, and the Vision of God's completed Kingdom to which the Story gives rise."²⁴ He shares a consensus view of the kingdom as the ultimate purpose for Christian religious education.

Groome has adopted an approach to Christian religious education by shared praxis, which he has defined as "a group of Christians sharing in dialogue their critical reflection on present action in light of the Christian Story and its Vision toward the end of lived Christian faith."²⁵ Shared praxis takes place in a situation of group dialogue. Shared in the dialogue is an articulation of critical reflection upon one's present active engagement in the world as a Christian. "This present engagement is in fact the embodiment of one's own story and vision, and critical reflection upon it takes place in light of the Christian communities' Story and the response which the Story invites."²⁶ Groome has identified five main components in Christian education by shared praxis. These are (a) present action, (b) critical reflection, (c) dialogue, (d) the Story and (e) the Vision that arises from the story.²⁷

In his description of present action, Groome believes that it is more than the overt productivity of the present moment. "It means our whole human engagement in the world, our every doing that has any intentionality or deliberateness to it. It includes all that we are

²³ Ibid., 25.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 185.

²⁶ Ibid., 185.

²⁷ Ibid.

doing, physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually as we live on personal, interpersonal, and social levels. In a sense, it encompasses any kind of human activity.”²⁸

The second component, which he referred to as critical reflection, is an activity in which one calls upon (1) critical reason to evaluate the present, (2) critical memory to uncover the past in the present, and (3) creative imagination to envision the future in the present.²⁹ Participants, therefore, who are engaged in critical reflection on the action, look at reason, interests, and assumptions as they share their own stories and visions. In critical reflection on present action (praxis), the exercise of the creative imagination is an expression of hope. Groome states that critical reflection requires the exercise of reason, memory, and imagination since all three are necessary for attending to the past, the present, and the future. However, Groome exercises some measure of caution in these words. “It must be emphasized that in critical reflection the source of discernment, as always, is not solely our own reason, memory and imagination. It is only by the Spirit’s grace of discernment working within our human efforts that we can know reality in light of God’s activity and contribute to its transformation according to God’s will.”³⁰

“In a shared praxis approach to Christian religious education the participants’ critical reflections on their present action as Christians are shared in dialogue within a pedagogical setting.”³¹ Dialogue is necessary for building Christian community within the group. As the general context of Christian education needs to be a community of Christian faith, so the immediate context, the environment of the intentional activity, itself needs to be a Christian

²⁸ Ibid., 184-185.

²⁹ Ibid., 185.

³⁰ Ibid., 188.

³¹ Ibid., 188.

community. Groome believes that “dialogue is especially necessary in a religious education context using a shared praxis approach because the dialogue approach of participants is an essential part of catechesis. In fact, the whole content and process of a shared praxis approach is to be dialogical.”³² The two essential elements that constitute the process of dialogue are that of telling and listening. The final point that is made is that dialogue is not only among the participants but also between the participants and God. In such a situation the participants in shared praxis, then, share in dialogue their critical reflection on the present action.

In the fourth and fifth components, Christian Story and Vision are dealt with respectively by Groome. Christian Story is described as “the whole faith tradition of our people however that is expressed or embodied.”³³ Groome says, “the term Story is intended as a metaphor for all such expressions of our faith tradition as they are all part of our Christian Story. From that Story by God’s grace, we draw our life of Christian faith, by making it accessible again we experience God’s saving deeds on our behalf.”³⁴ The metaphor Vision is intended to be “a comprehensive representation of the lived response which the Christian Story invites and the promise of God makes in that Story.”³⁵ It is to be noted, “the Story and the Vision are not separate realities, but rather two aspects of the same reality. The Story is the Story of the Kingdom and the Vision the Vision of the Kingdom. The Vision is our response to God’s promise in the Story and the Story is the unfolding of the vision.”³⁶

³² Ibid., 189.

³³ Ibid., 192.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 193.

³⁶ Ibid., 193

In his continued description of both the Story and the Vision, Groome has reminded his readers of the following.

The Christian Story and its Vision find expression, though not perfectly, in a community of Christian faith. They can be encountered there in a reflectively lived and shared faith of the whole community. But with the community, and in the context of intentional religious education, the educator has the responsibility of ensuring that the Story is encountered and its Vision proposed. In the community encounter between our stories and the Story, between our own visions and the Vision, we can come to “know God” in an experiential/ reflective manner. It will be a praxis way of knowing that arises from our own praxis, from the praxis of the community of pilgrims in time, and from the praxis of God in history.³⁷

Groome’s approach also involves five movements namely: (1) naming the present action, (2) participants’ Stories and Visions, (3) the Christian community Story and Vision, (4) dialectical hermeneutics between the Story and the Participants’ Stories, and (5) dialectical hermeneutic between the Vision and the Participants’ Vision. Groome believes,

using shared praxis one should expect to find an opportunity for the participants to name some dimensions of their present Christian action, to reflect critically to whatever extent they are capable on what they have named, and to share their reflection in the dialogue. Since critical reflection on present action is to be informed by the Christian faith tradition, then the Story and its Vision as they pertain to the issue or topic being dealt with must be made accessible to the group. Finally in keeping with the “present dialectical hermeneutics” and the dialectical unity between theory and praxis, there should be an opportunity for the participants to personally appropriate the Story and its Vision to their own lives and choose what may be a fitting lived response.³⁸

Each shared praxis exercise has a particular focus of attention.

1. The participants are invited to name their own activity concerning the topic for attention (present action).
2. They are invited to reflect on why they do what they do, and what the likely or intended consequences of their actions are (critical reflection).

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 207.

3. The educator makes present to the group the Christian community story concerning the topic at hand and the faith response that it invites (Story and Vision).
4. The participants are invited to appropriate the Story to their lives in dialectic with their own stories (dialectic between Story and Vision).
5. There is an opportunity to choose a personal faith response for the future (dialectic between Vision and visions).³⁹

Each shared praxis unit must have a particular focus that is some dimension or experience of Christian faith to which the group will attend. Finally, throughout these various movements Groome states, “the educator is usually the one who establishes the focus of attention in the group. This can be done in a myriad of ways. In some sense the focusing exercise becomes a common experience for the participants.”⁴⁰

During the next phase which is the development, implementation and evaluation of the project in ministry the following is a brief summary of ideas and methods that would be used from each of these three theorists. Regan’s central concept of transformative learning with its three modes, namely: technical knowledge, communicative and emancipatory, Groome’s second, third, fourth, and fifth movements and Cross’ four assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners that are different from the assumptions about child learners on which traditional pedagogy is premised.

Development of the Project in Ministry

Based on my review of these theories of adult education, together with the primary goal of the program, I then began to develop various components of the project. Foremost in my mind was Cross’ contribution to Andragogy which made assumptions about the designs of learning in which adults need to know why they need to learn something as well as their

³⁹ Ibid., 207.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 208

need to be free to direct themselves. Therefore, as the educator, I knew that I had to engage these participants in the learning process and serve as facilitator for them. Specifically, I had to get participants' perspectives about the topics that were to be covered and allow them to work on a project that reflected their interests. Therefore, in the planning phase, I had to make provision to allow the participants to assume responsibility for presentations and group leadership. I took all these factors into consideration and carefully designed the following components: the composition of the group; the facilities where the workshops were to be conducted; the component of the project; the sessions; the lecture/instruction component; faith sharing component; self-assessment, and the evaluation of the project.

Composition of the Group

Fifteen lay ministers, one per parish, who were of mixed gender and ranged in age from 35 to 62 years, were chosen by their pastors to attend a series of workshops, which were conducted by me at the Diocesan Pastoral Center. In the context of the diocese of Roseau, ministry is voluntary, and so there were no full-time or part-time paid staff. These are people who are married with families, engaged in full-time employment in secular fields, attend Sunday masses regularly, and are actively involved in different areas of pastoral ministry in their parishes. The ratio of men to women was 3 to 2 and their average age was 55.

The Diocesan Pastoral Center

The Diocesan Pastoral Center, with its vision of adult faith formation as its primary focus and its goal of deepening of the faith of all especially adults, was the location where all the five sessions were conducted. Fulfilling its mission, it is a place for worship, prayer, evangelization, and pilgrimage, as well as a center for worthy and exemplary liturgy with its large comfortable meeting room and a Chapel. In keeping with its vision since its

inauguration in 1976, the Diocesan Pastoral Center continues to prepare the entire diocese to confront the challenges of ordinary Christian life and to untangle the many pastoral problems that we have been battling.

Components of the Project

Bearing in mind that adults are goal-oriented and that, upon enrolling in a course, they usually know what goals they want to attain, I knew that they would appreciate an educational program that was well-organized and had clearly-defined elements. I therefore ensured that the program incorporated a theoretical component that was theological as well as activities that included practical strategies such as case studies, role playing, simulations, and self-evaluation. I also took into consideration the useful hint that instruction for adults needed to focus more on the process and less on the content being taught. On that basis, I developed the following components for each of the five sessions:

- (a) Opening Prayer, which was intended and arranged for the sanctification of the morning;
- (b) Lecture/Instruction- theology of the Eucharist, so that the participants were better equipped to understand the structure of the Eucharist;
- (c) Break for refreshments and snacks;
- (d) Reflection/ questions/ instructions/ sharing of personal experiences, intended to help the participants deepen and integrate their ministerial self-understanding as lay ministers;
- (e) Faith Sharing, using several focus questions that were based on the Eucharist;
- (g) and Closing Prayer, to end the day's proceedings. Video clippings of the entire procedure were recorded and utilized as a measure of review and evaluation as well as to become part of the archives of the Diocesan Pastoral Center.

Implementation of the Project in Ministry

The Sessions

Registration had already been done prior to the commencement of the sessions, and so at the first session each participant was given a folder containing materials that were required for the workshop. The contents of the folder included (a) a copy of Opening and Closing Prayer (APPENDIX II); (b) a copy of the Roman document *Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest*; (c) self-assessment form (d) a copy of the academic test to be administered; (d) an outline of the program (APPENDIX III); (f) stationery; and (g) a name tag which participants were encouraged to wear at all times.

Sessions one through four were similar in their structure, with the exception of session five which had its own unique procedure. At the commencement of each session together, we prayed the Opening Prayer, which the participants themselves conducted and participated in fully. Following the prayers, at the first session, I then extended a warm word of welcome and congratulations to all the participants for having been chosen and having given their approval by responding to serve in a specific area of lay ministry in the Church. Then each participant became engaged into a formal introduction of himself/herself, indicating not only his/her name but also the parish that he/she belonged to, as well as sharing something about himself/herself that he/she thought might be of interest to everyone. This served as a very effective ice breaker, which lightened the atmosphere.

Participants were then asked several questions about their participation and involvement in the workshop. Why are you part of this workshop? What about the program captured your interest and imagination? What experiences do you bring to this workshop? What do you hope to achieve by your participation in this workshop?

Near the beginning, these participants were already engaged in critical reflection on the action, looking at the reasons, interests, and assumptions as they shared their own stories and vision. This second movement of Groome is

first looking discerningly at present action to see the “obvious” about it, but it is also an attempt to go below the obvious, to become aware of its source, the genesis of present action. In this movement attempts to help the participants come to a consciousness of the social conditioning, norms assumptions and the like are embodied in their present action.⁴¹

Following this, in my explanation of the overview of the purpose of the workshop, I gave an introduction to the program. I then went on to explain to the participants that the purpose of the project was to help them as lay ministers to have a sufficient theological knowledge about Sunday and about the Eucharist, as well as to equip them with sufficient skills for leading Sunday Worship in the Absence of a Priest. Conscious of my role as facilitator rather than instructor, I knew that I had to guide the participants to their own knowledge rather than supplying them with facts and so I proceeded to the lecture components. (Sessions 2-4 followed a similar pattern with the exception of the introduction and the ice breaker which were always different).

Lecture /Instruction Component

Through the lecture component, I gave the participants an understanding of the church’s theology and a general overview of Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. I wanted them to recognize the importance of the Eucharistic celebration and its place in the life of Christians. In addition, I wanted them to develop a Eucharistic theology in which they would be able to connect their daily life experiences with the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist.

⁴¹ Ibid., 211.

The intention was that they be better equipped to understand the overall flow and structure of the Eucharist and its individual parts and thus be able to differentiate between Sunday celebration of the Eucharist and Sunday celebration when no priest is present (APPENDIX IV).

In the lecture component, I was able to combine Groome's third, fourth, and fifth movements. In terms of the third movement, I presented them with elements of the Christian Story and Vision (the scriptures and tradition), which are related to liturgy and the Eucharist. In the fourth movement, the participants gave a critique of the Story in light of the Stories and a critique of their present stories in light of the past Story. In the fifth movement, the participants decided how to live their Christian faith. The centrality of the Sunday Eucharist with its grounding in the paschal mystery provided a Story/ Vision for Christian.

In session one the instructions focused on the Introductory Rites; session two Liturgy of the Word and the Singing of the Psalm; session three Communion Rite, session four Act of Thanksgiving and session five Concluding Rite. I went on to explain to the participants that when the form used is a Celebration of the Word, changes have been made to make it clearer that this is not an abbreviated Mass. Therefore, no entrance procession is permitted. There is a required introduction, sign of the cross and greeting, and an opening prayer, which may be a seasonal prayer or the opening prayer of the specific Sunday, contained in an appendix in the prescribed textbook. There is no longer a penitential rite. The readings are always to be taken from the Lectionary for that Sunday. A homily or reflection on the readings is encouraged, to be followed by the Profession of Faith and Prayers of the Faithful. If Communion is to be given, the ciborium is brought to the altar then, but the one who presides goes back to his/ her designated chair, from which the Lord's Prayer is led. Then

he/she goes back to the altar and invites the congregation to Communion. It is then distributed under the single species of the sacred host. In a significant change from the 1994 Ritual, an act of Thanksgiving is prayed after Communion, since many had protested that the former position before the Lord's Prayer and Communion made it too similar to a form of Eucharistic Prayer. Brief announcements, the collection of money, and a prayer for vocations follow before the blessing and sign of peace. A closing hymn may be sung.

Following the break in each session, the participants were afforded an opportunity to share reflections or ask questions about the lectures / instructions or on the previous week's session; share some of their personal experiences since they all came from different parish backgrounds; and browse through instructions and questions which were intended to help the participants deepen and integrate their ministerial self-understanding as lay ministers. In this exercise, the participants were engaged in critical reflection, or the second movement of Groome's five movements of praxis by praxis.

Faith Sharing Component

Admittedly, although these participants had been engaged in diverse ministry in their local parishes, this exercise of faith sharing was a completely new experience to them. I explained to the participants the concept of a faith sharing exercise using several focus questions that were based on the Eucharist, which was the focal point of attention. Immediately, this brought into sharp perspective Groome's explanation of the first movement of shared praxis by praxis, which he called "Naming Present Action," and whose focusing activity helped the participants to turn to their present praxis. Groome believes that, "depending on the focus of attention, the opening movement could invite an expression of

the participants' reactions, feelings, sentiments, overt activity, valuing, meaning making, understanding, beliefs, relationships and the like."⁴²

Groome has asserted, "this movement is where the shift from *theoria* to a *praxis* way of knowing begins. After the focusing activity the opening question must be put in such a way as to elicit a naming of the participant's *praxis* rather than their *theoria*."⁴³ In this approach, I as the educator helped to facilitate dialogue ensuring that each participant had an opportunity to share his/ her views. I asked, "What do you do with Eucharist in your Life?" The faith sharing component was followed by the closing prayer, after which the participants were given reading assignments for the following week and then departed for their different destinations.

The fifth and final session was radically different. There was one class presentation, which demonstrated an exercise of collaborative ministry principles. Through this venture the three different groups role-played a continuous and unbroken scene in which a parish community was without a priest for the Sunday Eucharist. They were asked to conduct the Sunday celebration in his absence. In a true liturgical style and fashion, this assimilation exercise was of an hour's duration. The curtains were brought down on this engaging production by a resounding and standing ovation of applause, much to everyone's amazement. This exercise truly demonstrated their gaining of sufficient skills to lead Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest as each participant demonstrated ritual knowledge and ministerial presence in this practicum session.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 208.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 210.

Following the assimilation exercise of a Sunday celebration in the absence of the priest, the next hour was spent in open dialogue, critical analysis, and evaluation. I gave my final evaluation of the entire five weeks in what I entitled Key Outcomes. Then the participants handed in the copies of the academic tests that were meant to evaluate their knowledge of the subject matter that they had acquired during the sessions. As is so typical of Caribbean people, the third and final hour took the form of a social gathering during which refreshments and meals were served to every one at the end of which we all sang the hymn “To God be the Glory Great Things He Has Done” and then emotionally bade each other farewell.

Evaluation of the Project in Ministry

Self -Assessment

I developed and reviewed the self-assessment tools and the academic test which were included in the package. They were designed to help the participants assess their conceptual understanding of the theology of the Eucharist and their ability to participate and live the Eucharist. The evaluation provided me with feedback on various components of the program and their helpfulness to the participants. The participants were allowed to comment on the presenter’s grasp of the material, clarity, the materials provided to the participants and the program sessions. The participants were asked to give an overall evaluation of the entire program taking the following areas into careful consideration.

Presenter

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The presenter explained the materials clearly. 10. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

2. The presenter was knowledgeable about the subject matter. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.
3. The presenter encouraged participation. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Materials

4. The materials were pertinent to their needs. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.
5. The materials were clear. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.
6. The materials were designed for participant's levels. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Sessions

7. The overall length of the sessions too Long too Short Just right.
8. The opening session set the tone did not set the tone helpful not helpful
9. The Faith Sharing component was prayerful spiritual reflective
10. The Theological Lecture/ Instruction were instructive educational academic
11. The Opening and Closing Prayer were helpful. strongly agree strongly disagree
12. The Assimilation Exercise served its purpose did not serve its purpose.

Results of the Self-Assessment

The Self assessment provided the participants and myself with information on how they were affected by the program. The Self-Assessment helped the participants gauge what they learned from the program, how their views of the Eucharist had changed during the program and whether their hopes and aspirations in regards to the program were fulfilled.

Based on the overall average of the fifteen participants the results were as follows:

Presenter

1. The presenter explained the materials clearly. (9).

2. The presenter was knowledgeable about the subject matter. (9)
3. The presenter encouraged participation. (9)

Materials

1. The materials were pertinent to their needs. (9)
2. The materials were clear. (8).
3. The materials were designed for participant's levels. (9).

Sessions

4. The overall length of the sessions. Just right
5. The opening session set the tone.
6. The Faith Sharing component was reflective.
7. The Theological Lecture/ Instruction were instructive.
8. The Opening and Closing Prayer were helpful. strongly agree.
9. The Assimilation Exercise served its purpose.

Academic Test

The following was the academic pretest that was administered. The answers are the collective results from the participants. However, in the future a similar test is to be administered which will help to measure how much they had learned on the material presented during the project.

1. What are the different names that can be used for the Eucharist?

Answer: The different names are Holy Communion, Mass, Last Supper and the Breaking of the Bread.

2. Why is the Eucharist so important to the church?

Answer: The Eucharist is important because it is the heart of the church life in which Christ himself is present to his people.

3. Why do you attend Mass on Sunday?

Answer: I attend Mass on Sunday because it is a duty and obligation. On each Sunday, which is a commemoration of the day Jesus rose from the dead, the faithful come together not only to profess the faith but also to renew the life of Christ within them.

4. What does the Eucharist truly make present?

Answer: At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his body and blood. He did this to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the centuries until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection.

5. What are the two parts of the Mass?

Answer: The Mass comprises of two parts. The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

6. What is meant by the Liturgy of the Word?

Answer: The Liturgy of the Word is the first part of the Mass. When the Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself is speaking to his people, and Christ, present in his own word, is proclaiming the Gospel.

7. What is meant by the Liturgy of the Eucharist?

Answer: The liturgy of the Eucharist begins the second part of the Mass. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is the heart of the Mass in which we carry out the command of the Lord by celebrating the memorial of his sacrifice.

8. Why is the Eucharist kept in a tabernacle?

Answer: The real presence endures after the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy. Once communion has been distributed, the remaining hosts are placed in the tabernacle to provide viaticum for those who turn to the Church in their final hour and also to provide a focal point for prayer and worship of Christ in his real presence. It is for this reason that there is a tabernacle in Church.

9. Why is it important to prepare myself to receive the Eucharist?

Answer: It is important to prepare myself to receive the Eucharist in order to respond to the Lord's invitation to eat his flesh and drink his blood.

10. How should I prepare myself to receive the Eucharist?

Answer: All it takes is a little time to recollect our thoughts, recall what we are doing and thank God for the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

11. How does the Eucharist make us God's people?

Answer: Just as individually we are brought into union with Christ through our participation in the paschal mystery and our share in the consecrated bread and wine, so the Church as the new people of God comes to be in its celebration of the Eucharist. We are a people made one with Christ and one with each other precisely in the Eucharist.

12. Why should I attend Mass and receive the Eucharist?

Answer: Since we are constituted God's family -- God's people -- his Church -- precisely by our participation in the Eucharist, we cannot grow into Christ's new body as a healthy and full member without sharing in the Eucharist. On each Sunday, which is a commemoration of the day Jesus rose from the dead, the faithful come together not only to profess the faith but also to renew the life of Christ within them.

13. What is a communion service?

Answer: Communion services are intended to link the faithful attending them to the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist of a parish community. It is not meant to be a replacement or substitute for the Sunday or weekday mass.

Some Concluding Thoughts

In terms of my own personal evaluation and observation of the project I have named them key outcomes which I have outlined below.

Key Outcomes

Several outcomes of this process are worthy of note:

- Those who participated in the five-session workshop expressed tremendous gratitude for the opportunity to share with one another their own experiences of ministry.
- The participants understanding of the Sunday Eucharist had changed significantly over the course of the program and they were now equipped to better understand the reasons why they attended mass regularly.
- Participants went away with a renewed sense of their vocation as lay ministers through their contributions as lay leaders of worship.
- Their stories indicated the many ways through which the Holy Spirit had indeed called and gifted them through baptism and guided them on the journey.
- Faith Sharing was a new experience for the participants which assisted them to attend to their own experiences, appreciate them and grow in their relationship with God and others.
- Despite many personal challenges such as financial, personal, and familial sacrifices, participants displayed their abiding faith and love for the church.
- Participants were affirmed and reminded of the lengthy list of contributions that lay ministers make to parish life. They discovered that many of their contributions are pastoral in nature.
- Participants were given the ability to reflect both communally and theologically on their experience of church.
- The workshop gave participants an opportunity to exercise that fundamental skill as lay ministers who want to continue to serve the church in the future.

- The assimilation exercise provided an opportunity of implementing the Second Vatican Council's call for full and active participation of the people of God in the Liturgy.
- The program offered the participants a theological understanding of the Eucharist and will serve as a model in lay ministry for those in subsequent years.

Conclusion

Although many lay people are actively involved in different areas of ministry in their parishes, yet we have a long way to go before the church's practice fully reflects its budding theology of the vocation and dignity of lay ecclesial ministers. This workshop, which I recommend should be conducted for both ordained and lay ecclesial ministers, has served as a vehicle for making progress on this journey at the level of the laity in the Church. It could be utilized by those who have diverse ministries but share a common setting (such as a parish staff) or those who engage in a similar ministry in different settings. It is a valuable tool for allowing ecclesial ministers to share their stories, foster a sense of their ecclesial identity, reflect together on the theological meaning of their ministerial experiences, discern directions for the future, build respect for one another, and nurture healthy relationships of trust and collaboration. The outcomes may be different for each group that undertakes this process, yet the results will be equally fruitful for all.

APPENDIX I

FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

**THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROPOSAL

Date: December 28, 2009.

Title: **Preparing Lay Ministers in Dominica for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest**

Student: Reginald La Fleur (Diocese of Roseau, Dominica)

Director: Rev. Michael G. Witzak, S.L.D.

Readers: Rev. James Wiseman, S.T.D., and Dr. Kurt Martens, J.C.D.

Identification and Background in Ministry

Sacrosanctum concilium, (SC) which was the first document that was promulgated at the Second Vatican Council (1963), called for reform of the liturgy in order to facilitate the full, conscious, and active participation of the people of God in the liturgical life of the Church, particularly Mass. In the Diocese of Roseau, there is a pastoral situation where one priest has to serve as pastor of multiple parishes. Consequently, in some parishes Mass is replaced with a Communion Service every other Sunday. The Mass remains the proper way of celebrating Sunday, but the people must also recognize the presence of important elements of Sunday worship even when Mass cannot be celebrated. In order to ensure that the lay ministers who are engaged in conducting these liturgical functions are adequately prepared, the bishop has mandated me to design and implement a model of training for lay ministry which incorporates a four-module course that encompasses liturgical, eucharistic, scriptural, and preaching components. This will support and provide a basic, holistic approach to guide the ongoing formation of lay ministers. Fifteen lay ministers, one per parish, who are of mixed gender and range in age from 35 to 62 years, were chosen by their pastors to attend a series of workshops, which will be conducted at the Diocesan Pastoral Center. This proposal touches only one aspect of liturgical leadership and has threefold content: the celebration of the Eucharist, the celebration of Sunday, and the role of Lay Ministers. It has been designed to ensure, in the best way possible and in every situation, the Christian celebration of Sunday.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the project is to design, implement, and evaluate a program which will help the lay ministers to have (1) a sufficient theological knowledge about Sunday and about the Eucharist, (2) sufficient skills for leading Sunday Worship in the Absence of a Priest.

Supporting Research

Theology of the Eucharist: The primary sources will include: *Vatican Council II, the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; *Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest*; and *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*.

Sources for Sunday include Volume 4 of Martimort's *The Church at Prayer*; Volume 5 of Chupungco's *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*; Dallen's, *The Dilemma of Priestless Sunday*; and Adam's *The Liturgical Year*.

Lay Ecclesial Ministry: Rademacher's, *Lay Ministry: A Theological, Spiritual, and Pastoral Handbook*; Fox's, *New Ecclesial Ministry: Lay Professionals Serving the Church*.

Adult Catechesis: The theme will include how adults learn, and the use of faith sharing in catechesis. The primary sources include Cross's, *Adults as Learners*; Groome's, *Christian Religious Education*; and Regan's, *Toward an Adult Church: A Vision of Faith Formation*.

Project Design and Implementation

The workshops will consist of five sessions on consecutive Saturdays between the hours of 9.00 a.m. and 12.00 noon with break intervals. Each session will begin and end with prayer to be conducted by the participants. The first hour will be in the form of lectures. The first lecture will include (a) an introduction to the program and (b) a general overview of Sunday Celebration. Each of the following sessions will focus on a particular component of the rite of the Sunday celebration when no priest is present: Session 2: Introductory Rites; Session 3: Liturgy of the Word and the Singing of the Psalm; Session 4: Act of Thanksgiving; Session 5: Communion Rite and Concluding Rite. After the break, the large group divides into three focus groups of five persons each. The second part will consist of (a) reflections on the lecture, (b) discussion of experiences of the participants, (c) video-recordings, (d) faith sharing using several focus questions, and (e) instructions and questions intended to help the participants deepen and integrate their ministerial self-understanding as lay ministers.

Evaluation

The gaining of sufficient theological knowledge about Sunday and about the Eucharist will be evaluated by administering an academic test on the material presented during the project. The gaining of sufficient skills to lead Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest will be evaluated by the presenter as each participant demonstrates ritual knowledge and ministerial presence in a practicum session.

Contribution to Ministry

The situation is one where Mass cannot be celebrated every Sunday, so the community celebrates Sunday without Mass, though with a gathering and with communion. Therefore, it provides an opportunity of implementing the Second Vatican Council's call for full and active participation of the people of God in the Liturgy. The program will offer the participants a theological understanding of the Eucharist and will serve as a model in lay ministry for those in subsequent years.

APPENDIX II
PRAYER

Morning Prayer

Opening Hymn: Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on us. (Sung by all)

Opening Prayer: Most holy and adorable Trinity, one God in three persons, we praise you and give you thanks for all the favors you have bestowed on us. Your goodness has preserved us until now. We offer you our whole being, and in particular all our thoughts, words and deeds, together with all the trials we may undergo today. Give us your blessing. May your Divine Love animate us so that we can serve you better. We make this morning offering in union with the Divine intentions of Jesus Christ, who offers himself daily in the Sacrifice of the Mass and in union with Mary his Virgin Mother and our Mother who was always the faithful handmaid of the Lord.

Scripture Reading: 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14. (Read by a participant).

We are bound to thank God for you always, beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, because you are the first fruits of those whom God has chosen for salvation, in holiness of spirit and fidelity to truth. He called you through our preaching of the good news so that you might achieve the glory of our lord Jesus Christ.

Acclamation: Alleluia Give thanks to the Risen Lord.

Gospel: The Beatitudes.

Reflection on the Readings:

Prayer of the Faithful: In peace of God from above, let us pray to the Lord.

For the peace of the whole world; and for the peace, unity and faithful service of the churches of God in this and every land.

R. Hear us O Lord.

(Participants were the invited to add their own personal intentions).

The Lord's Prayer: Sung.

The Sign of Peace.

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, send forth your Spirit to enlighten our minds and dispose our hearts to accept your truth. Help us to listen to one another with openness and honesty, eager to learn from the talents and intuitions that you have given each of us. Never let differences of opinions diminish our mutual esteem and love. May we leave this meeting with more knowledge and love for you and your son in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

Closing Hymn: Give Thanks to the Lord.

Closing Prayer

Hymn: Breathe on me breath of God.

Psalmody: Ant. Lord God be my refuge and my strength.

In you O lord I take refuge	Be a rock of refuge for me
Let me never be put to shame	A mighty stronghold to save me
In your justice, set me free	For you are my rock, my stronghold
Hear me and speedily rescue me.	For your name sake lead me and guide

Release me from the snares they have hidden
For you are my refuge, Lord.
Into your hands I commend my spirit,
It is you who will redeem me, lord. Glory.

Scripture Reading: I John 5: 3-5.

The love of God consists in this: that we keep his commandments- and his commandments are not burdensome. Everyone begotten of God conquers the world, and the power that has conquered the world is this faith of ours. Who, then, is conqueror of the world? The one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Responsory:

They will be crowned with everlasting joy, alleluia, alleluia.
Gladness and rejoicing will be their inheritance- **Alleluia, alleluia...**
Glory be to the Father.. **They will**

The Angelus:

The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary
And she conceived by the Holy Spirit. *Hail Mary*

Behold the handmaid of the lord
Be it done unto according to your word. *Hail Mary*

And the Word was made flesh
And dwelt among us. *Hail Mary.*

Prayer: Pour forth, we beg you O Lord, your grace into our hearts: that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by his passion and cross be brought to the glory of his resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord.

APPENDIX III
OUTLINE OF PROGRAM

Each of the five sessions consisted of the following:

1. **Opening Prayer.** This was intended and arranged for the sanctification of the morning.

2. **Lecture/ Instructions.** The lectures and the instructions provided a theology elucidation of the Eucharist so that the participants were better equipped to understand the structure of the Eucharist, and to be able to differentiate between the Sunday Eucharist and Sunday celebration in the absence of a priest.

3. **Break for refreshments and snacks.**

4. **Discussions.** Reflection / questions/ instructions/ sharing of personal experiences were intended to clarify ambiguities and uncertainties that may have arisen from the lectures and discussions and also to help the participants deepen and integrate their ministerial self-understanding as lay ministers;

5. **Faith Sharing.** The Liturgy is an essential component of religious education which draws people into an intensified experience that God's life is mediated to them in love. Using several focus questions that were based on the Eucharist therefore provided the participants with a wide range of reflections, insights and observations for the faith sharing exercise.

6. **Reading Assignments.** In preparation for the following week the participants were given reading assignments to help them better understanding each session.

7. **Closing Prayer.** In this prayer we thanked God for bestowing his blessings over each session.

APPENDIX IV
STRUCTURE

Structure of the Sunday Eucharist

Entrance Rite

Entrance Song
Greeting
Penitential rite
Kyrie
Gloria
Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

Readings
Psalm Response
Alleluia
Gospel
Homily

Profession of Faith
General Intercession

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts
Eucharistic Prayer
Thanksgiving
Sanctus
Epiclesis (invocation of
the Holy Spirit)
Institution narrative and
Consecration
Anamnesis
Intercessions

Final Doxology
Communion Rite
Lord's Prayer
Sign of Peace
Breaking of the Bread
Commingling
Agnus Dei
Communion
Prayer after communion

Concluding Rite

Greeting and Blessing
Dismissal

The Structure of Sunday Celebration in the Absence of the Priest.

Introductory Rite

Greeting
Opening Prayer
Liturgy of the Word
Responsorial Psalm
Gospel Acclamation
Gospel

Homily
The Profession of Faith
Prayers of the Faithful
Communion Rite
The Lord's Prayer

Invitation to Communion
Communion
Act of Thanksgiving
Concluding Rite

APPENDIX V
ABBREVIATIONS

AA	<i>Apostolicam actuositatem</i> : The Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People.
AGD	<i>Ad gentes divinitus</i> : The Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church.
CCC	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> .
CIC	<i>Codex Juris Canonici</i> : The Code of Canon Law.
CD	<i>Christus Dominus</i> : The Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church.
DC	<i>Dominicae Cena</i> : <i>On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist</i>
DSCAP	Directory for Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest.
DD	<i>Dies Domini</i> : <i>On Keeping the Lord's Day Holy</i>
DV	<i>Dei Verbum</i> : The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation.
EA	<i>Ecclesia in America</i> : The Church in America.
EDE	<i>Ecclesia de Eucharistia</i> : On the Eucharist in its relationship to the Church.
GIRM	General Instruction of the Roman Missal.
GS	<i>Gaudium et spes</i> : The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> : The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.
MND	<i>Mane nobiscum Domine</i> : Stay With us Lord.
OT	<i>Optatam totius</i> : The Decree on Priestly Training.
PO	<i>Presbyterorum ordinis</i> : The Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests.
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> : The Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy.
SacCar	<i>Sacramentum caritatis</i> : The Sacrament of Charity
UR	<i>Unitatis redintegratio</i> : The Decree on Ecumenism.

USCCB United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

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