

Reflections on Renewal

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Lay Ecclesial Ministry and the Church

Edited by
Donna M. Eschenauer
and
Harold Daly Horell



A Michael Glazier Book

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Foreword

I had the privilege to serve on the committee that guided the development of Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord. Some committees are fun to work on and some are not so much fun, but I can honestly say that this particular committee was one of the most energizing and exciting committees that I have ever worked on for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). There was a tremendous amount of dialogue and collaboration. The document and its formulation helped me initiate an institute in lay ecclesial ministry.

To begin, I want to reflect on the past of lay ecclesial ministry. I suggest that lay ecclesial ministry is not new; it was part of the church from its very beginning. Jesus, as we know, gave certain responsibilities to the twelve apostles who participated in his mission. However, we also see very clearly in Luke's Gospel, chapter ten, that Jesus sent out the seventy-two in pairs ahead of him to every place he intended to visit. There was a real sense of collaboration and sharing in that mission. He sent them out with authority. With the mission to care for the people in general, especially the sick, Jesus sent them to announce that the Reign of God is at hand.

When we look at Paul's own ministry as an apostle in Romans, chapter sixteen (I love this quote), Paul says, "Greet Prisca and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only am I grateful but also all the churches of the Gentiles" (vv. 3-4). Additionally, in Paul's letter to the Corinthians he talks about the various ministries; specifically he mentions the ministries of teaching, administration, and healing. I suggest that in many ways lay ecclesial ministry, this sharing in the mission and the ministry of Christ, is not new.

To put this into a Christian theological context, we believe that all of us, through our baptism, are called to live in the triune God; we are called to share in the life of the risen Christ, and to be a witness of that life to the world. Through our baptism, God calls us to build and to form community with one another. We are called to live out that baptismal commitment to transform the world so that the Christ living in us may

be given to others. This transformation is the responsibility and the mission of *all* the baptized.

From among the baptized, we believe that some are called and sent to lead and to serve God's people in a more committed way, to make the ministry and the mission of Jesus Christ present today by their lives. I would say that historically there have been times in the church when lay ecclesial ministry has been strong: lay ecclesial ministers have worked very collaboratively with the ordained. There are other times in the church when ordained ministry was seen as the *only* ministry.

We live in a time when we must ask, "How do we bring lay and ordained ministries together?" The goal of lay ecclesial ministry is to foster the mission and the ministry of Jesus Christ. Through lay ecclesial ministry, we are encouraging the ordained and the laity to work together and truly be co-workers in the vineyard of the Lord. The church will become richer and more alive as lay ecclesial ministry continues to develop.

I want to turn now to look at the present reality. What *is* lay ecclesial ministry? First, it means that we have laypeople in the church who are given the authority and responsibility of service and leadership. Second, what they do is ecclesial; it has a place within the community of the church. Their ministry *is* in communion with the church. The ministry serves the church and makes present the mission and the ministry of Jesus Christ. It is ecclesial because it is grounded in the church, and because it is discerned, authorized, and supported by the church at large. It is ecclesial ministry because it shares in and fosters the three-fold ministry of Jesus Christ: his ministry of priesthood (prayer, and offering oneself in prayer); the prophetic role of teaching and preaching the word of God; and the role of leader or shepherding. The present reality is that our church is very, very blessed by a large number of lay ecclesial ministers in the world.

Who are these people? They are pastoral associates, catechetical leaders, youth ministry leaders, school principals, directors of liturgy, pastoral musicians, and others. These ministers serve at the parish level, but we cannot neglect that there are many lay ecclesial ministers in hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, and clinics. In recent times, the number of lay ecclesial ministers has grown significantly. When Co-Workers was written, there were over thirty thousand lay ecclesial ministers, working at least twenty hours a week, in paid positions throughout the United States and another twenty-six hundred parish volunteers who worked at least twenty hours. There are also over two thousand lay ecclesial ministers in hospitals, health care, college campuses, prisons, seaports, and airports in our country. The National Catholic Educational Association reminds us

that there are just over seven thousand principals of Catholic elementary schools and high schools. The church would not fulfill its mission if it were not for lay ecclesial ministers. Lay ecclesial ministers, working in the church and with others in ministry, make the church and the mission of Christ more alive, more visible, and more active.

Moving on to the present reality, I suggest that while we find great effectiveness in lay ecclesial ministry, we also need to look at where lay ecclesial ministry is not effective, perhaps even ineffective. We have to be honest in looking at that reality. What makes the difference? First, lay ecclesial ministry is effective where we have people who are rooted personally in prayer and who are educated and formed. Their gifts and their faith are recognized. They are invited by the church and sent by the church to take on ministerial responsibilities, and they become extremely close collaborators with others who are in ordained ministry. A person who is an effective lay ecclesial minister is committed to continuing education and is accepted and respected by other people in ministry. In addition, their gifts are used, their charism is obvious, and they see themselves as sharing in the ministry of Christ himself. I believe those characteristics are present where we have effective lay ecclesial ministry.

Nevertheless, I suggest that we have to look at the opposite side of that. Where is there ineffective lay ecclesial ministry? It seems to me that some ministers, paid or not paid, are not adequately prepared. They do not have the spiritual formation, the theological formation, the human formation, and the pastoral formation to do the task that we have entrusted to them. In some cases, their education in theology is either weak or non-existent. Very often, they have received no spiritual formation. They have generous hearts but have not been formed, spiritually or theologically. In order to teach reading, math, and science, a teacher has to be certified by the state. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that in one of our schools the religion teachers had not been certified. In one case, the teacher had never taken a theology course. Those who are directing or serving on staffs and leadership in social ministry, religious education, worship, campus ministry, youth ministry, prison chaplaincy, and healthcare need more than good will; they need to be prepared—truly formed in faith. Those who are not effective in lay ecclesial ministry very often do not see or understand the mission of the church, but they often see their role to be one of control, or perhaps they have a need for this. It seems to me that when people are ineffective, they do not have the ability (or have not been taught how) to collaborate with others. They tend to be more interested in their own turf than the mission and ministry of Christ.

I suggest that there are some definite challenges before us, as we move forward and as we try to live out what has been put before us in Co-Workers. Specifically, I am suggesting that there are ten challenges that we face. For some of these, I have partial answers; for others, I have no answers, but by prayer, the guidance of the Spirit, and by living the challenges out, I believe that we will be shown the way.

The first challenge I suggest is that the church must continue to encourage lay ecclesial ministry. As we continue to move forward, we must refine the definition of lay ecclesial ministry. I think the definition we have in Co-Workers is a wonderful beginning, but as we move forward, we do need to ask the questions, “Can we develop that definition better? Can we describe lay ecclesial ministry better?”

Second, we believe, and it is clearly stated in the document, that people are called to lay ecclesial ministry; that it is a vocation, a calling, a vocation within a vocation. Our first vocation is obviously the call to be baptized, and then of course the other vocations are the states in life. However, we believe that when a person is called by the church and sent, they have a vocation. This recognition, however, needs further studying, research and dialogue. How does vocation fit into this reality? What does that mean for our church? We would say that first, people either sense the call of God within themselves, or someone first invites them into considering ministry, and then they come to a realization of the call. That call must be discerned in prayer. If a person believes that the call may be truly God’s call to ministry, they would then enter into a period of preparation in order to exercise ministry. At some point the church has to say, “not only do you feel called to lay ecclesial ministry, but we as church, the people of God, along with other leaders of the church, see in you the gifts necessary to do ministry, and we need your gifts in order to fulfill the mission of Christ among us.” I think that this point needs further dialogue, study, and research because some people become uncomfortable when we talk about lay ecclesial ministry as a vocation.

Third, we must have, and I do not think I can emphasize this enough, not just formation programs but quality formation programs. I did not say education—but formation. Lay ecclesial ministers, those who are called by God and sent by the church, need to be formed. There are four pillars of formation: the human, the spiritual, the theological, and the pastoral. We need to ask the question (and this will vary from diocese to diocese, perhaps region to region): what are the prerequisites for candidates before formation programs accept them? What about a degree? Is that essential or not? How do we help a person have a balanced understanding of theology and of the church?

I would like to dwell just a little bit on these four pillars: the human, the spiritual, the theological, and the pastoral. All of us are probably most familiar with the theological. We have many schools, universities, and programs in dioceses that are providing theological education. However, as we know, to be a lay ecclesial minister, theological education is not enough. The knowledge of theology has to be integrated into our spirituality, into our relationship with God. A person in lay ecclesial ministry formation should have a spiritual director and should have courses in spirituality. Pastoral formation concerns how we communicate, how we lead God's people. I would suspect that the part of the formation that may be a surprise and may sound different is the dimension of human formation, so I would like to note the basic ingredients of human formation: "a basic understanding of self and others, psychological health, a mature sexuality, physical health, knowledge of one's personal gifts and special charisms and their relationship to the ministry, recognition of the traits and the abilities one lacks, understanding of family systems and dynamics, ability to learn from both praise and criticism, appreciation and valuing of racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity, a genuine respect and concern for others, virtues of Christian discipleship."¹ (When I read that, I am tempted to think to myself, "I should not be a minister!")

Fourth, I think we need to continue to talk about the important relationship between the ordained and the lay ecclesial minister. It would seem to me that the bishop, the priest, the deacon, and the lay ecclesial minister, though they have different functions and ministries, need one another. The lay ecclesial minister shares in the ministry of the bishop and collaborates with others. The lay minister is entrusted with specific responsibilities and leadership that make the church more alive. The purpose of focusing on lay ecclesial ministry is not to raise up an elite group or a different class, but is to recognize lay people who are giving themselves in leadership and service. Such ministry is truly ecclesial; it is connected to the very heart of the church, and it is the ministry of Christ. We need more discussion on the relationship between the bishop, priest, deacon, and the lay ecclesial minister.

Fifth, it seems to me that bishops, priests, and deacons, should be encouraged to see the need for lay ecclesial ministry, and to understand how it enhances who we are as a church. It is important to use opportunities to show seminarians the importance of lay ecclesial ministry, and this emphasis should be a part of their formation program. Likewise, the emphasis should be a part of the formation program for permanent deacons, and it would be a good topic to use for a convocation of priests. Commissioning for lay ministry makes the most theological sense if done

by the bishop. After people go through formation and upon the completion of formation and education, the bishop should accept them, and their credentials, and their gifts. He should recognize their charisms, and then authorize them within the diocese, the local church, to do ministry. This commissioning needs further discussion and research.

Sixth, where there is fear of lay ecclesial ministry and resistance, it is important that these realities are faced and discussed. Not to address these fears will cause tension in ministry, greater division, and "turfism."

Seventh, as mentioned earlier, all ministry is a sharing in the ministry of the bishop. It would seem appropriate for the bishop or his delegate to do the commissioning. Another question that requires discussion is, "How long is one commissioned and is it advisable to see permanency in such ministry?"

Eighth, as we continue to recognize the important reality of lay ecclesial ministry, we must practice what we preach, specifically in the area of just salaries and in benefits. That needs discussion. I do not have the answers to some of these questions, but I think they are important questions to be asked for the good of the church.

Ninth, how do we evaluate the ministry of lay ecclesial ministers? This is a complicated and important question. How do we help people grow in ministry?

Tenth, what process should be followed when a person requests a transfer from one parish or one ministry to another. What about the issue of termination when a person is not effective in ministry? These are complicated questions that need further deliberation!

Lay ecclesial ministry in the Catholic Church, in the United States, has an extremely bright future. There was a study done that was just published recently on young adult Catholics and their future in ministry.² The Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership sponsored the study and focused on the next generation of pastoral leaders. Without getting into too much detail, the study was based on interviews of college and university students from nineteen colleges, three of them Catholic; over a thousand people were interviewed. Then they conducted separate interviews of people who were involved in young adult groups in the dioceses and they interviewed over twelve hundred people. Interestingly, one-third of the college students who were interviewed and who were active in campus ministry said that they seriously were considering lay ecclesial ministry as a future vocation. One-half of those involved in young adult groups in dioceses said that they were interested in considering lay ecclesial ministry as a way of life, as a vocation. Eighty percent of

those who were interviewed said that they believe lay ecclesial ministry is a vocation and a call from God. That 80 percent said, “I believe God is calling me and has given me gifts in order to do ministry,” is, I think, a significant sign of how the Spirit is working in the church today. You may ask, “Well, what areas of ministry were they mostly interested in?” As one might expect, they answered that they were primarily interested in youth ministry or young adult ministry—that is where they are. Second on their list was religious education. The third most popular area of ministry was being a teacher or administrator of a Catholic school. And fourth, they were interested in becoming pastoral counselors or spiritual directors. Those were the four major ones. The question was also asked in this survey, “What would discourage you from becoming a lay ecclesial minister?” There were two major issues: first: “the wages might just be too low and I might not be able to support a family, or live properly myself,” and the second was, “will my gifts really be used?” “Will my gifts really be recognized and used?”

Interestingly, they were not discouraged when the interviewer said, “Well, you know you’re going to have to go into a formation program.” That was not a point of discouragement. Even the issue of job security and moving from place to place was not an issue. Their main motivation was the desire to live their faith actively, to share their faith, and to pass it on to others.

In conclusion, it seems to me that we are at a crossroads. When we look at the past, we see some periods in the history of our church when lay ecclesial ministry has been strong, and we need to revisit those times and learn from them. What about the present? I believe that *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* points us in a very positive direction; it gives us a vision. Someday we will rewrite *Co-Workers* as a document, but we will rewrite it by the way in which we live, and by the way in which we work together in ministry. We know that the Spirit of God leads us individually and is certainly leading the church. We must ask the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit so that we can know where the Spirit is calling us and how the Spirit is calling us. We need to be able to name our fears, claim our questions, and dialogue instead of becoming alienated. The Spirit is alive and will work in us and through us.

Archbishop Gregory Aymond

Notes

1. USCCB, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry* (USCCB, Washington, DC: 2005), 36-37.
2. Dean R. Hoge and Marti Jewell, *The Next Generation of Pastoral Leaders: What the Church Needs to Know* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2010).

The Fordham University Convocation

Donna Eschenauer

R*eflections on Renewal: Lay Ecclesial Ministry and the Church* is a venture committed to deepening the ongoing reflection about lay ecclesial ministry, and at the same time, it is committed to contributing to the work of renewal. Our book firmly supports the 2005 document, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)*, as a vital resource for the development of lay ecclesial ministry. The authors, however, address critical issues about ministry to stimulate greater awareness and scholarly research in the twenty-first century. Overall, *Reflections on Renewal: Lay Ecclesial Ministry and the Church* serves the work of the church. The essays offer insights for fostering a broader perspective of ministry and greater collaboration among all ministers.

This collection of essays was inspired by *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, the annual convocation sponsored by Fordham University's Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education (GSRRE). Our book is grounded in Fordham University's commitment to the church and its mission in the world. On April 4, 2008, the first *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* convocation commemorated the fortieth anniversary of the GSRRE, honoring the vision of the founding dean, Fr. Vincent Novak, SJ. Faculty, students, lay ministers, bishops, priests, and representatives from several colleges, universities, and dioceses gathered to reflect on the USCCB document: *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*. Since that time, the GSRRE continues to hold its annual convocation on this most important issue in the church. Of particular significance, because of the *Co-Workers* conferences, a pastoral consortium of Jesuits from various colleges and universities was formed.

Additionally, one cannot forget Fordham University's treasure in the astute wisdom and influence of Cardinal Avery Dulles. Without his intervention, the document *Co-Workers* may not have emerged in the way it did. In *Forward in Hope: Saying Amen to Lay Ecclesial Ministry*,

Bishop Matthew Clark captures a pivotal moment in the document's development. He writes:

In the midst of my brother bishops' deep discussion over what exactly 'ministry' is and whether or not the term can or should be associated with people who are not ordained, Cardinal Dulles rose to the floor. He spoke very strongly that such use of the word *ministry* was not a new development for the Church but rather has been part of our tradition for centuries. He spoke eloquently, as always, that we shouldn't fear using this kind of language about the laity, that this seemingly brand-new thing was not new at all.¹

Today, the GSRRE's vision, reflecting the Second Vatican Council, continues to energize religious education in all its forms (that is, in the classroom, the parish, family life, and in other arenas), and through its academic programs and events the GSRRE seeks to energize lay ecclesial ministry.

Personal experience prompts my own passion for lay ecclesial ministry. For over twenty years, I have worked full-time in a large suburban parish. As a laywoman, it is with deep joy that I serve the people of God on a daily basis. When I enter my office building, a poster announcing the newly ordained of our diocese hangs on the wall with the caption: "these men have answered a call to serve." This statement is true, and I honor the call of the ordained. However, as I read the sign I think to myself, "I too have answered a call to serve."

Thousands of laypeople have answered a call to serve the church. This call is rooted in a serious recognition of one's baptismal vocation to carry on the mission of Jesus Christ. In *Co-Workers*, the bishops affirm the universal call to holiness and the particular call of non-ordained persons to service in the church.

We are privileged to have Archbishop Gregory Aymond's encouraging closing remarks from the 2008 convocation in the Foreword of this book. Archbishop Aymond served on the committee that guided the development of *Co-Workers*; he describes his experience as energizing and exciting. While addressing the present and future of lay ecclesial ministry, Aymond also looks to its past and insists lay ministry is not new, rather it has been part of the church from the beginning.

The book is divided into two parts. The essays in part one (chapters one through four) affirm the work of *Co-Workers*. The first few chapters explore how the document provides a foundation for discussions of lay ecclesial ministry and the status of laypeople in the church. The essays

in part two (chapters five through thirteen) address critical concerns, raise questions for deeper conversation, and offer possible pathways for the ongoing development of ministry in general, and especially what is currently called lay ecclesial ministry.

Part One begins with “The Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry in the United States” (chapter one) by Richard McCord. McCord provides the story of lay ecclesial ministry in the United States. He concisely examines the meaning of lay ecclesial ministry, highlights its growth, presents some characteristics of its development, and offers questions for its future growth.

In chapter two, “How Co-Workers Came to be Written,” Amy Hoey, RSM, outlines the collaboration in the development of the document. She summarizes the deliberations that took place when Co-Workers was written, and provides a historical context with a brief look at the years between 1980 and 2005, citing other significant documents that emerged during that period. Hoey makes a most important point: lay ecclesial ministry is not a response to the declining number of priests; rather it is the work of the Holy Spirit among us today.

Chapter three, “From Communion to Mission: The Theology of Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord,” by Edward Hahnenberg, is a striking reflection on the dynamic of God’s work in the emergence of lay ministry. Hahnenberg views the theology of Co-Workers through the prisms of communion and mission. He discusses the rich significance of communion, or interrelationship, among the diverse ministries in the church. In addition, the theology expressed in Co-Workers, writes Hahnenberg, is Trinitarian. According to Co-Workers, ministry is essentially about healthy *interpersonal* and *ecclesial* relationships of service. In the same vein, Hahnenberg emphasizes that mission is the context of communion, and the goal of all ministry. In the end, he affirms that baptism commissions the communion of ministers for mission.

In chapter four, “Engaging in a Collective Gasp: A Historical Perspective on Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord,” Anthony Ciorra examines the history of ministry from the Council of Trent to the Second Vatican Council. He offers an ecclesiology for lay ecclesial ministry that is rooted in the work of Cardinal Avery Dulles. Ciorra also proposes that the lives and mission of two giants in our church, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Ignatius of Loyola, can serve as patron saints for lay ecclesial ministry.

Part two of the book deepens and guides the flow of the conversation toward genuine renewal. Kieran Scott’s chapter, “Swimming Against the Tide: Language and Political Design in Lay Ecclesial Ministry” (chapter

five), is pivotal to this book. He skillfully and prophetically explores the relationships between language, practice, and the institutional order of the church. Using philosophical analysis, Scott constructively attends to the importance of language modification and its direct effect on institutional renewal. Such attention to language is often neglected in the pastoral and educational ministries of the church. The chapter also explores the dilemma associated with the phrase “lay ecclesial ministry.” Like others, Scott recognizes the ambiguity of this phrase and argues that our language reflects our ecclesiology and the ministerial nature of the church. With sound conviction, Scott proposes a reshaping of ministerial language for the health, survival, and mission of the church.

Bishop Howard Hubbard’s essay, “Lay Ministry and the Challenges Facing the Church” (chapter six) pays tribute to a century-long process of renewal resulting in the explosion of lay ministries since Vatican II’s proclamation of the church as “the people of God.” This shift renews our understanding of baptism and the universal call to active participation. The notion of lay ministry then evolved more deeply through postconciliar documents and the work of the USCCB. Like Hoey, Bishop Hubbard stresses that lay ministry is not the result of the decline in vocations to the ordained or vowed life, but results from appreciating laypeople’s gifts and charisms for building the Kingdom of God. Embracing this vision and moving forward are not without challenges. From his personal experience as a diocesan bishop, Hubbard explores the challenges and tensions associated with the responsibility of fulfilling the mission and ministry of the church.

In chapter seven, “Being a Minister and Doing Ministry: A Psychological Approach,” Lisa Cataldo draws on psychoanalytic theory to examine how the inseparable models of being and doing underlie both lay and ordained ministry. Exploring the necessary elements of being and doing that are integral to the call to ministry, Cataldo engages the work of theologian Edward Hahnenberg and two psychoanalysts Donald Winnicott and Heinz Kohut. Moreover, she cautions that splitting these two elements is dangerous. Overall, Cataldo examines how the categories of *being and doing* and *lay and ordained* can be vehicles for realizing more fully our shared vocation as baptized persons.

“A Latino/a Perspective on Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord” (chapter eight) addresses a timely and important issue for the church in the United States. Claudio Burgaleta explores how Co-Workers adequately addresses the situation of Latino/a lay ministry in the United States, while at the same time he presents a constructive critique for

further responding to the growing Hispanic presence in the church. Burgaleta offers important statistics that help us to understand the different aspects of the Latino/a Catholic community in the United States. He applauds the document's awareness of an already multicultural church that invites local adaptation. However, Burgaleta contends that the rich Latino/a charismatic experience merits greater attention in future revisions of this document. In addition, like Kieran Scott and others, Burgaleta proposes reconsideration of the term "lay ecclesial minister."

"The Sacraments of Initiation: A Guiding Theme for the Future Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry" (chapter nine) by Donna Eschenauer further develops the emerging understanding of lay ecclesial ministry. The chapter takes a liturgical perspective that fosters a spirit of participation, imagination, and celebration. Inspired by the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, mandated for use in the United States in 1988, Eschenauer explores the three sacraments of initiation—baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist—and shows how they ground lay ecclesial ministry.

Chapter ten, "Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord and an Evolving Ministry," by Zeni Fox, explores whether Co-Workers can assist the ongoing evolution of ministry in the years ahead. Offering a succinct assessment of the document, Fox probes lay ecclesial ministry by looking at the origins of Co-Workers and developments in lay ministry. She applauds the theological vision of the document while acknowledging the need for greater clarity regarding the lay ecclesial minister. She concludes with some issues that require further reflection.

"Formation of Lay Ecclesial Ministries: Rooted in a Genuinely Lay and Ecclesial Spirituality" (chapter eleven) by Janet Ruffing, RSM, examines the emerging vocation of lay ecclesial ministers and proposes a better way to understand lay spirituality. She emphasizes vocational discernment, saying that for many laywomen and laymen, their vocation is to church ministry. Ruffing suggests that discipleship and conversion are a way of life. In addition, she reflects on the value of striving to nurture a paschal spirituality nurtured through the Gospel throughout the liturgical cycle of feasts and seasons.

Michael P. Horan's "Ministry in Service to an Adult Church: How Lay Ministry Fosters Mature Faith in the Catholic Parish" (chapter twelve) looks at lay ecclesial ministry through the lens of religious educational and pastoral theology. Horan pays particular attention to lay ministers as public professional leaders. He also considers the lay minister as a "living parable," stirring people to conscious faith. Like others, he challenges the ambiguity of the term "lay ecclesial minister." Significantly,

Horan picks up on the blurring of the distinction between volunteer lay ministers and professional lay ministers. He notes that professional lay ministers tend to be more concerned than volunteers with developing ministerial skills, establishing specific educational and professional goals, and seeking ecclesial leadership roles and authorization for their ministry. Horan also argues that clearer distinctions between volunteer, professional lay, and ordained ministry are needed if we are to encourage collaborative ministry in the church today.

Harold D. Horell concludes the book with “A Cause for Rejoicing: Hopes and Horizons for Lay Ecclesial Ministry” (chapter 13). The chapter reflects on critical issues concerning the development of ministry, especially lay ecclesial ministry. With honest sensitivity to justice, Horell affirms the signs of hope in the Spirit’s presence and action within the church. Undoubtedly, this is a cause for rejoicing! The essay specifically explores how the sacraments of initiation provide a common foundation for all ministries, presents an understanding of ministerial functions and roles that can enable us to develop a better understanding of lay ecclesial ministry, and examines how the involvement of laymen and laywomen in the secular world affects the ongoing development of lay ecclesial ministry. Each of these issues is explored in the light of the challenges and signs of renewal found within the church today. The chapter concludes by considering the importance of being open to the continuing guidance of the Spirit in further developing lay ecclesial ministry.

In order to promote deeper reflection on the various aspects of Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, each chapter concludes with reflection questions that serve as a springboard for conversation about future development and renewal.

The pages that follow are grace-filled endeavors that capture the significance of Co-Workers for the mission of the church. Each essay brings the reality of lay ecclesial ministry to the forefront and at the same time urges us to stop and ask critical questions that can lead us toward holistic growth and development. The essays presented in this volume prompt vital reflection regarding the responsibility of all the baptized. Perhaps the most compelling gift of Vatican II is an on-going appreciation that the baptismal vocation is central to renewal and, most important, that lay and ordained ministers should genuinely collaborate. In this regard, I am reminded of a homily preached at the Easter Vigil many years ago. The pastor humbly pronounced this statement: “Peter’s baptism tonight is more important than my ordination.” His intent was not to lessen the importance of ordination. Rather, he was acknowledging that he was

ordained because of his baptism. In the same vein, lay ecclesial ministry, in all its forms, acknowledges that all of the baptized are called to serve.

Since April 2008, Fordham University continues its commitment to Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord. This book reflects the sustained efforts of faculty, alumni, and students of the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education and their persistent dedication to educating leaders for sound mission in the church and society.

Notes

1. Bishop Matthew H. Clark, *Forward in Hope: Saying Amen to Lay Ecclesial Ministry* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2009), 2.