Theological and Liturgical Dimensions of Ecclesial Authorization for U.S. Catholic Lay Ecclesial Ministers

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THEOLOGICAL AND LITURGICAL DIMENSIONS OF ECCLESIAL
AUTHORIZATION FOR U.S. CATHOLIC LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTERS

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ABSTRACT

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This work provides steps toward a practical understanding of the changing ministerial relationships in the U.S. Catholic Church given the rapid increase in lay ecclesial ministers (“LEMs”) and decline in ordained priests. New ecclesial relationships develop through shifts in ecclesial ministry; formalizing these new relationships, the study argues, will allow for smoother transitions in parishes and a deeper theological understanding of the Church as a whole.

After outlining and exploring the Church’s theological understandings of LEMs as called, having a particular vocation, and able to provide us with unique contributions, the author posits that liturgical celebrations for installing LEMs can help situate ministers within new ecclesial and structural relationships.

The liturgical elements that should be included in installation rituals are the Eucharist, the proclamation of Scripture, and the use of formal liturgical language in a
Mass. The laying-on of hands would seem a natural addition as well. Diocesan-wide celebrations in addition to parish celebrations and bishop presiders can also help to express the developing theology of LEMs as called, formed, and gifted.

Liturgy can help to develop a contemporary ecclesiology of the lay ecclesial minister. This includes not only defining the roles of the various ministers, but also (and especially) drawing together theological understandings of these roles and devising liturgical reflections of the deepened understandings—which will, in turn, further increase our understanding. As the Church develops this theology and answers more of these questions, it can then transmit and perpetuate the Church’s developing understandings through liturgy.

This work concludes that liturgical installations can help lay ecclesial ministers feel empowered and fill them with the Holy Spirit. The installation rituals can also function as a form of liturgical catechesis, helping to develop and communicate theological understandings of the new ecclesial relationships.
DEDICATION

To my beloved husband, James Yount, who is truly the love of my life and my best supporter.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge my dissertation director, Maureen O’Brien, whose knowledge and attention to detail are priceless. Also, to all of the lay ecclesial ministers who enrich the Catholic Church in many ways: thank you. I hope that as the Catholic Church’s ministerial understanding develops we, the members, are ever mindful of the gifts you bring to us.
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General Introduction

The contemporary American Catholic Church is in a quandary. There are more lay ministers assuming leadership positions in churches—this is partly due to the priest shortage, but also because there is an enhanced appreciation of lay people in parishes—but few people (in American society in general, in parishes, in universities, in ordained ministry, or even in the lay ecclesial ministry positions themselves) seem to understand the roles and positions of these ministers. In part this is because the opportunities available to ministers, and the ways that they are needed in parishes, are evolving. This dynamism is good, and it is the best way for the Roman Catholic Church to get its needs met (i.e., by having a flexible ministry that can grow to assist in various ways).

However, lay ecclesial ministry (LEM) needs to have a solid theological, ecclesiological foundation so that people in all of the above-mentioned areas can reflect on, formulate ideas about, and discuss what is happening within the Church and within the fields of ministry and ecclesiology. Our developing understandings of the theological significance and the praxis of LEM need to become a part of the Church’s ecclesiological thought. For this to happen we need a common understanding of the need for LEM, what it means to be a lay ecclesial minister, and how to pass on and perpetuate this theology.¹

¹ While it is true that this theology of LEM is still developing, like most of the theological foundations and ecclesiological understandings within the Church, this “unfolding” does not preclude the Church from expressing its current understanding. In fact, expressing a current understanding is an important step in the process of growing in understanding. As LEM becomes something that is more often discussed and enacted, its theology will become further developed and its concrete expressions can likewise develop. And the reverse is true as well: as the concrete expressions adapt to the changing needs, so does the theology further develop, thus enriching the concrete expressions.
The state of the field is such that, for example, we still have some people who refer to lay ecclesial ministers (LEMs) responsible for overseeing the administration of a parish as “those who function in the absence of a priest.” This type of language both expresses and perpetuates the notion that the lay ecclesial minister is in this leadership position in the parish only because there is not a priest available. While this may, practically speaking, be the reason why a particular position was opened up to a lay person, this type of language is an injustice. It envisions the contributions of the lay ecclesial minister as limited to simply being a “placeholder,” someone who is holding that spot until the numbers of priests increase so that we can eventually replace these ministers with priests. The upshot of this kind of “placeholder” thinking is that people who are exposed to it get the impression that we do not really need that particular minister—the church will use him or her for the time being, but hopes that eventually the lay minister will not be needed.

In fact, the numbers of American priests are not rising at the same rate as LEMs. The number of LEMs is increasing, and part of the reason for this is because there is a growing recognition that LEM is a vocation in its own right, and one that is distinct from (although in partnership with) the ministry of ordained ministers. As the theology of LEM develops, the U.S. Roman Catholic Church is increasingly recognizing that LEMs bring with them special, unique gifts that are necessary to the Church. More lay ministry positions are being created and many more positions which used to be volunteer or part time are becoming full time instead. The number of U.S. Catholic churches employing

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2 These increases in LEMs and in the Church’s escalating reliance on, and appreciation for, LEMs are not limited to the United States, but I specify this area because it is the focus of this work.
LEMs at least twenty hours per week continues to increase, from 54 percent of parishes in 1990 to 66 percent in 2005. This means that, in just fifteen years, the number of U.S. Catholic parishes employing full-time LEMs went from a slight majority to almost two-thirds.

How can we communicate this growing understanding of the meaningfulness of lay ministers both to the ministers themselves as well as to the rest of the parish members? The best way to accomplish this is to teach people that lay ministers are called, have a vocation, and can provide unique contributions. In this work I explore the theological roots of a Catholic theology of ministry, looking at Scripture and tradition, including insights from theologians, regarding “call” and “vocation.”

In understanding what it means to be a LEM, theologians have returned to scriptural sources for insights, and this is what we look at in chapter 1. In this first chapter I trace the theological and liturgical development of LEMs in Scripture and relevant Church documents. Throughout this section I examine foundations for ministry in the Old and New Testaments, including an analysis of the notions of “call,” “vocation,” and duties/responsibilities involved in ministry. Paul’s writings emphasize the “giftedness” of all members of the Church and the need for unity in mission. Works from contemporary theologians and documents from, and after, Vatican II help us reclaim

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4 In the Old Testament section this is mostly accomplished by way of an analysis of the duties of priests, since the data on that form of ministry is richest for the Old Testament period. In the New Testament section, I examine the recurrent themes of discipleship to learn more about views of ministry.
the notion of the baptismal priesthood and use it to inform our theology of ministry. Documents by the U.S. bishops contribute to our understanding of what LEM is and how we can fulfill the potential of ministers.

After examining the theological foundations and developments of LEM in Scripture and “official” Church documents, I analyze selected theological treatments of LEM in chapter 2. This chapter sets up the problem by demonstrating the need for an ordering of ministries and for consistent systems of recognition of LEM, which I will later go on to recommend and describe. In chapter 3 I explore the likely ramifications of ritual and liturgical practices on the authorization of LEMs, establishing that ritual can transform individuals and societies, including causing and bringing to fruition a shift in competency and social status.

In chapter 4 I apply the ritual and liturgical theory from chapter 3, which results in guidelines for formulating and adapting liturgy (and its specific rituals) to keep it relevant and then apply this specifically to the case of the installation of LEMs. The main question answered in this chapter is “How can we preserve, develop, and transmit through liturgy the theological underpinnings for a theology of ministry such as the notions of vocation, gifts of the Holy Spirit, and call, while upholding the integrity of our theological notion of the mission and vocation of LEMs?” The answer includes an examination of how to adapt rites to specific situations.

Chapter 5 draws together the previous sections by building on the case for consistent installation rituals in the United States. I suggest elements that should be present in these consistent rituals to meet the goals of ritual (from chapter 3) while preserving their structure in such a way that the rites are adapted to the specific situation.
following the guidelines outlined in chapter 4. This helps to reinforce the theological foundations that undergird both ministry in general and the particular lay ecclesial ministries (utilizing the material from chapters 1 and 2). Thus, the work concludes with specific elements that should be included in liturgical installations in order to carry forward the developed and evolving theology of LEM and resituate the new lay ecclesial minister within the existing ecclesiological structure generally and within the parish specifically.

Having a consistent installation ritual for specific types of LEMs can help empower the minister and resituate him or her within the ecclesiological structure. This is important: it can provide many benefits to the Church as a whole. Not only can liturgical installations help the lay ecclesial minister feel pride in his or her mission, but, if sacramental, it can be a vehicle for enriching the minister’s gifts. Additionally, it can allow the receiving church, the church in which the minister will perform his or her service, to both understand and help bring about the fulfillment of the minister’s vocation.

The benefits of the resituation of the minister in the ecclesiological structure, the enriching of the minister’s gifts (along with the congregation’s participation in the communal celebration that brings this about), and the fruits that could come from the developments of these new relationships (between the congregation and the minister and the minister and the larger Church) extend beyond just those to the minister and the church in which the minister will serve. In fact, they can impact the Catholic Church as a whole.
Not only are liturgical installations of LEMs transformative, but they also can transmit our theological understandings of LEM. Doing this can help develop the theology as well as pass it on—both of these tasks would enrich the Church by increasing the deposit of faith. Additionally, all of the above benefits of liturgical installations of LEMs would bring about a good to which the Church needs to pay particular attention: that of meeting the needs of its LEMs. This is a social justice issue. If we are going to ask our LEMs to help build up the Church, then we need to recognize that this is what they are doing and support them in it. It is unjust to define a minister by a lack, as happens when people refer to the men and women who perform this ministry as “those who function in the absence of a priest.” This is a disservice to the minister and also to theology (in denying our understandings of vocation, giftedness, etc.), which could be destructive to the whole body of Christ, both because we are limiting our flourishing by perpetuating an injustice and because we will discourage LEMs by not acknowledging what they can bring to the Church.

Bishops, priests, parish administrators, theologians, and other Church members have asked how to increase the number of lay respondents to address the growing needs, how to distinguish between LEMs and other laity, what the various capacities of service for LEMs are (including director of religious education, pastoral associate, youth minister, campus minister, hospital chaplain, etc.), how the Church can support LEMs effectively, and more.

Part of the answer to these questions lies in ritual. Liturgical catechesis (used here in the sense of teaching people through liturgy) is an effective vehicle for passing on the tenets of the faith, and this study will assert that liturgical celebrations and ritual are
especially important to the development and perpetuation of an appreciation for lay ministers in the Church.

Rituals that install LEMs should communicate the Church’s enriched understanding of the roles of these ministers. There has been a recent increase in the number of theologians studying the various facets of lay ecclesial ministry, especially the theological foundations for our understanding of lay ministry and the implications of the growing number of these ministers. These studies, though important, rarely examine how we transmit our theological understandings to the ministers and their congregations—indeed, to the Church as a whole. The ideal way of transmitting this content is through ritual and liturgical celebrations that highlight the fact that lay ecclesial ministry is a vocation, something to which the minister is called, and the result of a discernment process (on the part of both the congregation and the minister).

This study underscores the need for universal installation rituals for LEMs and proposes liturgical elements that should be included in these liturgies (and I will suggest that the rituals be in the context of a liturgy) for use in U.S. dioceses. It explores theological understandings of the role that rituals play in our consciousness and delves into how we can adapt rituals while preserving the meaning and “operation” of the rituals. Additionally, this study goes beyond a critique of the current ritual installations to provide the first steps toward a model of installation and recognition of LEMs in all U.S. dioceses. It examines the meaning conveyed by specific ritual practices and proposes liturgical elements that reflect our contemporary theological understanding of LEMs, elements that should be included in all liturgical authorizations of LEMs.
Chapter 1. A Historical and Theological Overview of Lay Ecclesial Ministry

I. Introduction

The origins and contemporary expression of ministry in the Roman Catholic Church today are highly debated. Examining the roles in the Old and New Testaments can contribute to the discussion, although part of the root of the controversy is that the data from these sources are open to different interpretations. In this chapter I examine the scriptural evidence (along with some of the corresponding interpretations) and trace the development of the theology of ministry, especially lay ministry, through selected Church documents. Special attention will be paid to authorization, which is ultimately the focus of this endeavor.

II. The Old Testament

In the Old Testament period the priesthood was seen as the main form of ministry, so I will examine this form of leadership first. The role of the priest (kohen) was filled differently at various times in the Old Testament. The heads of families or tribal groups originally performed what we see as priestly functions (e.g., offering sacrifice), but as the social organization of Israel developed, the office of the priesthood surfaced.\(^5\)

Deuteronomy⁶ and Numbers tell us much about the Israelite priesthood.⁷ In general, priests are seen as teachers of the law, judges, mediators between humans and God through the offering of sacrifices, and vehicles for messages from God to humanity through the Urim and Thummim (a concept which later died out). Raymond Brown describes priests from the pre-monarchical time period as altar attendants.⁸ He explains that the functions of the Israelite priesthood were diverse, some of which involved mediation from God to humanity while others entailed speaking for humanity to God.

After the beginning of the monarchy of Israel the power and professionalism of priests grew. The functions of a priest were seen, increasingly, as limited to professionals.⁹ A shift in the perception of the holiness of priests occurred: their purity was understood as a special ritual holiness because of their distance from the profane.¹⁰

Deuteronomy 33:8–11, a part of the larger blessing of Moses, tells us much about the priestly activity during the monarchical period, outlining the functions of the priesthood, probably in order of importance:¹¹

And of Levi he said: Give to Levi your Thummim, and your Urim to your loyal one, whom you tested at Massah, with whom you contended at the waters of Meribah; who said of his father and mother, “I regard them not”; he ignored his kin, and did not acknowledge his children. For they observed your word, and kept your covenant. They teach Jacob your ordinances, and Israel your law; they place incense before you, and whole burnt offerings on your altar. Bless, O Lord, his substance, and

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⁶ Especially 33:8–11 (part of the “Mosaic Blessing”).
⁷ The distinctions within the notion of the “Israelite priesthood” will be explored shortly.
⁸ Brown, Priest and Bishop, 12.
¹⁰ Ibid., 191. This shift in perception seems to have been a self-perpetuating cycle: as the priest became more removed from the “profane,” he was perceived as more “holy”; and as the priest was seen as more holy, he became more removed from the profane.
¹¹ Ibid., 10.
accept the work of his hands; crush the loins of his adversaries, of those that hate him, so that they do not rise again.

Clearly the consultation of the Urim and Thummim, which involved casting lots to discern God’s answer to a question, was an important part of the priesthood during this time (See 1 Sam. 14:41–42). The priest was seen as “proclaiming God’s will to men.”

The function of teaching was also oriented from God to people, as the Law was given to priests so that they would communicate it to others (Jer. 18:18; Mal. 2:6). In Deuteronomy 30 we can see that the priests were instilling in the people a dynamic spirituality which was to be expressed in the way that they lived their lives: “Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is…very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe. See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity” (Deut. 30:11, 14–15). Ronald E. Clements informs us that the role of the Levites as teachers of the law “became increasingly [the priests’] responsibility in the early post-exilic age.” In fact, teaching the law is a major way that the deuteronomists saw the role of the priests.

Another important role of priests was offering sacrifice and cultic offerings from humanity to God. The person who brought an animal sacrifice killed it, and the priest was only involved in the parts of the sacrifice that involved approaching the altar.

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12 וְהָאורים הָאוֹרִים, variously translated as “lights and perfections,” or, more allegorically, “revelation and truth.” Brown (Priest and Bishop, 10–13) discusses both the function of the Urim and Thummim and their etymology.

13 Brown, Priest and Bishop, 10.

14 Ibid., 10.

15 Ibid., 11.


17 Ibid., 536.

18 Brown, Priest and Bishop, 12n.
In Exodus 25–27 Moses is instructed to build the sanctuary and the altar for, according to P, a kind of new sacrificial worship.\(^{19}\) Exodus 28:1 reveals Yahweh telling Moses to “Then bring near to you your brother Aaron, and his sons with him, from among the Israelites, to serve me as priests.” These priests are to be exclusively Aaron and his sons, and, in the future, their descendants. Moses does as he is commanded (Exod. 35–40, Lev. 8), and then Aaron for the first time performs the altar ritual (Lev. 9).\(^{20}\)

Lester Grabbe explores the roles of the two orders of priests. There is a distinction made between the descendants of Aaron and those of Levi. He informs us that the Levites are “lower clergy, with responsibility over the fabric of the temple (or tabernacle, in the wilderness texts); they are also assigned other menial tasks in the cult (Num 1:47–53; 4).”\(^{21}\) The traditional role of the firstborn was to be consecrated to serve Aaron and the priests, but the Levites assumed this role. They were supported mostly from the people’s tithes, although the Levites were expected to tithe in turn to the Aaronite priests (Num. 18:21–32).\(^{22}\)

The above distinctions come from the book of Numbers, but Deuteronomy does not make the distinction between priests and Levites, instead “referring to the ‘Levitical priests’…or ‘priests, sons of Levi’ (21:5; 31:9).”\(^{23}\) Although the situation is assumed rather than discussed, one passage suggests that some viewed the matter differently from

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\(^{20}\) Ibid., 195.
\(^{22}\) Ibid., 42.
\(^{23}\) Ibid., 42.
the position in the priestly writings: Deuteronomy 18:1–8 says that “the whole tribe is without inheritance; therefore, any Levite has the right to take his place at the altar and receive its dues.”\textsuperscript{24} Deuteronomy 10:8–9 tells us that the tribe of Levi has the responsibility to carry the Ark and attend to Yahweh, since they have no inheritance. People were to remember the Levites in their tithes, and Grabbe informs us that “Deuteronomy seems to regard all Levites as having the right to preside at the altar (cf. Emerton), whether or not they chose to exercise it.”\textsuperscript{25}

The responsibilities of Levitical priests were cultic (including “pronouncing on skin diseases”—Deut. 24:8), but they also presided over the law.\textsuperscript{26} Apparently, after Moses wrote it, the law was given to the charge of the priests, who “placed it beside the Ark and read it to the people every seventh year (31:9–13, 24–26).”\textsuperscript{27} The tribe of Levi was also made up of teachers of the law in general (33:10). The priests (remember, there is no distinction in Deuteronomy) were also judges. Grabbe informs us that, “if a matter arose too difficult for the local courts, the parties were to go to the place which Yhwh would choose and present it before the magistrates or priests (17:8–13; 19:17).”\textsuperscript{28} The priests were in charge of all lawsuits that involved assault (if, indeed, nega’ means “assault”). They were to motivate the troops before battle, inspiring them by telling them that God was on their side (20:1–4). Finally, they had the \textit{Urim} and \textit{Thummim} (Deut. 33:8).

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 42–43.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 43; NB, Here I focus mostly on the Levitical priesthood because it is the one about whose functions we know the most.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 43.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 43.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 43.
It is important to note the shift from singular language in verses 8–9a to plural in verses 9b–10 of the Deuteronomy 33 selection. This may mean that these two sections have various origins, along with verse 11, which takes a very different, secular, direction. Nelson’s theory is that verse 11 may represent “an older materialistic and militaristic blessing, later augmented by vv. 8–9a and then vv. 9b–10 as priestly oriented supplements. Verses 8–9a authorize the function of priestly divination; vv. 9b–10 add the tasks of instruction and sacrifice.”29 However, verse 11b would fit in well if the imprecations were viewed as aimed at those who oppose the priestly claims of the members of the Levitical line.

Verse 9a (“he ignored his kin”) is fascinating. Nelson thinks that it sounds like a “formal legal proclamation of familial severance.”30 Why would this be a good thing? Perhaps it is to emphasize Levi’s loyalty. The date of this passage is disputed, but Aelred Cody and many other scholars would assign it to the beginning part of the eighth century.31 Verses 9b–10 are “a later addition within the framework of the primitive blessing of Levi.” In verses 8–9a, 11, the usage of “Levi” is singular, referring to the whole tribe; in verses 9b–10, “Levites” in the plural form, is used.32

The older part of the excerpt is probably prior to the establishment of Jerusalem, as, after the time of the divided monarchy, there are no records of priests using instruments to consult God.33 The newer part shows priests teaching and orally giving “instructions or decisions” of God to the rest of the Israelites. The giving of this tôrâ (i.e.,

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29 Nelson, 390.
30 Ibid., 390.
32 Ibid., 114.
33 Ibid., 115.
instructions in how to be faithful to the divine covenant) only appears in texts in the eighth or early ninth centuries.\textsuperscript{34}

From this time forward, the giving of \textit{tôrâ} is clearly seen as a function of priests, and later, the \textit{tôrâ} is written—or at least stable—and taught with the “customary laws.”\textsuperscript{35} This \textit{tôrâ}-giving is teaching, but it is not the teaching function of the priesthood of which we commonly think; it “consists of little more profound than handing down statements on the conformity or non-conformity of a given course of action with a given norm.”\textsuperscript{36} The function of doctrinal teaching belonged to the wise man, not the priest.\textsuperscript{37}

The status of sacrifice in relation to the priesthood also changed during the time of the monarchy. It came fully under the domain of priests. The person offering the sacrifice still immolated the victim, but all the rest of the sacrifice, which involved contact with the altar, was reserved for the priest. The burning of incense necessitated approaching the altar, so it, too, was set aside for priests. The reason for this change was due to a shift in the perception of the idea of ritual holiness: priests, as a class, were seen as more holy because of their distance from the profane.\textsuperscript{38}

Deuteronomy 33:9b-10 shows us the historical development of the Levites “between the division of the monarchy and the actual realization of cult-centralization.” The shift from referring to the Levites in the singular to that of the plural demonstrates that the tribal sense of the group was strong at first, but this soon changed. Also, the functions of the Levites are outlined—they were associated with “fidelity to the

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 116.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 117–18.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 118.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 119. The wise man, or Hebrew sage, in Israel contributed counsel and teaching that had been handed on to them (cf. Job 15:18 and Jer. 18:18).
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 119.
Covenant, with the handing-down of customary laws and of instruction based on Covenant, with holocaust, and, perhaps, with incense-offering” at the same time during this point in their historical development.39 Priests in the second quarter of the ninth century also “had a part to play in the pronouncing and declaring of apodictic law, in which [they] served as the speaker for God in what was to all intents and purposes a sacral act.”40

Before the exile, all of the men of the Levite tribe were priests; after this period, only a small group of them could be. Ezekiel reports that God said that only the Levites who were descended from Zadok could approach God, as the other Levites were guilty of idolatry (Lev. 44:9–15).41 George Gray tells us that, whether or not this division was immediately put into practice, “at the close of the Exile, when the community was restored, a division of Levites into priests and not priests was accepted and established…and there is never subsequently any return to the pre-exilic recognition of all Levites as priests.”42

Cody posits that characterizing this early priesthood as only sacrificial—which has been done by many—is too limited. Priests, he writes, had many functions other than offering sacrifices. Also, evidence shows that all of the heads of households could offer sacrifices; the only difference between what the priests and the heads of households could do during sacrifices was that only priests could sacrifice the parts of an animal which required approaching the altar.43

39 Ibid., 120.
40 Ibid., 121.
41 Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Testament, 227.
42 Ibid., 228.
43 Cody, History, 114.
Also, the Israelite priesthood was adaptable. According to Brown, the Israelites saw all of their people as worthy of the title “priest,” and the development of a professional priesthood did not conflict in any way with this notion: the professional priesthood was based on the need for ministers to be educated and trained.44 Another distinction between the professional priest and the people was that the priest “was sanctified by and for his work.”45 The greater purity demanded of a priest was achieved through his removal from the secular or profane, since the holiness of God was associated with his transcendence.46 The function of offering sacrifice was the only one left to the priest by the end of the Old Testament period, as the others were given over to the prophet and scribe.47 By then, the priest was seen as speaking to God for humanity, not as an intermediary between the two.48

The generally diverse functions of the Israelite priesthood involved both speaking for humanity to God and mediation between God and humanity. Priests offered sacrifices and cultic offerings from the people to God.49 The consultation of the *Urim* and *Thummim*, objects by which lots were cast to discern God’s answer to a question, was an important part of the priesthood during the pre-monarchical and monarchical times (1 Sam. 14:41–42). The priest was seen as announcing the will of God to the people. The function of teaching was also oriented from God to the people, as the Law was given to priests so that they would communicate it to others.50 Cody explains that, in the time of

46 Ibid., 8.
47 Ibid., 12.
48 Ibid., 13.
49 Ibid., 12.
50 Brown, *Priest and Bishop*, 10; see Jer. 18:18, Mal. 2:6.
the monarchy, a man was a priest not through a special ordination, but “because he was actually exercising priestly functions.”

In the post-exilic period, priests were still attached to the temple, still sacrificed, and still exercised a teaching function. However, the focus of the priesthood had shifted. The offering of sacrifices became more prominent. The *Urim* and *Thummim* disappeared, and the teaching function became limited to specific laws, not “wider moral teaching.”

Also, rituals helped to establish leaders in their leadership roles, which I will look at more carefully. Some of this adjustment in the view of the priesthood happened before the exile, but as Gray notes, the new understanding “only becomes clear and decisive after the Exile.”

In addition to priests, during the Old Testament period there were other community leaders such as prophets and, later, kings. These leaders were seen as providing special services and roles in the Old Testament, and people were sometimes authorized for these functions through anointing, which symbolized, according to Pope John Paul II, “the strength needed to exercise authority.” In referring directly to the Old Testament function of anointing, he adds that: “‘Consecration through anointing’ refers to the spiritual strength needed to carry out the mission God gives to a person he has chosen and sent.”

Kings, especially, received anointing, but so did some priests and prophets.

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53 Ibid., 237–38.
55 Interestingly enough, Pope John Paul II, in this same document, points out that this symbol passed from the Old to the New Testament. Jesus applies this ISAIAH text to
So, kings, prophets, and priests were all ministries that were seen as special roles that included authority and stemmed from a calling by God.

The biblical scholars Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering collected some instances of anointing of kings in the Old Testament. For example, the prophet Samuel anointed David as Israel’s king and “Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed David’s son Solomon as king (1 Kings 1:34).”56 This example of David is crucial because later, in the New Testament, Jesus will be the new Davidic king. As Dauphinais and Levering put it: John the Baptist, as both prophet and priest (“of the priestly line of Aaron through his parents Zechariah and Elizabeth”), anoints Jesus as the Davidic king.57

In their discussion of David, Judges, Samuel, and Elijah, Dauphinais and Levering speak more about David and the roles of priests, prophets, and kings during the Old Testament time. They underscore the downward spiral in Judges from unity of dwelling in God to civil war and say that a strong leader was necessary.58 Samuel as the last judge functions as priest, prophet, and king with his burnt offerings and organization of military attacks. David is the divine king who helps establish Jerusalem as the “holy city.”59 The covenant with David adds two important things: “a divinely ordained kingship and a divinely ordained temple.” The task of the king is to establish justice and himself at the Nazareth synagogue during his discourse at the start of his public life:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free” (Isa. 61:1).

56 Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering, *Holy People, Holy Land: A Theological Introduction to the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2005), 143.
57 For more Old and New Testament connections made through anointing, see Dauphinais and Levering’s discussion of God’s declaration of Jesus as the Davidic king when quoting the “triumph of the Lord and his anointed over his enemies” (Ps. 2:7) and the Isaiah servant song ( Isa. 42:1ff) (ibid., 143).
58 Ibid., 91.
59 Ibid., 91. Dauphinais and Levering cite 1 Sam. 8:7 here.
perfect reconciliation ("holy people") by ensuring obedience to the divine Law; the meaning of the temple is that God’s name dwells most perfectly in the land, and that the land is truly a "holy land" or place where human beings dwell liturgically with God in an intimate fashion.  

An example of a calling of a king is that of David. William C. Placher examines some biblical examples of callings, and his examination of the calling of David tells the story of 1 Samuel 16:1–13, in which the Lord says to Samuel, "‘you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.’” Samuel obediently goes to Bethlehem and looks at Jesse’s sons, finally having the youngest brought before him, and the “Lord said ‘Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.’ Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.” This anointing of David is a good example of the view of anointing and kingship in the Old Testament.

III. The New Testament

This understanding of priests, prophets, and kings as unique ministries is carried into the New Testament in various ways, especially regarding the manner in which discipleship and leadership are viewed.

In the New Testament there are recurrent themes of discipleship, but only rarely is Church leadership discussed. Kenan B. Osborne examines Christian discipleship in the

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60 Ibid., 97.
62 Ibid., 16.
New Testament. He points out that all are to follow Jesus—there are no two ways of discipleship (i.e., it is not divided into leader and follower).  

63 This notion of discipleship, according to Osborne, should function as the norm by which we can determine “the validity or invalidity of certain ecclesiastical situations.”  

64 A Church instituted by Christ must, by its very nature, be a community that fosters discipleship; otherwise, it will cease to exist. I will return to this theme of discipleship after I discuss the historical background of the divisions currently in place within contemporary ministry and why they are unsatisfactory. For Osborne, discipleship is the only answer to the opposition of the notions of cleric and layperson within the one Church: “only within a gospel theology of discipleship is it possible to develop the meaning of church and therefore the meaning of lay and cleric.”  

65 There is limited material about the laity in the early Church up through the fourth century. The main focus was not on internal role differentiations, but rather on Christians versus non-Christians. Christianity at the time was a minority community subject to persecution.  

66 However, insight into the roles of priests and lay members of the Church can be gained through an examination of the history of the terms laikos and kleros (and also the biblical connection that laikos has with laos, or “people”). Both Kenan B. Osborne and Alexandre Faivre, after discussing the history and usage of these terms, draw out the implications of them for our developing notions of laity and clergy.

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64 Ibid., 110.
65 Ibid., 10.
66 Ibid., 115.
According to Faivre, the New Testament has no hint of the term “lay” nor “even a trace of any reality that could be transposed and put in parallel with our contemporary phenomenon of the ‘laity.’”\textsuperscript{67} The notion of “priest” as it is used today cannot be found, either: the only references to “priest” or “priesthood” refer to Christ or the collective believers. So it is hard for us to know exactly what happened back then. Perhaps they had a notion of clerical and lay members and perhaps not.

We do know that the material and spiritual unity of the members was emphasized, e.g., “the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and…everything they owned was held in common” (Acts 4:32; see also Acts 2:44–45). Also, all the members were not only called to be saints (1 Cor. 1:2), but also were referred to as “saints” (Eph. 5:3; see also Eph. 4:12; 1 Cor. 6:2, 14:33, 16:1). They were one family, responsible for one another beyond just the local churches: “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God” (Eph. 2:19).

All Christians are elected and united through the one Lord in the one faith. According to Faivre, the New Testament tells us that there is one lot common to all Christians: \textsuperscript{68} “‘a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me’” (Acts 26:18) and “‘heirs according to the promise’ of Abraham” (Gal. 3:29). The idea of a common “lot” is expressed in the Greek word \textit{kleros}, which originally referred to an instrument used to draw lots, and then, by extension, became the term for the lot itself (which could be


\textsuperscript{68} Faivre, \textit{Emergence of the Laity}, 6.
material, a social responsibility, etc.). Matthias, who received the _kleros_ of the twelfth apostle, is an example of this: “And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles” (Acts 1:26). Lastly, the term evolved from a lot connoting a specific responsibility to the term describing the common lot of the early Christians. They had a strong sense of being a community, united in their lot and belonging to a select group. They were all co-heirs of Christ.\(^7\)

_Kleros_ was used for the whole of the believers. The Greek word _hierus_, priest,\(^7\) is “never applied to ministers. It is only used either for Christ himself or for the whole of the believing people.”\(^7\) Yves Congar details the uses of the word in the New Testament, explaining, “_hiereus_ (priest, sacrificer) appears more than thirty times in the New Testament, and the word _archiereus_ more than one hundred and thirty times.” Because the usage of these two words is so consistent, both the writers of Scripture and the first-generation writers (who agree on the usage of the word) must have deliberately meant to convey something specific when using the word: “_hiereus_ (or _archiereus_) is used to denote either the priests of the levitical order or the pagan priests. Applied to the Christian religion, the word _hiereus_ is used only in speaking of Christ or of the faithful. It is never applied to the ministers of the Church’s hierarchy.”\(^7\)

Faivre argues that presbyters, elders in the early Church, cannot be called priests in our sense of the term.\(^7\) In 1 Peter believers are told: “But you are a chosen race, a

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\(^6\) Ibid., 6.
\(^7\) Ibid., 6.
\(^7\) This a Greek translation of _kohen_, mentioned above.
\(^7\) Faivre, _Emergence of the Laity_, 7.
\(^7\) Faivre, _Emergence of the Laity_, 8.
royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” (2:9). Their task is to “like living
stones…be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices
acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2:5).

In fact, Christ was seen as enabling all of us to share in the priestly function, and
there was no independent priestly caste or function in the first century of Christianity.
The inheritance “was a joint inheritance, shared equally between all heirs. The people
experience their vocation as believers collectively. The lot which God had promised since
the time of Abraham and distributed in Christ was not divided unequally.”

Despite the common priesthood, call to holiness, and shared election, there was
still a diversity of spiritual gifts. These gifts were a way of expressing one’s election, and
they were hierarchically ordered according to their contributions to the building up of the
community. Their aim was “the common good and the gathering together of people.”
Paul discusses these various spiritual gifts extensively, and he uses the image of the body
of Christ to emphasize the important unity of all believers: the members have many
different functions, all of which are necessary to the building-up of the Church.

We can, however, trace the development of the priesthood and from this draw
some conclusions about the roles of lay members in the Church. During the time of the
New Testament’s composition, and likely through the end of the first century and well
into the second, there were no Christian priests, only pagan and Jewish. 1 Peter describes
the whole people as a “royal priesthood” and the Letter to the Hebrews speaks of the
priesthood of Jesus by comparing his death and entrance into heaven with the Jewish high

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75 Ibid., 7
76 Ibid, 8–9.
77 I will return to this topic of gifts and building up the Church shortly.
priest’s annual entrance into the Holy of Holies, bearing a blood sacrifice to expiate the sins of his people.

The early Christians, according to Brown, did not need priests because they already had the Jewish Temple priests. Before 70 CE, most Christians still viewed themselves as a part of the Jewish faith; and, as Jews, they recognized the validity of the Jewish priesthood. However, many theologians (e.g., Hans Küng) think that there were no individual priests in the New Testament period because this act of Jesus as priest was seen as final and decisive—the priesthood of all has been fulfilled. Louis-Marie Chauvet seems to agree with this idea, telling us that the Temple and its priesthood are fulfilled and thus annulled by Christ, who is the one and only high priest. “The entire Jewish system...through its symbol, the Temple, is rendered obsolete as a means of access to God: the Holy of Holies is empty. Christians have no other Temple than the glorified body of Jesus [and have] no other priest and sacrifice than his very person.”

Chauvet writes that the priesthood language of the New Testament is very different from that of the Old. The cultic and priestly language used in the New Testament was borrowed from the Old, but it was changed. The New Testament refers to a new priesthood, one that is changed through the Paschal Mystery and the gift of the Holy Spirit bestowed on the new Church. This new priesthood is that of the people of God, and the “sacred work, the cult, the sacrifice” is the confession of faith lived out in

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78 Brown, Priest and Bishop, 16–17.
79 Ibid., 17.
80 Ibid., 13.
one’s daily life.\textsuperscript{82} That is, the basis for all worship and sacrificial activity is daily ethics.\textsuperscript{83} It is the living out of the confession of faith through “the agape of sharing in service to the poorest, of reconciliation, and of mercy.”\textsuperscript{84} To support his idea, Chauvet cites Paul’s spiritualizing of the priesthood into ethics or missionary work.\textsuperscript{85} Also, in 1 Peter 2:4–10 the emphasis on the priestly nature of the entire Church through its common mission is evident.\textsuperscript{86} Rather than the term “priest” being used in reference to a ministry within the Church, it may have referred to “ministries of the Church in the world.”\textsuperscript{87}

Chauvet, however, emphasizes that a cultic dimension remained in Christianity: a cult of a different theological order than its Jewish predecessor.\textsuperscript{88} Jesus is the Messiah and gives us the Spirit. Thus, fulfillment of the precepts of the Law is minimal, and our thanksgiving is not only our own works in purity of heart but also “Christ himself.”

Justification, according to Chauvet, is now connected to Christ, upon whose heart the Spirit inscribed the Law. All Christians live under this new law of the Spirit.\textsuperscript{89} Romans tells every Christian: “the Spirit of God dwells in you” (8:9). The Old Testament system of Law was accomplished by completing works, so it necessitated a separate caste

\textsuperscript{82} Chauvet, \textit{Symbol and Sacrament}, 260.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 255.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 260.
\textsuperscript{85} In Romans 15:16, Paul refers to “the priestly service of the gospel of God.”
\textsuperscript{86} This is especially true in 1 Peter 2:9: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”
\textsuperscript{87} Chauvet, \textit{Symbol and Sacrament}, 259. NB: On this same page, Chauvet continues on to explain that this emphasis on the foundation of sacrifice as ethics and the consequent emphasis on the priesthood as belonging to the whole faithful began to shift in the third century, and the terms “priest” and “sacrifice” came to describe the Eucharist and those ministers who presided over it. The fourth century continued the shift.
\textsuperscript{88} Chauvet, \textit{Symbol and Sacrament}, 250.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 251.
of priests to complete the rituals.\textsuperscript{90} Reversal of this system occurs with the Law of the Spirit: no longer must we try to ascend to God via works (and through the intermediary of a priestly caste), since God has “descended” upon us; he has written the law on our hearts and has given us the gift of the Spirit.\textsuperscript{91} From now on, “the primary worship of Christians is welcoming in their daily lives this grace of God through theological faith and charity.”\textsuperscript{92} Jesus is the Messiah and gives us the Spirit. Thus, fulfillment of the precepts of the Law is surpassed—and our thanksgiving is not only our own works in purity of heart but also “Christ himself.”

For Chauvet, in other words, with the New Testament there is now a new cultic status that cancels out the old system of Law (governed by the priests and rituals by which one can “achieve” salvation), and ushers in a new system, one governed by the “new Christo-pneumatic principle,” in which we do not have to ascend to God. Instead, God has descended to us and we simply “welcome salvation in our historical existence as a gift of grace.” The old system cannot be repaired. The Gospel “attacks it decisively at its very root.”\textsuperscript{93} It should have ended “Law and Temple (sacrifices and the priestly caste)” since priests and sacrifices are no longer intermediaries. The new system is triangular with the corners as: God $\leftrightarrow$ Church of All Baptized Living Daily Sacrifice of Faith and Charity $\leftrightarrow$ Liturgical Cult Led by Ordained Ministers $\leftrightarrow$ God.\textsuperscript{94}

Sacrament both comes from and sends us back to ethics: “it is above all in the everyday that the Risen One is encountered,” and the sacred, cultic, and priestly language

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{90} Ibid., 252.
\bibitem{91} Ibid., 252.
\bibitem{92} Ibid., 253; emphasis in original.
\bibitem{93} Ibid., 252.
\bibitem{94} Ibid., 253.
\end{thebibliography}
of the New Testament, borrowed from that of the Old, is used to refer either to Christ or to the Christians’ daily life (rather than to formal Christian liturgical activities). In other words, the breach with the “oldness” of the Law/Temple system consists in making daily ethics the fundamental meaning of all worship-cultic-sacrificial activity.

Later Chauvet identifies this daily ethics as “the confession of faith lived in the agape of sharing in service to the poorest, of reconciliation, and of mercy.” This is why Hebrews uses the term “priest” to refer to all those who are “partners” with Christ, namely, all in the community of the baptized living consecrated daily lives of sacrificial faith and sacrificial charity.

In Scripture and the time of the early Church the ministers of the Church were seen as part of the Church, the entire faithful people, rather than separate from it. Osborne studies the textual data for the divisions of *klerikos*/*laikos* in detail and concludes that “the study of the origin and significance of these terms within the early Christian world, with the intent of determining the origins of a lay/cleric church as understood by later generations, seems, first of all, to be counter-productive.” This is because, he continues, in early Christian writings, they are used so rarely that they cannot provide us with the answers we seek. Secondly, *klerikos* did not develop with *laikos*—it was only later that

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95 Ibid., 254.
96 Ibid., 255. NB: For Chauvet, sacrament is rooted in ethics and also calls us to practice ethics through the everyday practice of love that we come into contact with through Christ. This emphasis on ethics is a result of his idea that we are the new Temple, and shows us that mutual service is just as important to worship as is the Eucharist; in fact, the Church needs both. Chauvet says this: “the community is founded and maintains itself as much by mutual service as by Eucharistic worship” (261).
97 Ibid., 260.
98 Ibid., 256.
100 Ibid., 38.
the two began to be used complementarily. The introduction of “ordo into ecclesiastical vocabulary and thought colored the meaning of both laikos and klerikos.” These two would never have been separated if it were not for understanding ordo as those people and their functions in “ministerial, leadership positions.”¹⁰¹ Jesus, as the model and source of all leadership, cannot be considered a cleric or layperson, so Christology is not part of the basis for these divisions. The separation comes, as we have seen, in the late second and early third centuries.¹⁰²

_Apostolic and Pauline Theology_

The lives and ministry of the apostles and others in the New Testament tell us a lot about ministry and leadership, not only because they speak about it, but also because they embody it and demonstrate it in their lives. In the latter half of this New Testament section I will engage in theological examinations and reflections on what the apostles can teach us about the roles and authority of ministers.

The apostolic root of the faith remained central to the early Christians. Thus, the writers of the synoptic Gospels saw the calling and appointment of the Twelve as a major event in the ministry of Jesus. The twelve apostles, because of their intimacy with the Lord and their understanding of his teachings, received the authority to act on behalf of

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 38. The term _ordo_ began as denoting those in leadership positions and soon came to describe the function of those leaders. Then it began to be described theologically (tied to the ordering in the Old Testament priesthood) and ordered according to the pattern of order in creation. Then there was a “gradual inclusion of the ministerial _ordo_ into the socio-political structures of the Graeco-Roman world, then the Frankish world, then the world of the Holy Roman Empire” (38). Lastly, _ordo_ became a way of “being,” with the focus on the “ontological” difference between those with and without these orders (39).

¹⁰² Ibid., 39.
the kingdom. Aidan Nichols examined the synoptists’ writings on the authority of the apostles, and he explains the three ways that authority is expressed.

First, the Twelve were handed the responsibility of the worship of the new community.\textsuperscript{103} That is what Aidan Nichols asserts, based on his understanding of the Last Supper. Some people have posited that the Last Supper command of Jesus to his disciples to continue the breaking of the bread in his memory was the first ordination ritual, but most contemporary scholars disagree with this interpretation. Osborne says that Jesus did not give the disciples the power “to be ‘priests,’ giving them thereby the power to celebrate the eucharist.”\textsuperscript{104} Brown agrees, pointing out that the priesthood must be seen as an evolving notion that includes much more than presiding over the Eucharist. If we were to equate the Last Supper and the priesthood, then the priesthood would be limited.\textsuperscript{105}

The second way that Nichols sees the authority of the twelve apostles expressed is in their unique teaching role. Jesus and the apostles could take for granted the Jewish principle of agency, that the one sent is like the sender. All four Gospels contain sayings of Jesus to this effect, such as Mark 9:37: “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.” John 13:20 is similar: “whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.”\textsuperscript{106} Thus, the apostles, viewed through the idea of agency, passed on more than just external teachings; they were connected

\textsuperscript{105} Brown, \textit{Priest and Bishop}, 20.
intimately to Jesus, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Nichols’s third way in which the authority of the Twelve is expressed is the apostles’ authority concerning the government of the Church.

Moving beyond our examination of the Twelve to other New Testament figures, Brown describes four main ministries in the New Testament that eventually become part of the Christian priesthood: “the disciple, the apostle, the presbyter-bishop, and the celebrant of the Eucharist.” The notion of disciple, which included all Christians but became concentrated in the idea of the priesthood during the time after the New Testament, emphasized following and living according to Christ. The presbyter-bishops were to live in a closer relationship to Christ (such as that of the Twelve) and help to guide the Christian community. They were to help the community make explicit the “priestly and sacrificial [act of] an entire people making their very lives the prime place of their ‘spiritual’ worship.”

Whereas “disciple” emphasizes following Christ, “apostle” refers to the service aspect of the priesthood—service to Christ and thus others. This aspect of the role of a priest involves overseeing the churches. Without this institutional element, the apostolic character of the priesthood would disappear.

The third ministry that eventually was part of the official priesthood, the presbyter-bishop, is quite different from the Pauline apostolic ideal that I discussed

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110 Ibid., 22.
113 Ibid., 35.
114 Ibid., 36.
above. The apostle was missionary and the presbyter-bishop became more residential.\textsuperscript{115}

The last role of the priesthood, that of presiding over the Eucharist, is not mentioned in the New Testament (except what may or may not have been implied at the Last Supper when Jesus commanded those present to continue the breaking of the bread).\textsuperscript{116}

Paul never mentions presiding over the Eucharist and rarely mentions baptizing, so we can infer that he did not see his primary function as an administrator of the sacraments.\textsuperscript{117} Also, there is no evidence that the Twelve presided over the Eucharistic meals they attended, nor that they appointed those who conducted the sacramental functions.\textsuperscript{118} Instead, the liturgical leaders were designated in diverse ways, with “the essential element always being church or community consent (which was tantamount to ordination…”\textsuperscript{119}

Paul speaks of the priestly activity of all people (including his own priesthood) as the exercise of charity among all. In Romans 15:15–16, he speaks of his missionary activity of spreading the Gospel message as a grace that he has been given by God: his priestly service.\textsuperscript{120} In 1:9 he says that he serves God spiritually “by announcing the gospel of his Son.” Second Corinthians tells us that God accepts the “apostolic action of one sent” as a pleasing fragrance, as an aroma of Christ to God.\textsuperscript{121}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 35.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 40. This is highly debated, and, as I note above, most scholars do not necessarily view the Last Supper as any sort of first ordination ritual.
\item \textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 40–41.
\item \textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 41.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 41–42.
\item \textsuperscript{120} “The grace given me by God to be a minister \textit{[leitourgos]} of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:15–16).
\item \textsuperscript{121} Chauvet, \textit{Symbol and Sacrament}, 256. See 2 Cor. 2:12–16: “When I came to Troas to proclaim the good news of Christ, a door was opened for me in the Lord; but my
Perhaps Paul emphasizes priesthood as service because he perceives a strong difference between the purpose of cultic activity in the Jewish and Christian faiths. Jews sought to separate the sacred and the profane, whereas Christians were to sanctify the profane in their daily lives. Also, Christians did not need priests as mediators in the Old Testament way, since they had “corporality itself” as the mediator between God and humanity.¹²²

How did Paul understand his role in the early Church? Paul communicates to the churches with authority—as a leader. There are also references to other leaders, names and titles such as “apostle, the twelve, teacher, prophet, evangelist,” etc.¹²³ The apostles have the primary place in leadership, and Paul includes himself among them. However, he addresses the various communities themselves, not the leaders; and there is no mention of ordained or nonordained. The theological foci for Paul are God, the centrality of Christ, the mystery of the Church, the role of prayer, and living a life of high moral values based on Christ. A disciple is one who has responded to God’s call and “answered through faith, which itself is a gracious gift of this same loving and forgiving God.”¹²⁴ I will return to Paul’s larger theological themes later. For now, I will note that Hebrews, the pastoral epistles (1–2 Tim. and Titus), and the general epistles (James, 1–2 Pet., 1–3 John, and Jude) are all (except 2 Tim.) written with the larger community in mind. There

¹²² Chauvet, Symbol and Sacrament, 262–63.
¹²³ Osborne, Ministry, 96.
¹²⁴ Ibid., 101.
are some references, in a limited way, to the names and functions of Christian leadership; but there is no indication of—to use Osborne’s phrasing—a “klerikoi/laikoi situation.”

This is true of most of the New Testament.

To have this kind of opposition or division among ministers would go against the ideals of biblical discipleship (all must follow Christ) and service leadership, Osborne insists. Osborne thinks that we must keep these ideals in mind as the basis for all ministry. In fact, he says, we can use them as a lens as we examine Church history, discovering if the Church is following these ministerial ideals or straying from them—and thus using them as a measure of what we should be doing, where the Church may have gone wrong, and so on.

As promised above, I return to the theology attributed to St. Paul in the Scriptures. His larger notions of community, the one body, and the purpose of many varied charisms help us to understand why there are many different, but equal, roles in the Church. In fact, we can learn much about the role of the members of the contemporary Church through Paul’s theology. The essential and dynamic role of the laity in the Church today can be seen clearly in Paul’s discussions of the Church. Paul wants the members of the Church to not only be aware of that to which they are a part, but also wants them to live it out. He uses the image of the body of Christ to emphasize the important unity of all believers: the members have many different functions, all of which are necessary to the building-up of the Church.

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125 Ibid., 109.
126 Ibid., 109.
127 It is interesting to note that women were involved in Christian ministry—praying, prophesying, and many other tasks. Osborne points out that, “Women and men
This idea of the body of Christ is a christological conception of the people of God, and it is a visible manifestation of the unity of the Church. It also illustrates our mutual interdependence and the fact that the building-up of the Church has been entrusted to all who are baptized into the one Spirit. The laity are an essential part of this building-up, just as they are a necessary part of the body. In Ephesians 4:1–4:16, Paul asks the members to embody the unity of the Church, as the diverse charisms that all have received can only help the Church to reach fruition when united. This passage emphasizes that all of the different members of the Church are active and essential, though their jobs within the Church are different.

Paul speaks of the importance of the unity of the Church. He uses the concept of the body of Christ to emphasize the unity of all believers, as the idea of the body with its members symbolizes union.¹²⁸ This idea is probably derived from the societal Hellenistic concept of the state as the “body politic.” It expressed the moral unity of its members toward a common goal. This is similar to what Paul says when he points to the Corinthians’ diversity of spiritual gifts, which are to be used for the good of all (Cor. 12:12–27; see also Rom. 12:4–5). Paul is not just speaking of members united under a common goal, but also of the members of Christ: the unity is not just “corporate but also somehow corporal.”¹²⁹

Paul illustrates our mutual interdependence when he uses the image of the body and points out that we do not all have the same functions. In Romans 12:3 and following,

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¹²⁹ Ibid., 91; cf. 1 Cor. 6:15, 10:16–17.
Paul says that everyone should know their place in the Church, for “as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another” (Rom. 12:4–5). We should be content with our individual gifts and use them accordingly, as we “have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness” (Rom. 12:6–8).

This theology of the Church as the body of Christ is further elaborated in 1 Corinthians, where the human body is applied to the Church and described in its “unity and diversity.”

Herman Ridderbos tells us that Paul’s discussion of the human body results from his already-existing concept of the Church as the body of Christ: because the Church is the body of Christ, it must act like a body, in the way that one can see one’s own body acting. This idea adds to Paul’s concept of “the many” (including the many “in Christ”) in that the people of God are a “corporate unity, all together in him.”

Ridderbos also discusses Paul’s 1 Corinthians image of the Church as the people of God. The image of the body of Christ builds on this, giving “expression to the unity of all who in Christ are the people of God and the true seed of Abraham.” This gives us a richer picture of the Church.

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131 Ibid., 370–71.
132 Ibid., 371.
133 Ibid., 393.
conception of the people of God, and it is a “visible, outward manifestation” of the unity of the Church.\footnote{Ibid., 394–95.}

The members of the body of Christ are given diverse gifts, and these gifts find harmony within the body and through the building-up of the Church.\footnote{Ibid., 447.} Ridderbos posits that the different gifts and ministries outlined by Paul do not “denote a differentiation of persons, but rather represent and particularize the fullness of grace” given to the Church. Also, they show that the building-up of the Church has been entrusted to the many, not just a few—all are baptized into the one Spirit. In fact, the discussion on the many gifts and the unique contributions of every member of the body shows that the building-up of the Church “has its matrix” in the Church itself (as a body).\footnote{Ibid., 448.}

Ridderbos terms Paul’s conception of the Church as the body of Christ the “christological” aspect of his view of the Church. He also points out Paul’s notion of the “redemptive-historical aspect” of the Church. Paul views the Church as an embodiment of Christ’s grace and redemption. The Church is the “continuation and fulfillment of the historical people of God that in Abraham God chose to himself from all peoples and to which he bound himself by making the covenant and the promises.”\footnote{Ibid., 327.} These two elements of Paul’s understanding of the Church are connected and together form a united concept.

The redemptive-historical aspect of the Church is expressed through Paul’s use of the term *ekklesia*. This term was usually a translation of *qāhāl*, which, in the Greek
Jewish writings (e.g., Sirach and Philo), referred to Israel as the people of God. Paul saw the Christian Church as the fulfillment of Israel’s wanderings and covenant, and uses *ekklesia* as “the customary description of the communion of those who believe in Christ and have been baptized into him.” This term was used to refer to both the universal Church and local churches.

Ridderbos concludes that, for Paul, the universal Church is primary and the local churches can be designated *ekklesia* because the universal *ekklesia* is “revealed and represented” in them. As we have seen through Paul’s body of Christ and people of God images, the role of all members of the Church is essential, and thus, if the universal Church is to be represented in the local church, then the participation of the laity in the local church must also be necessary.

The epistle to the Ephesians also tells us a great deal about the Church and the role of the faithful within it. Paul begins with the mysteries of the divine plan of salvation and God’s counsel, fulfilled in Christ and in humanity, and effecting a union between Jew and Gentile. Paul then points to his own mission to proclaim the mystery and his hope that his readers will understand the fullness of this plan. In 4:1–4:16, he asks

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138 Ibid., 328, 328n.
139 Ibid., 328. For examples, see 1 Cor. 12:28 (universal) and 1 Cor. 14:34ff (church meetings).
140 Ibid., 330.
141 Paul’s authorship of Ephesians is disputed, but even if it were to be determined that the author was someone else, the scriptural information is still relevant, and helpful, to our discussion.
them to embody this unity, as the diverse charisms that all have received can only reach fruition when united.\textsuperscript{142}

Ephesians 4:7–16 is especially relevant to my examination:

But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore it is said, “When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people.” (When it says, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people’s trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.

These charisms, as we saw in 1 Corinthians (above), are for the building up of the Church. They stem from one united source and continue salvation, completing the universe and bringing it to Christ.

Paul’s list of charisms in this passage is not exhaustive: he lists some of the ones that represent the diversity of graces, are stable, and involve the functions of authority and teaching. Apostles and prophets are mentioned first because it is through them that the mystery is principally revealed.\textsuperscript{143} The apostle’s role is to plant and build up (1 Cor. 3:6, 2 Cor. 10:8), while that of the prophet is to build up the Church through the speaking of truths. In both cases, the regard due them is because of the holder’s mission of Church-

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., see also Eph. 3:5.
building. Respect for the office and the office-holder’s role is due, but the charisms should not be used for the holder’s glory: they are gifts from God. The same is true for all of the other charisms, those mentioned here, in 1 Corinthians and elsewhere, as well as those represented by the listed charisms.\textsuperscript{144} George Montague says it thus: “As it is Christ who masters the evolving completion of the universe, so too it is he and no other who gave the Church its officers, that the whole body (and through it the universe) might attain his fullness (4:11).”\textsuperscript{145}

Evangelists are mentioned next. This role involved preaching the Gospel “in subordination to the Apostles.” The next two positions, pastor and teacher, are more stable geographically (i.e., located in particular churches). They are also closely related, since the Greek article before “teachers” is omitted.\textsuperscript{146} These gifts and the other charisms they represent are given “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God” (4:12–13).\textsuperscript{147}

Montague looks at the translation of verse 12 (“to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”), pointing toward the added dimension of a preparation of persons: the saints are given gifts “to organize or to mobilize.” The saints could be the ministers just listed, but if one acknowledges the representational factor of

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 194.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 193.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 194.
\textsuperscript{147} François Amiot, \textit{The Key Concepts of St. Paul} (New York: Herder & Herder, 1962), 176. In addition to this list of charisms, there are three others in Paul’s works, none of which claims to be complete. The other lists can be found in 1 Cor. 12:8–10, 1 Cor. 28–30, and Rom. 12:6–9.
the list, then the saints are all of the members of the body. Also, interpreting “saints” as the ministers listed does not fit in with the theme of the rest of the passage, since it “teaches that the body works out of its own growth and every member has a share therein.”

So, what does this passage tell us about the role of the laity in the Church today? The laity and ordained ministers both have active and essential roles, but their jobs within the Church are different. The role of ordained ministers is to build the Church by drawing-out and guiding the gifts for Church-building which are inherent in every Christian through God’s grace.

The diversity of gifts is given so that members may care for one another and, together, build up the Church. The goal of the growth of the Church is Christ, to live out the truth in love. Montague describes the Christian as one who “bears in his heart the destiny of the universe and contributes to its realization [by participating in the] divine love flowing from the head and circulating in the members, uniting them and making them grow together into the spiritual stature of...Christ.” Christ has so distributed his gifts that the members of the body all have a role to play in the perfection of the Church, and all of these roles are equally important and necessary (see also 1 Cor. 12:4–7, 11).

Paul also develops this “spiritualization of priesthood and sacrifice into the confession of faith and the practice of charity” into a sacrificial/priestly theology of

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149 Ibid., 195.
150 Ibid., 195.
151 Ibid., 199.
152 Ibid., 203.
missionary work. Similarly, in 1 Peter we find the accent on the priestly nature of the entire Church in its “communitarian mission.” There is no sense of “priest” referring to “ministries within the Church,” but only to “ministries of the Church in the world.” This supports Paul’s message. Hence the Church, as Paul’s metaphor of Christ’s body in 1 Corinthians suggests, is the new Temple, the spiritual house of God. Chauvet insists that throughout the entire second century the New Testament position was faithfully maintained on this point… the anti-sacrificial course plotted by the New Testament is firmly maintained. This is evident, on the one hand, in that the ministers of the Church are never referred to as hiereis or sacerdotes, nor the Eucharist as thusia in the absolute later sense of the “sacrifice of Christ,” and on the other, in that the theme of “God has no need of sacrifices” is frequently used.

Consequently, we can conclude that there was some kind of structure of leadership in the New Testament churches, but we do not know exactly what it looked like.

IV. Ministry and Discipleship in Church History

a. The Early Christian Period

Let us move on to the early Christian period: what did discipleship look like in this context? When and how did the laity/clergy distinction develop? The Church has, at different times, emphasized both the dignity of the role of the laity and the necessary unity of the Church. The first mention of the term “lay” (laikos) occurs in the First

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154 Ibid., 257.
155 Ibid., 258–59.
Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. This letter is polemical, and attempts to suggest to the Corinthians that order must be restored within the community. The letter refers to Christians most commonly as “Christ’s flock,” and “‘those of the brotherhood,’ ‘brothers,’ ‘the elect,’ ‘those called and made holy,’ ‘the multitude,’” and so on. “Lay” is a term used only twice toward the very end of the letter.

Because he is trying to restore order to the community at Corinth, Clement continually exhorts everyone to remain in their respective places. He offers two models of behavior for the community members: one is the military and the other is the Old Testament cultic hierarchy. The thrust of these two examples or models is respect for order, and Faivre insists that we “should not see in either purely and simply a description of the organization of the Christian Church.”

Because this term, “lay,” to our knowledge, did not reappear until almost a century later (with Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian), we can safely assume that Clement of Rome’s usage of this term did not impact the language during his time at all. Faivre tells us that during “the whole of the second century, Christians were more preoccupied with the task of defining their relationship with Christ than with defining the relationships that existed among themselves.”

Justin Martyr, writing in the second century, mentions the priesthood, but it is always the universal priesthood to which he refers. There is no mention of a ministerial priesthood. Instead, in describing Baptism and Eucharist, he simply discusses “one

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156 Traditionally ascribed to Clement of Rome.
157 Faivre, Emergence of the Laity, 16–17.
158 Ibid, 17.
159 Ibid, 22.
160 Ibid, 25.
presiding over the assembly of brothers” and “the ministers whom we call deacons.”\textsuperscript{161}

We can see in his works that all Christians were viewed as essential participants, but there was a role that involved presiding, and that there was, in turn, a particular group who relied on the president—nonpresiders who received help. That is, there was a group who followed and needed the leadership of the presiders, but exactly what was the nature of the contribution of the leaders, we do not know.\textsuperscript{162}

Irenaeus of Lyons speaks more of the Church than the individual Christian, although he does distinguish between those who claim Jesus and the “disciple” or the “true disciple.”\textsuperscript{163} He does not distinguish between the ministerial priesthood and the rest of the disciples, and he opposes the Valentinians’ practice of distinguishing between the “common people” or “ecclesiatic” and the “perfect.”\textsuperscript{164} However, Irenaeus does emphasize the need for individual disciples to follow good presbyters, who are intellectual guides.\textsuperscript{165}

From 40 to 180 CE (i.e., from the earliest New Testament texts to Irenaeus’s \textit{Against Heresies}), the word “lay” occurred only once, and even then it was not applied to the individual Christian. Why was the distinction not verbalized despite the Old Testament typology and the availability of the terminology? Perhaps it is because the Church was still forming its identity in unity and centering itself around Christ; thus, it did not channel energy toward forming distinctions between groups of people within the one Church.

\textsuperscript{161} Ibid, 32. NB: Examining deacons is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but Osborne gives a good summary of the history of this ministry (\textit{Priesthood}, 67ff).
\textsuperscript{162} Faivre, \textit{Emergence of the Laity}, 33.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid, 36.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid, 37.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid, 38.
There is mention of the threefold ministry of bishops, presbyters, and deacons in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch (around 110 CE), so these roles were probably in place by the end of the first century, but it is difficult to be certain—and since we do not know a lot about these roles at their inception, they are not much help to our current discussion.\footnote{Thomas P. Rausch, “Ministry and Ministries,” in \textit{Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood}, ed. Susan K. Wood, 52–67 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 55.}

This lack of distinction between the laity and the clergy changed during the third century as the terms “priest” and “sacrifice” came to describe the Eucharist and those ministers who presided over it.\footnote{Chauvet, \textit{Symbol and Sacrament}, 259. Osborne and Louis-Marie Chauvet will be my main sources for tracing this “change” and the resulting displacement of the Church’s understanding of the intrinsic dignity of the laity.} The fourth century completes this change. When priesthood language began to be applied to bishops and presbyters (about the year 200 for bishops and later for presbyters), it brought with it “a certain Old Testament background of the sacrificial levitical priesthood.”\footnote{Raymond E. Brown, \textit{Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible} (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 124–26.} As a result of the development of sacrificial language for the Eucharist, the person assigned to preside at the Eucharist was then called a priest, since the Old Testament priests had been involved with sacrifice. There may have been sacrificial aspects in the earliest understanding of the Eucharist, but there is no record of its being called a sacrifice before the beginning of the second century.\footnote{Ibid., 124–26.}

Osborne tells us that from apostolic times to the beginning of the third century the overriding Christian concerns were: their relationship to Judaism, the identity and meaning of Jesus as Messiah and Son of God, how Jesus can be God while there is only one God, and the relationship of Christians to the Roman Empire and the larger world.
The community (including liturgical) life of Christians was being developed as well, including their ideas of servant leadership.170

b. The Patristic and Medieval Periods

In the patristic and medieval periods the theological issue of lay Christians was not central. Instead, there were “a few key issues of this period which affected in a major way the meaning and status of the lay Christian,” especially the relationship of the Church (both the leadership and the whole community) to Graeco-Roman governmental structures, which resulted in the “hierarchical-positioning or power-positioning of church leadership slowly but ever-increasingly [becoming] the hermeneutical instrument to interpret Christian discipleship, rather than Christian discipleship itself serving as the hermeneutical instrument to interpret the role of church leadership within governmental structures.” This in turn resulted in the “depositioning” of the laity.171

During this time the hierarchical understanding of the Church became the interpretation of Christian discipleship; there was a repositioning of royal/imperial persons (and resulting depositioning of educated lay Christians), monasticism (and depositioning of the lay brother), and a decline in the roles of laity in the Church’s liturgical life. The effects of these changes in “position” (which we are about to look at in more detail) were a transition of the notion of “king and priest” to “laity and priest” and an emphasis on legalistic ecclesiology with a view of priestly “power” as “magical” and a

170 Osborne, Ministry, 114–67.
171 Ibid., 165.
resulting confiscation of the baptismal priesthood. As a result of these shifts there was little or no recognition of the dignity of lay members by virtue of being laity. Those laity who did have power or influence in the Church had this because of their power in the sociopolitical arena—which gave them entry into the ecclesial world.

The patristic and medieval periods put the laity even further in the fringes of the ecclesiastical world (and the sociopolitical world, too). The center of society was the Church hierarchy and the king (with his entourage). When the Western Church hierarchy began to question the divine institution of the kings (and saw itself as the source of kingship), the resulting struggles between Church leadership and political leadership led to less active lay participation in liturgy and catechesis, Church decision making, Church leadership for non-nobles, and education.

All of these shifts came from the primary concern of Christians at that time about “the way in which a Christian should relate to the socio-political world.” In understanding these shifts, it is important to note that “from the patristic period down to the end of the middle ages, the Christian world was divided de facto, not into two groups: lay/cleric, but into four: emperor, cleric, monk, lay.” The repositioning of the royal/imperial persons (and thus the depositioning of the laity as well) resulted from the answers to the question, “What is the origin of the emperor or king?” In one answer the papacy and kingship were combined, underscoring the powers of the papacy and

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172 Ibid., 114–62.
174 Ibid., 162.
175 Ibid., 198.
176 Ibid., 198.
reducing the king to a “lay state” subject to the pope. Osborne says this about one of the conclusions surrounding the role of the pope: “Both theoretically and actually, he could be both emperor and pope of the entire societas Christiana, but ‘in humility’ he deferred the regal tasks to a king.” Osborne continues to explain that from this developed the notion that priests, and especially the “head of priests, the pope, is given an omnicompetence” in both spiritual and societal matters. As the status of the pope and the origin of papal power grew, there was “an inevitable depositioning not just of the king or emperor, but of the ordinary lay person as well.”

The concurrent rise in the monastic life, however, contributed to “a way of viewing discipleship which has remained both enriching and enigmatic to the church structures down to the present day.” The nonclerical character of the monastic movement can imply much about discipleship simply by virtue of the fact that so many people entered it. As Osborne puts it, “Evidently the form of discipleship which the clerical or episcopal church structure offered was not seen as the only form of discipleship, nor even as the more desirable form of discipleship.” Thus, in monasticism up to 600 CE there was an “alternative church”—i.e., “an alternative style of Christian life” that was a different way of being a disciple. Thus, there were “two ways of being ‘lay’ in the church during these centuries.” This expansion of the notion of what it meant to be a disciple would, at first glance, seem to be positive, and it was; but soon

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177 Osborne covers several answers to this question and explains the resulting depositioning of the laity from each, but here we simply look at one. For more information on these answers and their consequences, see Osborne, Ministry, chap. 5).
178 Osborne, Ministry, 200–201.
179 Ibid., 200–201.
180 Ibid., 232.
181 Ibid., 234.
182 Ibid., 234.
this second way of discipleship, with its asceticism and celibacy, was viewed as the “better” way, a lifestyle more likely to lead to holiness than that of the nonmonastic layperson: “The ‘religious’ were considered to be in a special class of Christian discipleship.”  

The notion of Christian discipleship in the New Testament gives meaning to the Church, to service leadership, and to the Christian ethical life. The gradual depositioning of the laity by the end of the first millennium is not in line with New Testament notions of discipleship. This happened gradually and eventually underscored efforts in the twelfth century to divide the Church into two groups: cleric and lay (although Osborne points out that this was not quite successful since the “presence of the religious remained both an anomaly to and critique of such a reduction”).  

The laity could not reject their depositioning because of the concurrent deprivation of education, lack of a lay spirituality, and misinterpretation of discipleship. In the second millennium we will see attempts to correct this unbalanced situation.  

Chauvet is a helpful supplement to Osborne’s thought, as he fundamentally agrees with Osborne’s notions of how our understanding of the sacrament of Holy Orders went awry; Chauvet adds fewer insights from the historical perspective and more from the religious and philosophical side. He also describes the rise of a division between the leadership of the Church and the rest of the members—the effects of which were devastating. The Catholic tradition after the eleventh century, he tells us, did not keep ecclesiology rooted in Christ, and consequently the Church fell into (and here Chauvet

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183 Ibid., 234.
184 Ibid., 236.
185 Ibid., 308–30.
quotes de Lubac) “a deadly dichotomy between the Eucharistic body and the ecclesial body.”\(^{186}\) This was not necessarily a conscious divorce, but soon the dichotomy became so pronounced that by the thirteenth century the Church as the *mystical body* of Christ was understood “without any relation to the Eucharistic mystery.”\(^{187}\) This led to several destructive consequences.

One consequence of the dichotomy is that the Church became “expelled” from the “intrinsic symbolism” of the Eucharist.\(^{188}\) As a result Catholicism developed “a more law-based than communion-based” ecclesiology. Second, Christ was seen as being present not only sacramentally but also truly, opening a gap between sacrament and reality—which led to thinking of the “real” as behind the sacrament.\(^{189}\) In the fourth century, the “Church became an established institution seeking to win the pagan world for Christ.” When the new converts from paganism saw the Christian priests presiding over the sacraments, they thought that the role being played by the priest of their new religion was comparable to that of the pagan priests (i.e., magical).\(^{190}\) Prior to and during the Middle Ages the desire to “use the priestly status of the ministers” for magical purposes was primary.

The effects of this usage were threefold. First, the priesthood itself, because of an overemphasis on priestly cultic activity, began to be seen as separate from priestly ministry, with the priesthood “being perceived as itself an all-inclusive totality, sufficient

\(^{186}\) Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 294; emphasis in original. (Here de Lubac is talking about the second and third bodies—the mystical body of Christ and the truth of this body, being the “true” ecclesial body.)

\(^{187}\) Ibid., 294.

\(^{188}\) Ibid., 295.

\(^{189}\) Ibid., 295–96.

\(^{190}\) Ibid., 308.
unto itself to define itself.” Second, due to the overemphasis on the cultic activity of priests, most priests did not exercise the ministry of the Word, and the responsibility to evangelize was overlooked. Third, according to Chauvet, there occurred “a confiscation of the baptismal priesthood of the entire people of God by the priests.” This exclusion of the laity failed to appreciate the baptismal priesthood as foundational to the ordained priesthood.\textsuperscript{191}

During the time of 1000–1500, there was a growth in philosophy, art, music, literature, etc. The agricultural world of the West had been feudal and ecclesiastical, but it began to be more urban and nationalistic. These changes were mainly brought about by lay people, and at the end of this period we have a socially repositioned lay person within a restructured Christian society.\textsuperscript{192}

There was an enhancement of the status of the warriors (who were nonordained members of the Church) brought about by the Crusades since knights, along with their leaders and assistants, were seen as “key players in the history of salvation.”\textsuperscript{193} Scholars, torn between the imperial and papal positions of power, began to reexamine Church structure, the roles of clergy, and even the roles of lay people. This flood of new ideas and questions helped support the participation of the laity for a little while—until these ecclesiological seeds grew into the definition of a priest as one who has the power to consecrate and forgive sins; eventually the definition of the laity would be developed as a

\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., 308–9; it is also interesting to note on page 471 that Chauvet emphasizes that the Scholastics (e.g., Aquinas, \textit{ST Suppl.}, q. 36, a. 2, ad 1), when they separated the power to consecrate from the care of souls, aided in the detachment of the ordained priesthood from Scripture and the Church community.

\textsuperscript{192} Osborne, \textit{Ministry}, 333–60.

\textsuperscript{193} Ibid., 387.
contrast to this definition (i.e., with the layperson as one who lacks these powers). The names of influential women began to appear in the way that they did in the first four centuries of Church life, thanks to both the “growth in a strong western mystical tradition” (many of these mystics, such as Hildegard of Bingen, were female) and the beginnings of the reform movements, many of which were comprised of women. The rise of universities, and thus an educated laity, and the rise of the merchant class all contributed to the repositioning. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the lay members attempted to reassert themselves through movements in the life of the Church, special devotions emphasizing asceticism, communal life, prayer, and care for the poor. The movements were then brought under clerical control or evicted from the Church, but they still began the process that accelerated in the next period.

There were several reformations in the sixteenth century, all of which grew from the seeds of movements in the preceding period. Osborne, in his analysis of the Reformation’s impact on understandings of the laity, first looks at writings about lay people from Martin Luther. Luther stresses the priesthood of all believers, the rejection of an all-powerful papacy, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit over structure, the gratuity of grace and Christ’s work (which contrasted sharply with the current portrayal of the sacramental and priestly system), and the individual conscience. John Calvin said that the community played a secondary role in choosing ministers and leaders—God primarily selects ministers—Calvin focused on the gratuity of God’s grace, the rejection of a good

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194 Ibid., 387–88.
195 Ibid., 388.
196 Ibid., 360–90.
work approach to the sacraments and spirituality, and the importance of the laity reading the Scriptures (the Calvinist movement itself was predominantly a lay movement).\(^{197}\)

The Council of Trent in the 1500s emphasized the need for an increase in the spiritual formation and education of priests, but it did not plumb the depths of the true meaning of discipleship—instead, the bishops at the council thought that “gospel discipleship” could be furthered “on the basis of an educated and spiritual clergy.”\(^{198}\) By contrast, the 1700s to the eve of the French Revolution included the rediscovery of Scripture by laity (with the notion of the Holy Spirit as the inspiration) and an increased desire for Gospel discipleship. The result was an emphasis on the Spirit over structure, and the notion that “no church structure, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Protestant or Orthodox, can corral the Spirit.” But still, this was gradual: the clerical/lay division is still present.\(^{199}\)

The French and American Revolutions, from the 1700s to 1960, gave voice to the changing notion of what it means to be a citizen (i.e., that all men and women are created equal). The Catholic Church in the West did not deal with these issues, staying within the medieval notions of gender and the priesthood because of its focus on divine order as intrinsic within creation rather than looking anew at these issues through the Gospel lens on discipleship. The Gospel notions that did rise to the fore as a result of both lay and magisterial efforts (especially during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) were the recognitions that dignity and freedom should be part of all humans and that social justice needs to be extended to all groups. Bringing these to reality involved many

\(^{197}\) Ibid., 391–430.
\(^{198}\) Ibid., 467.
\(^{199}\) Ibid., 463.
struggles, as can be seen in the Catholic Action issues, the silence of Vatican II documents on the role of women in the Church, and the hesitancy to focus on the people of God as the Church and to engage in missionary movements (both partially remedied at Vatican II).\textsuperscript{200}

Instead of the division between \textit{klerikoi/laikoi}, which Osborne says was not present, there was one constant historically— that of sacramental order, according to Susan K. Wood. The ways that the ministries are ordered (and how they evolve) shift constantly, but the principle of sacramental order remains the same. By this Wood means that there is some form of sacramental ordering; she does not mean that the ordering remains the same, but that different offices exist. There were many different offices, Wood says, such as “bishop-presbyters, deacons, traveling prophets, and teachers” in the late first century, with “little distinction between a bishop and a presbyter” since the leadership offices were first developing. The earliest writings showing the threefold office of bishop, presbyter, and deacon appear in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna at the beginning of the first century. Originally the bishop administered “baptism, post-baptismal anointing, Eucharist, and penance.” As the Church expanded, presbyters began to take on some of these sacerdotal functions. The diaconate, too, shifted quite a bit, as deacons were involved in the Church for the first three centuries, guiding and sometimes even overseeing home parishes, and then they were limited by the Council of Nicea (325), which led to a decline. For centuries the permanent diaconate was not in use, and then eventually the diaconate “was a preliminary step to the priesthood almost everywhere in the West, and the diaconate as a separate

\textsuperscript{200} Ibid., 515–17.
permanent order disappeared in the Middle Ages and reappeared only in *Lumen Gentium.*

More recently, the office of the permanent diaconate was restored to the Latin Church by Paul VI in 1967, and in 1972 he “suppressed tonsure, minor orders, and the sub-diaconate [and] established the installed ministries of reader and acolyte for laymen and opened the possibility for episcopal conferences to establish other installed ministries.” These developments are important not only because they help us to understand the individual changes within the particular offices, but especially because when we understand the fluid nature (to some extent) of the offices, we realize that sacramental order is not fixed—that offices can and should evolve as the needs of the Church evolve. In the same way that presbyters took over sacramental functions from the bishops when the Church expanded, so too do we now see some laypeople assuming some of the roles that have been, for the past century or so, traditionally seen as part of the “duties” of a priest.

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202 Ibid., 263–64.

203 I want to be careful to emphasize what I mean by “ministry” here. Out of necessity I speak of “functions” and “duties,” but, of course, ministry is so much more than that. Graziano Marcheschi, in his essay “Rituals Matter: What Diocesan Rites Can Tell Us about the Emerging Theology of Lay Ecclesial Ministry,” in *In the Name of the Church: Vocation and Authorization of Lay Ecclesial Ministry,* ed. William J. Cahoy, 153–88 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), points out that we must understand “ministry as ‘relationship’ rather than ‘function’” (160). A priest is more than simply what he does, and this is also true of lay ministers. “Overemphasis on function can lead to a service oriented, sociological approach to ministry,” Marcheschi writes. Instead, “their relationship with parishioners gives priests and lay ecclesial ministers their agenda: to become living icons of God’s love, imitating Christ by loving people into wholeness and holiness” (162).
V. Ministry and Discipleship in Church Documents

a. *Vatican II Documents*

The Second Vatican Council reverted to some of the discipleship notions of scriptural times—especially in its emphasis on the baptismal priesthood. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* says that the liturgy builds up the temple of the Lord and also strengthens the Church’s power to preach Christ (§2).\(^\text{204}\) Most importantly, however, the document emphasizes over and over the need for the “active participation of the faithful” in liturgy through music, etc. The full involvement, the active participation, of the laity in liturgy can help to enhance discipleship and the common priesthood (and thus the Church as a whole) in many ways, including allowing them to feel ownership of the ritual processes, to feel as if they are a part of the Church, to learn through liturgical catechesis, and much more, as will be explored in the next chapter.\(^\text{205}\)

*Lumen Gentium* emphasizes the notion of the unity of the people of God, especially in chapter 2 when it uses the “people of God” (New Israel) image to highlight the common identity and dignity of all of the members and underscores the fact that all of us are journeying together. The work of Christ as priest, prophet, and king shows us the work of the whole people.\(^\text{206}\) The priesthood of the faithful is affirmed, but distinguished


\(^{205}\) I will also discuss Chauvet’s input on the form and purpose of liturgy and ritual processes in the next chapter.

\(^{206}\) *Lumen Gentium* (“Dogmatic Constitution on the Church”), http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-
from the ministerial priesthood, which exists to serve the larger (laity and clergy)
priesthood of all believers. Chapter 4 of Lumen Gentium emphasizes that the laity are part
of the whole people of God and share in Christ’s priestly, kingly, and prophetic work—but it also emphasizes throughout the chapter that they seek the kingdom of God through earthly affairs.

Avery Dulles discusses Lumen Gentium, emphasizing that the council is continuous with past theology in that it highlights the common identity and dignity of all of the members of the Church. There is an emphasis on the Church as “sacrament,” the mystical body, the kingdom of God, the people of God, hierarchical, and formed by the magisterium and the “sense of the faithful.” The priesthood of the faithful is affirmed (with the spiritual sacrifices of the faithful particularly mentioned) but distinguished from the ministerial priesthood, which exists to serve the larger (laity and clergy) priesthood of all believers. These ideas, Dulles points out, are presented clearly, but also in such a way that allows for further development, for a deepening of the Church’s self-understanding. He posits that the key to this deepening is the council’s view of ecclesiological theologies through the notion of sacrament.207

The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, Apostolicam Actuositatem, expresses an even deeper understanding of the meaning of discipleship. Through Baptism we are all incorporated into the common priesthood of Christ, and the laity are active members of this priesthood. Their apostolate is bringing Christ into the world. Christ calls every

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baptized believer to serve the mission of the Church: the apostolate belongs to everyone. There is one mission (the salvation of all and the renewal of the world), but many ministries. The laity share in the prophetic, priestly, and kingly activity of Christ by evangelizing, sanctifying, and witnessing—their temporal ministry comes from “their own share in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church” through Christ.208

The Holy Spirit gives gifts to the laity and the pastors judge the gifts, keeping what is good and being careful not to quench the movement of the Holy Spirit. Laity have a duty to use their charisms in the Church and in the world. Laity are active in church communities through outreach, catechesis, and administration at the local, national, and international levels in promoting the “true common good” (AA §10). A lay spirituality should be fostered and it is important to nourish lay ministry. The document Apostolicam Actuositatem reminds us that the individual apostolate is the basis for all group forms, and everyone has the attendant responsibility to participate in both. The goals of the lay apostolate are to build up the Church and bring people to salvation (AA §§5–7). The hierarchy has the primary responsibility to coordinate activities (including spiritual activity, secular activity, and charitable activity) within the Church.209 The document ends with an entreaty for lay members of the Church to heed the “invitation of Christ” (AA §33).

Robert W. Oliver, B.H., in “The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, Apostolicam Actuositatem,” explains that the goal of this document is to stimulate the


209 This is made clear throughout chapter 5, “External Relationships.”
laity to serve Christ and the Church. As in *Lumen Gentium*, “service” in *Apostolicam Actuositatem* is sharing in the Trinitarian work of salvation. Through Baptism we are all incorporated into the common priesthood of Christ, and the laity are active members. The notion of “apostolate” is thus broadened in this document: individuals or organizations are involved in the apostolate when they are bringing the Gospel into every aspect of the world (not just direct evangelization and sanctification). Earlier juridical understandings of “apostolate” required canonical authorization, but this document sees individual believers working with ecclesial authority. There is a difference between the role of the laity and that of ecclesial authority: some apostolates, due to their ecclesial ends, require direct Church governance, while others do not. “Ecclesiastical authorities, for their part, are charged with developing means to coordinate the different forms of the apostolate effectively, while respecting the distinctive character of each form.”

*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, according to Oliver, has had a tremendous impact on subsequent documents, especially *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), the revised codes of canon law (1983, 1990), and Pope John Paul II’s apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici* (1988). An intensification of lay activity has developed since the document, but the full breadth of the council’s understanding of the apostolate has yet to be fully achieved. The role of the magisterium in the Church is, ideally, complementary to and interactive with that of the laity. It is the whole Church together, the Nicene Creed tells us, that is indefectibly holy. The body of Christ must be connected and communicating so that it may carry out its apostolate of spreading the Gospel message. We have all received

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211 Ibid., 271–86.
varying gifts and strengths, and through the sharing of these gifts, the whole body is enriched (AA §3).

b. Post-Vatican II Documents

Post-Vatican II Church documents continue dealing with some of the themes from these Vatican II documents and introduce some of their own notions. We will look at these documents in terms of the ecclesial ministry of the laity rather than the common priesthood, the laity’s role in the secular sphere, and the other general “laity” topics that were more prevalent in Vatican II documents. Pope Paul VI’s Ministeria Quaeadam (1973), which drew on The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (1963), designated lectors and acolytes as special lay offices and provided the only two such offices with a common canonical status and installation rite in the Latin Church. But episcopal conferences can, according to Zeni Fox’s interpretation of The Constitution, “request the establishment of other offices from the Holy See.”\(^{212}\) When looking at ministry, the document tells us, we should look to both the early communities and the Church’s present needs.\(^ {213}\) On Evangelization in the Modern World (1975) asserts that the task of evangelization belongs to the whole Church while reminding the faithful that all of the members of the Church have different roles in this evangelization.

The Revised Code of Canon Law (1983) discusses many nonordained ministries, both in the absence of priests and even when there are plenty of priests—still, it is more

\(^{212}\) Zeni Fox, New Ecclesial Ministry: Lay Professionals Serving the Church (Franklin, WI: Sheed & Ward, 2002), 252.

\(^{213}\) The Synod on the Laity (1987) pointed to the need for collaboration between ordained and lay members in ministry
“conservative in its treatment of lay ministry” than Vatican II.\textsuperscript{214} It recognizes that all members of the Church have a common dignity and vocation to holiness.\textsuperscript{215} The Code also says that lay members can assist in ecclesiastical offices and encourages people to prepare themselves for these offices through obtaining the required knowledge in the sacred sciences.\textsuperscript{216}

\textit{Christifideles Laici} (1988) was a follow-up to Vatican II (twenty years afterward), and it seems to appreciate the increase in lay contributions to the Church while at the same time expressing concern or “cautions” about these contributions.\textsuperscript{217} I treat this more contemporary document in greater detail than the previous ones because it demonstrates the contemporary state of much of the Church today regarding lay ministry: it has a combination of appreciation for the contributions of these much-needed ministers and fear at the ways that sacramental order might change. For example, \textit{Christifideles Laici} says that lay people are like laborers in the vineyard, called and sent forth by God to labor in the whole world, “which is to be transformed according to the plan of God in view of the final coming of the Kingdom of God” (§1).\textsuperscript{218}

\textit{Christifideles Laici} also notes that the laity have become more involved in ecclesial ministry since the council. Conversely, however, \textit{Christifideles Laici} cautions against the following “two temptations”: “the temptation of being so strongly interested

\textsuperscript{214} Fox, \textit{New Ecclesial Ministry}, 256.
\textsuperscript{215} Ibid., 208–10.
\textsuperscript{216} Ibid., 228–30.
\textsuperscript{218} Note how the document seems to be emphasizing the “secular” nature of the ministry of LEMs.
in Church services and tasks that some fail to become actively engaged in their responsibilities in the professional, social, cultural and political world; and the temptation of...a separation of the Gospel’s acceptance from the actual living of the Gospel in various situations in the world” (CL §2). Here we can see the fear of some members of the Church. Likely they are wondering where this new involvement of LEMs will lead. Will the lay members of the Church become the same as priests? Clearly there is a concern that LEMs will give into the “temptations” to forget about their “secular” responsibilities and, apparently, to “live” the Gospel rather than to simply spread it.

This focus on these “temptations” (and on the secular nature of the lay minister) does not seem to make sense—is there really a risk that laity will become so involved in “Church services and tasks” that they will not be “engaged” in the “professional, social, cultural and political world”? Is the distinction between Church tasks and the social and cultural world that sharp? Or is the Church part of the dynamic of the social and cultural world? I pose these questions because it seems to me that the reason Pope John Paul II emphasizes the concern about these “temptations” so strongly in Christifideles Laici is because of the fear that many priests were feeling at the time. Shifts in sacramental order can be unsettling, and priests undoubtedly felt (some likely still do) a bit confused and threatened. They might have the question: “If the laity can do these things, then what is distinct about my role as a priest or bishop?”

Pope John Paul II, in Christifideles Laici, knows that there is a new urgency for the laity to get involved in ecclesial ministries and in the Church as a whole, especially given the pervasive secularism, lack of the recognition of human dignity, and conflict in the form of violence, terrorism, and war. The lay faithful can make the Church present
“as a sign and source of hope and of love” (*CL* §7). The identity and dignity of the lay faithful come from the “Church’s mystery of communion” (*CL* §8). The mission of the lay faithful comes from Baptism, when the Holy Spirit anoints each person, making him or her a spiritual temple filled “with the holy presence of God as a result of each person’s being united and likened to Jesus Christ” (*CL* §13). They are thus sharers in the threefold mission of Christ: priest, prophet, and king. The prime and fundamental vocation of the layperson is holiness, which “is intimately connected to mission and to the responsibility entrusted to the lay faithful in the Church and in the world” (*CL* §17).

However, the emphasis that we saw earlier in *Christifideles Laici* (with the focus on the “temptations” of the laity to get too preoccupied with Church matters) resurfaces with the point that the vocation of the laity has a “secular character.” They “live an ordinary life in the world: they study, they work, they form relationships as friends, professionals, members of society, cultures, etc.” In this reality they can fulfill their vocation (*CL* §15).

*Christifideles Laici* points toward the unity of the Church and the important contributions of its many members, depicting the benefits that the whole of the lay faithful can bring to the Church. While it is addressing all of the lay faithful and not specifically LEMs here, we can include LEMs under this designation. The ecclesiology of communion, the document says, is best seen as a body. “In fact, at one and the same time it is characterized by a diversity and a complementarity of vocations and states in life, of ministries, of charisms and responsibilities. Because of this diversity and complementarity every member of the lay faithful is seen in relation to the whole body
and offers a totally unique contribution on behalf of the whole body” (CL §20). The Eucharist is a sign and sacrament of (so it actually brings about) this communion.

The document is careful to try to preserve priestly identity throughout, pointing out that there are ministries, offices, and roles for lay ministers that are different from those of the ordained. Ordained ministry has a primary position, and it comes from that of the apostles, who were chosen and constituted by Jesus. “The ministries receive the charism of the Holy Spirit from the Risen Christ, in uninterrupted succession from the apostles, through the Sacrament of Orders: from him they receive the authority and sacred power to serve the Church, acting in persona Christi Capitis (in the person of Christ, the Head)” (CL §22).

The ministerial priesthood is absolutely necessary for the participation of the lay faithful in the mission of the Church. However, Christifideles Laici says, “when necessity and expediency in the Church require it, the Pastors, according to established norms from universal law, can entrust to the lay faithful certain offices and roles that are connected to their pastoral ministry but do not require the character of Orders” (CL §23). Ministries practiced by lay people should be exercised “in conformity to their specific lay vocation, which is different from that of the sacred ministry…[there is a need to uphold] the essential difference between the ministerial priesthood and the common priesthood, and the difference between the ministries derived from the Sacrament of Orders and those derived from the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation” (CL §23). Laity should be active in their particular church while growing in the sense of the universal Church. Pastors should collaborate with the laity at the local and national levels. There are
individual and group forms of participation in the Church, although lay associations must be in communion with the Church.

The laity share responsibility in the Church’s mission. They are prepared by the sacraments of Christian initiation and the gifts of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel. They must inform their whole lives with the Gospel and so teach others that it is the only complete response to the “problems and hopes that life poses to every person and society” (CL §34). They are also called to “missionary zeal and activity” to those who do not believe and to the young. The laity must also take a stand for the dignity of the human person (and thus the right to life, which follows from dignity) so that societies can rediscover this truth. The lay duty begins first in the family, the basic unit of society. They must also participate in public life (government, etc.) to promote the “common good” (CL §42). They must address workplace, cultural, educational, and ecological issues.

The warnings about and limitations of lay ministry are not limited to Christifideles Laici. In the Roman Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests (referred to as Ecclesiae de Mysterio) (1997), there is a careful distinction between the ministry of priests and laypeople. The authors pointedly caution that “It must be remembered that ‘collaboration with’ does not in fact mean ‘substitution for.’” The Instruction was written to address some concerns raised by congregations about the distinctions becoming blurred between LEMs and priests. As Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) explained, it was written because “a progressive relativization of the

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219 Fox, New Ecclesial Ministry, 266; the quote from the Instruction is from the “Premiss,” or “Introduction” of the document (prior to section 1).
priestly ministry is occurring. This is caused partly by a loss of the sense of the sacrament of Holy Orders, and by the growth of a type of parallel ministry among so-called ‘pastoral assistants or workers’ who are addressed by the same titles as priests: pastors, ministers, and those who, when exercising a leadership role in the community, wear liturgical vestments at celebrations and cannot be easily distinguished from priests.”

As later interpreted by Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, the Instruction attempts to guard against the perceived risk of a clericalization of the laity since “the tasks and functions of a ‘supplementary service’ have frequently become tasks and functions belonging to a new type of ‘ministry’ which overlaps that of priests.”220 In this attempt to preserve the “essential difference between the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood,” the emphasis is on the fact that the ministry of priests is rooted in “the sacrament of Orders” while the other ministries stem from the “sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.”221

The United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, on the other hand, focus on encouraging lay participation in ecclesial ministry in their documents “Called and Gifted” (1980), “Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium” (1995), and “Lay Ecclesial Ministry: The State of the Questions” (the culmination of committee work from 1994 to 1999).222 These are discussed below.

“Called and Gifted: The American Catholic Laity” points out that lay people are increasingly seeing themselves as members of the Church with “knowledge, experience

221 Ibid., II.2
222 NB: All of these three documents except the last one were written prior to the Instruction.
and awareness, freedom and responsibility, and mutuality in relationships.”\textsuperscript{223} They have taken leadership positions in churches and also expressed their faith in all aspects of life: “the laity are uniquely present in and to the world and so bear a privileged position to build the Kingdom of God there.”\textsuperscript{224} Lay people are “seeking spiritual formation and direction in deep ways of prayer.”\textsuperscript{225} The parish must be ready and able to meet the increasing spiritual needs of lay people and, further, the parish should be a place in which lay people and their leaders join together for “mutual spiritual enrichment.”\textsuperscript{226}

Collaboration between laity and clergy is essential: “The clergy help to call forth, identify, coordinate, and affirm the diverse gifts bestowed by the Spirit. We applaud this solidarity between laity and clergy as their most effective ministry and witness to the world.”\textsuperscript{227} Ecclesial ministers, “i.e., lay persons who have prepared for professional ministry in the Church,” are a gift to the Church and a new development. Women, “who in the past have not always been allowed to take their proper role in the Church’s ministry,” need an increased role in ministries of the Church.\textsuperscript{228}

“Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium,” written by the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops on the fifteenth anniversary of the first “Called and Gifted,” carries forward some of the same ideas.\textsuperscript{229} It tells us that holiness comes from the Holy

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{224} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{225} Ibid., “The Call to Holiness.”
\item \textsuperscript{226} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{227} Ibid., “The Call to Ministry.”
\item \textsuperscript{228} Ibid., “Ministry in the Church.”
\item \textsuperscript{229} USCCB, “Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium: Reflections of the U.S. Catholic Bishops on the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Decree on the Apostolate of the
Spirit received through baptism. Relationships bring us into deeper unity with Christ and we can see the creator’s work all around us. Suffering, service, and simplicity help us in addressing global injustices and ecological issues.

Laity encounter God in family, work, nature, and relationships, and community is at the root of the Church’s new evangelization. Community (family, parish, and small Christian communities) experiences foster faith: “Beyond the intimate community of family life, the parish is for most Catholics their foremost experience of Christian community, enabling them to express their faith, grow in unity with God and others, and continue the saving mission of Christ.”

In the mission and ministry section of the document the responsibility of laity to “develop the gifts she or he has been given by sharing them in the family, the workplace, the civic community, and the parish or diocese” is emphasized. The clergy have a parallel responsibility to acknowledge and foster lay ministries and offices. Laity and clergy should be partners in transforming the world.

In speaking of LEMs particularly, the document acknowledges that there are more “professionally prepared lay men and women offering their talents and charisms in the service of the Church.” The Church sees this as a blessing and is grateful. With this increase the need to “foster respectful collaboration, leading to mutual support in ministry” between clergy and laity rises to the forefront, and this “huge task” will require “changes in patterns of reflection, behavior, and expectation among laity and clergy


230 Ibid., “Christian Community in Family and Parish.”

231 Ibid., “Participation in the Church’s Life and Mission as the Sacrament of Christ in the World.”

232 Ibid., “Lay Ministry in the Church.”

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alike.” Both ordained and lay members of the Church must view their “roles and ministries as complementary,” and understand that their purposes are united in the one mission and ministry of Christ, whose prayer at the Last Supper was for unity. “Collaboration in ministry is a way to realize that unity.”

“Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry” expresses the “strong desire” of the USCCB “for the fruitful collaboration of ordained and lay ministers who, in distinct but complementary ways, continue in the Church the saving mission of Christ for the world, his vineyard.” It points to the need for ministers and an understanding of the common call—including the fact that the lay faithful are called and have a vocation in the Church. This document presents a theology of LEM, especially that of discipleship and ministry as being part of the Trinitarian communion. It quotes Pope John Paul II’s description of the Church as “‘a mystery of Trinitarian communion in missionary tension’” and emphasizes how discipleship can help the Church fulfill “the conviction of the Second Vatican Council that the Church finds its source and purpose in the life and activity of the Triune God”:

The Church is a communion in which members are given a share in the union with God brought about by Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. The reality of the Church is the communion of each Christian with the Triune God and, by means of it, the communion of all Christians with one another in Christ. The Church is the communion of those called by Christ to be his disciples. Discipleship is the fundamental vocation in which the Church’s mission and ministry find full

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233 Ibid., “Challenges for the Future.”
meaning. The call to discipleship is, first of all, a gift. God offers to us a share in the Trinitarian communion, the love of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 235

From this theology of ministry based on Trinitarian communion, the document draws out implications for how LEMs are related to bishops, priests, deacons, and other laity. In fact, the document is written to be a “resource for diocesan bishops and for all others who are responsible for guiding the development of lay ecclesial ministry in the United States.” 236 Ecclesial ministries “require authorization of the hierarchy in order for the person to serve publicly in the local church. They entrust to laity responsibilities for leadership in particular areas of ministry and thereby draw certain lay persons into a close mutual collaboration with the pastoral ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons.” 237

In this document the U.S. Bishops emphasize the need for LEMs to be formed spiritually in the Church, especially since they serve publicly in the local church—they must be “fully versed in authentic Church teaching, supportive of it, able to defend it, and present it with clarity.” 238 After discernment and training comes authorization, overseen by the bishop. This is when the prepared LEMs are given responsibility for their mission(s), and it often includes a certification, a commissioning, and an appointing. The last stage is public—within the community—but what this should look like is not formulated. Also, it is important to note that, while the USCCB speaks of authorization as if it is already in place, it is not. Some churches and dioceses explicitly practice authorization, but many do not. And even among those that do, what authorization means and how it is expressed publicly varies greatly within the United States.

235 Ibid., 19.
236 Ibid., 5.
237 Ibid., 5.
238 Ibid., 41. This is one of the four necessary areas of formation.
“Co-Workers” explains that LEMs have the following:

- Authorization of the hierarchy to serve publicly in the local church
- Leadership in a particular area of ministry
- Close mutual collaboration with the pastoral ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons
- Preparation and formation appropriate to the level of responsibilities that are assigned to them.\textsuperscript{239}

The document points out the need for LEMs to fulfill responsibilities “rooted in their baptismal call and gifts” and emphasizes that serving publicly in the local church “requires authorization by competent authority.” Lay ecclesial ministry is rapidly expanding, comes from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and shares in the mission of the Church. We as a Church need to further explore “the specific place of lay ecclesial ministers in an ordered, relational, ministerial community.”\textsuperscript{240} The bishop, often through the pastor, must oversee and order these new ministerial relationships within his diocese. He also must “affirm and guide the use of those gifts that lay ecclesial ministers bring—not to extinguish the Spirit, but to test everything and to retain what is good.”\textsuperscript{241} Priests have the duty to help lead LEMs in “developing collaboration that is mutually life-giving and respectful.”\textsuperscript{242} Christian discipleship is expected of all of the baptized, and the call to lay ecclesial ministry “adds a particular focus” to this Christian discipleship.\textsuperscript{243} There are many ways that people become interested in LEM (personal, communal, and ecclesial)

\textsuperscript{239} Ibid., 10. It is interesting how these qualities are discussed as if they are everywhere when they are not. This is similar to my observation in the paragraph above that, despite the way the USCCB speaks of authorization, it is not commonly in place across the dioceses of the United States. There seems to be a trend of theologizing and attributing idealized characteristics to lay ecclesial ministry, but these things are far from being accomplished.
\textsuperscript{240} Ibid., 21.
\textsuperscript{241} Ibid., 23.
\textsuperscript{242} Ibid., 24.
\textsuperscript{243} Ibid., 26.
and discern a call for it. Dioceses and institutions of higher education should collaborate to aid in discernment, which is lifelong. Formation should address the whole person: “human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral.”

It is evident throughout this study that the Church has been striving for a deeper understanding of lay ministry at different times in its history (and especially since Vatican II). Scripture demonstrates the need for all members to contribute to the body and mission of the Church, and Church documents (albeit written at different levels and with differing levels of authority) at and after Vatican II have an emphasis on: all of the faithful; ministerial roles as “offices”; the baptismal priesthood; an increase in the need for, and involvement of, lay ministers; the fact that laity share in the work of salvation and in Christ’s priestly, kingly, and prophetic work; the laity’s primary vocation “in the world” (of family, work, community, etc); and the benefits and dangers of increasing collaboration between lay ministers and priests.

Vatican II brought to the fore, again, the priesthood of all believers and the universal call to holiness. With these came a stronger articulation of communion ecclesiology and the role of the laity in the Catholic Church. The laity share in the prophetic, priestly, and kingly activities of Christ by evangelizing, sanctifying, and witnessing. Lay members of the Church were entreated by the council to heed the “invitation of Christ” (AA §33) to participate in the mission of the Church—the one people of God drawing all people into the communion of the Trinity.

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244 Ibid., 34.
The foundation for a rich understanding of LEM and the need for ritualization of this role certainly exist in the Church. This is especially visible in “Lay Ecclesial Ministry: The State of the Questions,” which points out the following qualities of LEMs (defined in the document as “professionally prepared men and women, including vowed religious, who are in positions of service and leadership in the Church”):

- A fully initiated lay member of the Christian faithful (including vowed religious) who is responding to the empowerment and gifts of the Holy Spirit received in baptism and confirmation, which enable one to share in some form of ministry
- One who responds to a call or invitation to participate in ministry and who has prepared through a process of prayerful discernment
- One who has received the necessary formation, education, and training to function competently within the given area of ministry
- One who intentionally brings personal competencies and gifts to serve the Church’s mission through a specific ministry of ecclesial leadership and who does so with community recognition and support
- One to whom a formal and public role in ministry has been entrusted or upon whom an office has been conferred by competent ecclesiastical authority
- One who has been installed in a ministry through the authority of the bishop or his representative, perhaps using a public ritual
- One who commits to performing the duties of a ministry in a stable manner
- A paid staff person (full- or part-time) or a volunteer who has responsibility and the necessary authority for institutional leadership in a particular area of ministry

Note particularly that this document emphasizes that ministry is a response to a particular vocation, involves professional preparation, is conferred upon the minister, and that the minister is installed. The document suggests that this installation may happen through a public ritual—but this study will demonstrate why it must happen via a public ritual.

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247 Pope Paul VI, in Ministeria Quaedam, talked about installing lectors and acolytes, but the installation mentioned here seems to be of a different sort since that document is not cited here (and also since it is not practiced).
ritual if the Church is to be true to its theological understanding of LEM (as well as to the purpose of ritual itself).

Documents such as “Co-workers” and “Lay Ecclesial Ministry,” above, provide important starting points for our study, but this dissertation draws out some of the implications of their thought. In addition to developing a general theology of the laity, we, as a Church, are formulating a contemporary ecclesiology of the lay ecclesial minister. This includes not only defining the roles of the various ministers, but also (and especially) drawing together our theological understandings of these roles and devising liturgical reflections of the deepened understandings—which will in turn further increase our understanding. The next chapter of this study will inform the notion of ritualizing the roles and status of LEMs with the perspectives of several contemporary theologians.

248 In “Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium,” too, the bishops point to the need for collaboration between ordained and lay ministers and emphasize the fact that “their purposes [are] joined to the one mission and ministry of Jesus Christ” (“Challenges for the Future”).
Chapter 2. Theological Treatments of LEM

I. Introduction

It has been established (both in the previous chapter and through the works of other authors) that lay ecclesial ministry is a vocation that is assumed in response to a call. I argue that for our professional ministers to fulfill their vocation in the Church, we must have some form of ritual authorization associated with various ministries, allowing LEMs to be representatives of—and within—the Church. Through ritual authorization, new ecclesial relationships between the bishops and the ministers, and between the ministers and the parishes in which they serve, are formed. It both represents and creates responsibility within the minister for the parish and the Church as a whole.

In this section I will examine what it means to be a lay ecclesial minister in the Catholic Church and analyze the need for authorization in this context. Zeni Fox provides an overview of LEMs and points out why we need universal systems of recognition given the situation of the contemporary lay minister. Yves Congar’s theology of the Trinity (and especially the role of the Holy Spirit within the dynamic of the persons), Richard Gaillardetz’s model of the Church, the Church’s developing communion ecclesiology, and Cardinal John Henry Newman’s reflections on the sense of the faithful all help to form a theological basis for understanding the role—and importance of—the laity in the Church, especially that of LEMs. The reflections of various authors on implementing the goals and strategies outlined in “Co-Workers” pinpoint where the Church is in meeting the needs of LEMs and point toward necessary areas of growth. Finally, the
characteristics of ministry and the models proposed by Thomas O’Meara and Edward Hahnenberg lead us to important conclusions about lay ecclesial ministry and how the Church can meet the needs of these ministers and the parishes they serve.

If indeed LEM is a vocation and a response to a call, then what does this mean for the recognition of the dignity of the ministry itself (and the public nature of it)? If the lay ecclesial minister holds an office that has been conferred by a bishop or priest, should this conferral of authority be expressed to the congregation? If so, how?

This chapter answers these questions by developing a theological understanding of LEMs. Developing this understanding will include examining lay ecclesiastical ministries in light of such theological concepts as “call” and “vocation,” exploring the ecclesiological position of LEMs, and ordering the various ministries. A developed theological understanding of LEMs will permit lay ecclesial ministries to be expressed in the life and liturgy of the Church, which is essential to our ministers being able to fulfill their functions in the Church; if we expect them to be representatives of—and within—the Church, then the Church must authorize them and their ministry to be so. Authorization and other forms of recognition are necessary since it is through authorization that new ecclesial relationships between the bishops and the ministers, and between the ministers and the parishes in which they serve, are formed and made public.

Who are these called and practicing LEMs? Chapter 1 of this study notes that in 1980 the U.S. Catholic Bishops described (in “Called and Gifted”) the “new” phenomenon of lay persons who were professional ministers in the Church. Fox highlights some of the research on LEMs since this time, focusing on the demographics, educational background, formation, and supervision of these ministers. A trend has
developed from lay persons being involved in catechetical work to their presence in educational, pastoral, and liturgical ministries. The overwhelming majority of these ministers (approximately 85 percent) are women. Fox suggests that lack of advancement, security, and poor financial compensation contribute to the lack of lay men in ecclesial ministry. Interestingly, over 90 percent of these ministers are white—Fox thinks that part of the reason for this is the requirement that ministers have degrees and be professionals.  

The majority of LEMs see themselves as ministering and acknowledge that they have received special charisms, or graces, for the ministry in which they are engaged. They view their authority as rooted in Baptism and Confirmation or through a special vocation.  

II. LEM as a Vocation, a Charism, and a Gift of the Holy Spirit

Fox reflects on vocation, emphasizing the need for the lay ecclesial minister to view his or her own ministry as a vocation as well as the importance of the community understanding the role of the minister as such. God, in revealing God’s self to us, calls us to be in relationship with God—and through God—in community with each other. Additionally, we are to join in the mission of Jesus, “the mission of preparing the way for the final coming of the reign of God.” Despite the fact that the Church has taught this

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250 Fox, New Ecclesial Ministry, 72.

for some time, Fox explains, “for most Catholics there is not an adequate language available to describe their search for the right work, their experience of an inner drawing to this work, their experience of their vocation to work.”[^252] The benefit of understanding one’s work as a vocation is that one finds deeper meaning in one’s life mission. It is important that individuals and the community (“theologians, bishops, and communities of faith”) both foster awareness of the many vocations in the Church today.

Yves Congar’s theology of the Holy Spirit is essential to our study of charisms and the living out of a vocational state in life. His notions will also factor into some of our later discussions on the structure of the Church and the implications for ministry within it. Thomas O’Meara draws on Congar in formulating his model, and O’Meara tells us that Congar, writing in his journal at the end of Vatican II, said: “What has been accomplished is fantastic. And nevertheless, everything remains to be done.”[^253] This is so true—in the case of lay ecclesial ministry, especially.

Congar writes that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are helpful in the discernment of vocations and charisms. From the twelfth century onwards, mostly due to the works of Augustine, people frequently petitioned for the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and understood them as “principles of action according to God.”[^254] The seven gifts are enumerated in Isaiah 11:2–3. Saint Thomas Aquinas described them as well, and they are outlined in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: wisdom—judgment about the truth; counsel or right judgment—the gift of truth that allows one to respond prudently; courage

[^252]: Ibid., 13.
or fortitude—allows us firmness of mind to do good and avoid evil; understanding—
allows us to apprehend the truth; knowing—true knowing (more than an apprehension of
facts); reverence or piety—through the Holy Spirit we give worship to God; and wonder
and awe or fear of the Lord—a fear of separating oneself from the all-powerful God. 255

Much was made about these gifts being grouped into seven, relating them to
sections of the Church’s history (Rupert of Deutz) or to the seven capital sins. The gifts
of the Holy Spirit were separated from the virtues around 1235. Aquinas called them
“spirits” rather than simply “gifts,” and this was significant because it “points to a
movement by inspiration” of the Holy Spirit. 256 He said that the gifts help humans to
reach beyond their limitations and act in ways that they could not otherwise. Congar
(with the help of Aquinas’s thought) emphasizes that the gifts are “dispositions which
make the Christian ready to grasp and follow the inspirations of the Spirit.” 257 They open
us to guidance from the Holy Spirit.

In Scripture there are many examples of people being called—personally or
collectively summoned by God (e.g., Samuel) in the Old and New Testaments. In fact,
Gary Badcock tells us that “the Hebrew verb ‘to call,’ is one of the more frequently
occurring words in the Old Testament.” 258 The biblical sense of a call was “the summons
to faith, obedience, and salvation,” and there are occasional references to the condition to
which one was called (what we now call vocation), such as the call of Paul to be an

255 Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), §1831,
http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c1a7.htm (accessed Sept.
23, 2012); hereafter cited as CCC. See also §1806 in CCC for a reference to Aquinas on
prudence.
256 Congar, I Believe, 1:119.
257 Ibid., 1:119.
258 Gary Badcock, The Way of Life: A Theology of Christian Vocation (Grand
apostle. Congar tells a story of a Christian faith that began to lose its understanding of vocation (and the role of the Holy Spirit in general) through history, and he explains that the idea of “vocation” became narrowed so that it only applied to a vocation to the priesthood or religious life. Vatican II reclaimed this emphasis on the Holy Spirit and enriched our understanding of the Church and the roles of its members.

The Second Vatican Council emphasized that the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. *Lumen Gentium* compared the “visible and the spiritual, the human and the divine, aspects of the Church and the union of the two natures in Christ.” Congar tells us that “this comparison is made for the purpose of attributing to the Holy Spirit the task of animating the Church as an event here and now.” Certain ecclesial rituals were again seen as a participation in Christ’s anointing, and recognition of the work of the Holy Spirit again came to the fore. For example, the new Confirmation ritual included “the fourth- and fifth-century Eastern formula, ‘the seal of the gift of the Spirit.’” Also importantly, epicleses were brought into the Eucharistic prayers. The body of the Church is seen as “a unity in the Trinity of persons.”

The renewal of an understanding of charisms was another way that the Holy Spirit was restored to our theology at Vatican II. We see this in many of our readings, including sections from *Lumen Gentium*. The Church was seen as built up by all of the charisms of the members of the Church and not just by the institutional aspects of the Church. Everyone is to use their charisms in communion with each other and their pastors for the

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259 Ibid., 7.
261 Ibid., 1:168.
262 Ibid., 1:169.
263 Ibid., 1:169.
good of the Church. Congar tells us that as a result of this development in theology, “a
new programme of ‘ministries,’ giving the Church a new face that is quite different from
the one that the earlier pyramidal and clerical ecclesiology presented, has developed since
the Second Vatican Council on the basis of these charisms used for the common good
and the building up of the Church.”

It is through a theology of the Holy Spirit that we can understand why there are
new things in the Church (and why things like the order of ministries must develop as the
needs change). New things must happen because the Spirit guides the “perpetual
renewal” that should be taking place in the Church so that the Church can remain faithful
to the Lord. The Spirit inspires the members as a whole so that they can help to
maintain the Church in truth. The responsibility of each member to contribute their gifts
to the good of the whole was also emphasized at Vatican II. In fact, the body of the
faithful as a whole, through the supernatural sense of the faith given by the Holy Spirit,
cannot err in things pertaining to faith. All of this was begun at the council, but it must
actually be accomplished, put into practice, by the life of the Church. The whole people
of God must decide to actually live it out. I will look at this more during the latter half of
this chapter.

Congar calls the Holy Spirit the “co-instituting” principle of the Church. The
Word and the Spirit work together as persons of the Trinity—they act together (operate)

264 Ibid., 1:170.
265 Ibid., 1:171.
266 See, for example, LG §12: “The entire body of the faithful, anointed as they
are by the Holy One, cannot err in matters of belief. They manifest this special property
by means of the whole peoples’ supernatural discernment in matters of faith when ‘from
the Bishops down to the last of the lay faithful’ they show universal agreement in matters
of faith and morals. That discernment in matters of faith is aroused and sustained by the
Spirit of truth.”
as “two hands” proceeding from the Father. Congar summarizes Saint Paul’s thought on this by saying, “the glorified Lord and the Spirit may be different in God, but they are functionally so united that we experience them together and are able to accept one for the other.” The resurrected Lord is still active in the Church, and we are partners in working with Christ to sustain and build up the body of Christ.

The Word has an invisible mission (to make us God’s adopted sons and daughters), and the Holy Spirit has an invisible mission (to penetrate our hearts). The Church is the “fruit” of these divine missions. Congar, drawing on Aquinas, says that the notion of mission connects the sender (the Father), the one sent (the Son/Holy Spirit), and the one to whom the sendee is sent (humans). The Word and the Holy Spirit thus bring humanity into a new relationship with God. The Church depends on these missions, and “we believe that the profound life of that great body, which is both scattered and one, is the culmination and the fruit, in the creature, of the very life of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

The implications of Congar’s notion of the missions and the Spirit as the co-instituting principle of the Church are great. The fact that the Holy Spirit is the co-instituting principle of the Church has implications for the various vocational states in life. This is especially the case for lay and ordained members of the Church, and we will look at this again when we are talking about O’Meara’s text and the development of a theology of ministry.

\[267\] Congar, *I Believe*, draws from Irenaeus for this phrase.
\[268\] Ibid., 2:12.
\[269\] Ibid., 2:7.
\[270\] See part 2 of Congar, *I Believe*, for additional “missions” that are beyond the topic of this dissertation.
\[271\] Ibid., 2:8.
Briefly now, though, let us turn to Congar’s implications for ritual. There is a public ordination for ordained ministers of the Church. Would Congar’s thought inform our discussion of the need for a communal liturgy of public commissioning for the laity who have been prepared and approved for ecclesial positions? Congar hints at this: “why it is important and under what conditions it is possible to call the Spirit, who makes the Church by these means, ‘co-institutive’ of the Church. Going beyond all legal provisions, the Holy Spirit is entrusted with the task of making sure that ‘the form of government established by Christ the Lord in his Church’ is unfailingly observed.”272 The event of the Spirit, he continues, is such that the social structures of the Church are at the service of the Spirit. Therefore, following through on this line of thought, the social structures of the Church would need to be flexible—that is, as the Holy Spirit inspired transitions within the Church, the structures of governance would need to be able to respond to these movements of the Spirit.

a. Contemporary Developments in LEM—Possible Movements of the Spirit—and Required Next Steps

In fact, new transitions (movements) are happening within the Church. Lay ministers are helping to invite and engage parishioners in a way that was not happening before, and so they are “themselves a sign of the ministry of the whole Church.”273 The Church now has a diversity of ministries (sacramental, guarding the tradition, community building, prophecy, and caring for society) that is in line with the New Testament; it is recovering from the corruption that had occurred, as Fox puts it, when the perception of

272 Ibid., 1:170.
273 Fox, New Ecclesial Ministry, 300.
“the sacrament of orders had swallowed all ministries.” However, Catholics need to concentrate as a Church on preserving ministry as service-oriented, collegial, and rooted in charism. The way to do this is to connect lay ministry to order in the Church. The Church needs to reorder its ministries—to expand ministerial order to include these changes to LEM and ministry in general. Then, and only then, will the Church be able to respond to the working of the Spirit within it (especially in regard to the Spirit-supported flourishing of lay ministry).

In ordering, the new ministers’ titles and roles must be defined such that they can be formal rather than informal leaders—and this will include a special designation. Allowing LEMs to be formal leaders means that they are more “official,” which increases their authority. People employed in a full-time position, for example, are likely to have a lot more room to make changes in a parish than volunteers. One thing that Fox suggests is incorporating the traditional notion of “stability”—a space/time commitment—into our understanding of LEM. But, she acknowledges, this is problematic for our mobile society. At the least, there must be public recognition that in our society there “are those who are called precisely to full-time ministry in the

__274__ Ibid., 304.
__275__ The Church clearly needs more work on this, since “only 19 percent [of pastors] include parishioners in their decision-making process” (ibid., 310).
__276__ It might also involve a form of particular higher education as part of a special formation, Fox says, but what about minority communities in which this form of preparation is uncommon? Addressing this is beyond the scope of this work, but this is a crucial point to keep in mind as the Church develops its expectations for LEMs in other forums.
__277__ While it is true that I advocate for flexibility in social structures, I also think that local communities/parishes need to formalize the structures that work for them. Additionally, the Church needs to determine how to view ecclesiological structures in such a way that LEMs are recognized in all of the theological integrity that they bring with them. What this will look like given the local flexibility that also needs to be present, I do not yet know. This is an area for further exploration and dialogue.
Church…their work is not within the ‘secular’ realm.” 278 Fox suggests that “The most helpful way to designate lay ministers as official ministers would be to petition Rome for another category of official lay ministers,” one that is in addition to the limited (and rarely used) lector and acolyte installations. 279

Fox does emphasize that a common ritual of designation—a form of public authorization—is needed. However, she acknowledges the difficulty of determining which roles require authorization. Still, if the conference of bishops made these decisions rather than individual bishops in their dioceses, there would be consistency across the United States. Possibly eventually even the synod of bishops could make some of these common decisions so that this consistency would extend beyond the United States. 280

Lay ecclesial ministers have a continuing need to celebrate commissionings ritually and to build support systems (for themselves as well as their spouses). Less than 20 percent of LEMs in Fox’s analyses are currently commissioned, but the majority of LEMs she studied would prefer at least some form of commissioning on the part of the Church community. 281 To this end, Fox points out that “the Church’s tradition of minor orders, especially as reconfigured by Ministeria Quaedam, offers a fruitful source for identifying a way to ritually designate new ministers for a new role in this community.” 282 This study will examine that further in the next chapter. For now, I will

278 Fox, New Ecclesial Ministry, 327.
279 Ibid., 328.
280 To what extent particular rituals are culturally determined (and thus should be established locally) will need to be explored once rituals become more consistent across a geographical area, but this task is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this work and something for which the Catholic Church is not yet ready, especially considering that it is just beginning to establish the need for somewhat consistent rituals.
281 Fox, New Ecclesial Ministry, 72.
282 Ibid., 125.
examine communion ecclesiology and how it contributes to our developing theological basis for viewing the LEM as an important component of ministry and as necessary to the very function and survival of the Catholic Church.

b. Implications of Communion Ecclesiology for LEM

The faithful’s view of the Church impacts the way they view the Church’s ministers. Susan K. Wood’s emphasis on the Church as communion is a step toward a theology of unity in that it situates the discussion in an ecclesial context and helps us to understand a common theological barrier to communion, which can be destructive because, among other issues, LEMs are more likely to be seen as an important component of ministry within the context of a united view of the Church. That is, we need a healthy and balanced view of ecclesiology to have a healthy and balanced view of LEM.

The barrier is an attachment to universalist or particularist tendencies within ecclesiology—Wood posits that either of these two extremes limit communion, as we shall see. At the Second Vatican Council there was a new emphasis on particular churches (a diocese or grouping of churches in the same culture), each of which is “essentially an altar community around its bishop” and requires the Eucharist and a bishop. The universal Church is completely present in the particular church, and it is best thought of as “a communion of particular churches in which there is a relationship of...

283 Instead, as we will see, Wood asserts that there must be a balance between these two positions.
mutual interiority between the particular church and the universal Church.”  

*Lumen Gentium* tells us that the bishops “are the visible principle and foundation of unity in their particular churches, fashioned after the model of the universal Church, in and from which churches comes into being the one and only Catholic Church” (*LG*, §23).

In this model the bishops are signs of the communion of churches (each bishop represents his particular church, and collectively the college of bishops represents the communion of churches), conveyed through the Eucharistic presidency of the bishop, which is the visible expression of the relationship of communion between the particular churches. Collegiality, subsidiarity, and diversity should thus be evident in the administrative aspect of the universal Church.

There are universalist and particularist tendencies, and those with ecclesiology of the first type focus on the pope as the successor to Peter and the head of the whole Church (secondarily the bishop of Rome). Those who emphasize the particular aspect of ecclesiology underscore the diversity of churches in the New Testament and say that the primacy of the pope comes from Rome being the site of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul. In the latter model diversity is the given and unity is something to be achieved. In Wood’s notion of this second model, she emphasizes the “visible and institutional elements which mediate and facilitate communion [including] the papacy…since the Petrine ministry is a ministry of unity…the college of bishops, which represents the communion of particular churches,” and smaller units such as synods of bishops and

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285 Ibid., 166.
national episcopal conferences. In addition to these structures, the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, bring about unity and effect visible communion.

There must be a balance between the two positions: “The universalist position protects the Church from falling prey to a narrow nationalism. The expertise and breadth of scope available to the universal Church provide a corrective and balance to the necessarily limited wisdom and skills of a single bishop. On the other hand, more active participation of the laity, greater attention to the social and cultural location of the people in the proclamation of the gospel, and a decentralization of bureaucratic administration are possible with attention to a theology of the local church.”

It is clear that striking a balance between universalism and particularism is important to a healthy Church, and this can only be achieved with active participation of the laity. Part of encouraging this participation is recognizing and supporting the lay ministers in particular churches, thus empowering the laity everywhere and helping other lay ministers to recognize their vocations to ministry.

Wood pointed out the need for recognizing and supporting lay ministers, and Gaillardet’s theology can help us do this concretely. He points to the need for an

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286 Ibid., 172–73. In emphasizing the unitive elements, Wood is showing that particularist models are also seeking to maintain unity, not to abandon it.
287 Ibid., 176.
288 This is Wood’s view, but additionally, Lumen Gentium says this: “pastors know how much the laity contribute to the welfare of the entire Church. They also know that they were not ordained by Christ to take upon themselves alone the entire salvific mission of the Church toward the world. On the contrary they understand that it is their noble duty to shepherd the faithful and to recognize their ministries and charisms, so that all according to their proper roles may cooperate in this common undertaking with one mind. For we must all ‘practice the truth in love, and so grow up in all things in Him who is head, Christ. For from Him the whole body, being closely joined and knit together through every joint of the system, according to the functioning in due measure of each single part, derives its increase to the building up of itself in love’” (LG §30).
ordering of ministries and articulates an ecclesiological foundation for a theology of LEM. The three features of Vatican II’s emerging ecclesiology are: “(1) the priority of the baptismal call of the Christifideles, (2) the Church’s call to mission in the world, and (3) the Church as an ordered communion.”289 His theology, then, follows these points, and he draws them together to emphasize that baptism into the Church means baptism into the Church’s mission.290 By emphasizing the common mission of all the baptized to the world, he connects the church ad intra and ad extra. He also touches on the relationship of the parish to the universal Church by underscoring the nature of the Church as koinonia—connected as a union of Eucharistic communions.

He views the Church as inspired by the Holy Spirit through its hierarchy and sees this “ordering of the church as intrinsic to her life as it receives its life from the God who, in Christian faith, is ordered in eternal self-giving as the triune communion of persons.”291 It is through initiation into the Church that one assumes one’s ordo (“place”) in the community and impacts communion with God, all Christians, and the world.

Ministry, according to Gaillardetz, is any form of service that is formally undertaken and draws one into a new ecclesial relationship through a call, ecclesial discernment and recognition of charism, appropriate formation, authorization and ritualization.292

290 Ibid., 29.
291 Ibid., 35.
292 Ibid., 35–40.
In order to recognize liturgically this ecclesial repositioning, he suggests moving away from the designation “lay ecclesial ministers” and instead using ordained, installed, and commissioned ministries. The specific ordering of ministries has and will continue to change. The stability comes from the fundamental orientation of the whole Church in the fulfillment of Christ’s mission and the ordering of ministries to better serve this mission. The way that order should be expressed in our contemporary Church is outlined thus: “Installed ministries demand significant ministerial formation and a high degree of stability. Commissioned ministries also indicate a repositioning, and imply a new degree of accountability, a specialized formation and a demand for some formal authorization.”

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\[c. \quad The \ Role \ of \ the \ Inspiration \ of \ the \ Holy \ Spirit \ in \ the \ Church\]

Gaillardetz also underscores the fact that the nature of the Church requires that its official teaching office consult the faithful. The insight of the faithful and the authority of office both share the same source: the Holy Spirit who guides the Church, maintaining it in truth. Both have a prophetic role in the Church, and as Vatican II pointed out, when a consensus fidelium occurs (universal Catholic agreement), the people of God are infallible \( (LG \ §12) \). The Holy Spirit gives the whole Church the gift of itself, the “Spirit

\[293\] Ibid., 45. Note that the way that Gaillardetz uses “installed” is a bit different from that in \textit{Ministera Quaedam}—he proposes to extend what the document calls “installed ministries” beyond those of lector and acolyte to include other (what are currently called) lay ecclesial ministries. This is in line with the apparent intention in the document of setting up this category of stable ministries, since the document did allow for episcopal conferences to “petition for the addition of other public ministries.” These installations would require a ritual component (ibid., 44–45), so it is similar to the need that Fox identifies.
of truth,” and so it is only by the clergy and the laity working together that truth can be realized (LG §12). Thus, the nonordained faithful also have a role to play in the prophetic ministry of the Church. This discernment is guided by the magisterium. Moreover, the Holy Spirit may be guiding the development of the structures of LEM in our contemporary Church, which I will explore near the end of this section (once I have established the basic theology of the role of the sense of the faithful).

Francis Sullivan examines this passage from section 12 of Lumen Gentium, emphasizing that the sense of faith (sensus fidei), which is a supernatural grace of the Holy Spirit, is given to all of the faithful collectively. The four effects of this gift are named in Lumen Gentium. First, sensus fidei enables the faithful to recognize the word of God even though it may be mediated to them through humans. Second, it allows one to recognize and hold true to the truth or to reject error. Third, the grace helps the faithful to comprehend the truth more accurately through insights. Lastly, it leads them to apply the Word of God more completely to their lives.

Avery Dulles, through his understanding of the fruits of the Holy Spirit as the goal of religious experience, adds another dimension to our examination of the role of the Holy Spirit in the sensus fidelium. He informs us that the Church and its members who are filled with the Holy Spirit have a “grace-given dynamism toward the things of God.”

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294 Here Lumen Gentium refers to 1 Thessalonians 2:13: “We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God’s word, which is also at work in you believers.”

Insofar as they have this inclination, the members of the Church accept that which in their “religious experience” will lead them to the fruits of the Holy Spirit.\(^{296}\)

Dulles draws upon the Letter to the Galatians for the fruits of the Spirit. Paul lists them as: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Gal. 5:22–23). Immediately following this list, Paul writes, “If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25). Dulles’s point seems to be supported here by Paul’s letter—if one lives by the Spirit, one will be filled with the fruits of the Spirit (and vice versa) and be able to discern what should be accepted as truth to aid in further growth in the Spirit.

Conversely, Dulles writes that where the result of a teaching is “inner turbulence, anger, discord, disgust, distraction, and the like, the Church can judge that the Spirit of Christ is not at work.”\(^{297}\) However, I would here remind the reader of the resistance by many Catholics to the liturgical reforms of Vatican II and caution that our nature and personality may make us initially resistant to change, and so Dulles’s idea, if true, should only be applied some time after a new teaching is promulgated.\(^{298}\)

The sense of the faith is somehow connected to our baptism, at which we receive a special grace from the Holy Spirit, which changes our souls forever. We are all baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Susan K. Wood describes the


\(^{297}\) Ibid., 69.

\(^{298}\) Clearly the sense of the faith I have been discussing belongs by necessity to Catholics, as it is a sense of the Catholic faith. Whether or not non-Catholics have a sense of ultimate truth given to them by the Holy Spirit is another question altogether and cannot be addressed within the scope of this work.
action of the Spirit during this sacrament: “A baptismal community lives in the power of the Spirit. The prayer of the blessing of the baptismal water evokes the power of the Spirit of God hovering over the waters of chaos: ‘At the very dawn of creation your Spirit breathed on the waters, making them the wellspring of all holiness.’ The epiclesis of the prayer of ordination for a presbyter also invokes the Spirit of holiness: ‘Almighty Father, grant, we pray, to these servants of yours the dignity of the priesthood, renew deep within them the Spirit of holiness.’”

The question of how to ascertain whether or not a consensus fidelium exists still remains. Susan K. Wood emphasizes that the universal consent called for “does not mean that only where there is 100 percent agreement on the part of all the Catholics in the world does a true sensus fidei obtain in regard to any Christian doctrine, or that the majority opinion represents the action of the Holy Spirit.” In fact, Wood informs us that a “truly universal consensus” has never existed. An ecclesiological model posited by Gaillardetz, and rooted in an understanding of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the Church, can help us to understand how the consensus fidelium might be determined and accurately taken into account in the formulation of doctrines.

Gaillardetz proposes what he calls the “communio-model of reception.” In this paradigm the nonordained faithful and the bishops receive from (and regulate) each other,

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301 Ibid., 14.
preserving truth together. The model begins with the “lived experience and testimony of
the Christian community,” and then the bishops, themselves a part of the life of the
Church, receive the expressions of faith of the community and “assess their fidelity to the
apostolic tradition.” Next, if necessary, the bishops receiving the faith “give doctrinal
form to the insights manifested in the faith expressions of the community.” Lastly, the
“faithful engage this official teaching and, upon recognizing its fidelity to the lived faith
of the Church, actively appropriate the new formulation.” The members of the Church
then develop new expressions of faith and the cycle begins again.

One advantage to Gaillardetz’s model is that the practice of the hierarchical
authority and that of the rest of the Church body work together: the bishops receive the
apostolic faith from the consensus fidelium, and then this “first moment of reception”
leads eventually to a second moment of reception in which the teaching of the bishops is
received by the faithful and incorporated into their faith life, resulting in new expressions
of faith. This model seems to meet the demands of a theology that accurately portrays
the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church as a whole. However, Gaillardetz’s model
represents an ideal, that is, it does not describe concrete structures for consultation or
provide for breakdowns in the steps of the cycle, and in our time of many theological
challenges such difficulties are sure to arise.

Based on the Church’s teaching about the inspiration of the Holy Spirit
maintaining the whole Church in faith, many posit that a papal statement can be
recognized as a dogmatic definition by its reception—whether it has been decisive for the

303 Ibid., 115–16.
304 Ibid., 115–16.
305 Ibid., 116.
faith of the Church. Cardinal Newman called this the consensus fidelium. Since the pope can define as dogma only a revealed truth, the argument goes, it must therefore be “contained at least implicitly in the faith of the church.” Failure of any defined doctrine to be eventually accepted by the Church as an article of faith, according to this idea, would demonstrate that it “was not contained in the deposit of faith, and hence was not capable of being defined as dogma.”

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger seems to support this, although he has a more limited view of what would constitute consulting the mind of the faithful (i.e., Scripture and the creed): “Criticism of papal pronouncements will be possible and even necessary, to the extent that they lack support in scripture and the creed, that is, in the faith of the whole church. When neither the consensus of the whole church is had, nor clear evidence from the sources is available, an ultimately binding decision is not possible. Were one formally to take place, the conditions for such an act would be lacking, and hence the question would have to be raised concerning its legitimacy.”

Cardinal John Henry Newman addressed this sense of the faithful, and he summed up his main point in a letter to a colleague: “surely the sensus fidelium has a real place in the evidences (per modum unius) of apostolical tradition and in the preliminaries of a dogmatic definition….The Holy Father, before defining the Immaculate Conception, proceeded (over and above other more authoritative instruments of ascertaining the

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307 Ibid., 89.
tradition of the doctrine) to ascertain through the Bishops of all Christendom the sensus fidelium."  

He continues on to inform us that his research has demonstrated that the bishops were to learn the “feelings” of the laity in this case of the Immaculate Conception, and emphasizes that “‘feelings’ implies more than a testimony to a fact.”309 Presumably, by “testimony to a fact,” Newman means mere affirmation or negation of a fact, such as whether the Church teaches a given doctrine or not; this would make the role of the faithful purely descriptive. But Newman asserts that the role of the faithful includes affirmation or negation of whether the Church should teach a given doctrine or not; and that makes the role of the faithful prescriptive. A prescriptive role, of course, entails the contention that the faithful are not just observers, but are themselves a source of authority in doctrinal matters.

Cardinal Newman’s theology of the inspiration of the Church by the Holy Spirit, which had a strong influence on the theology of Vatican II in this area, emphasized that the whole Church participates in the handing on of the faith. In his landmark work, On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine, he states, “the body of the faithful is one of the witnesses to the fact of the tradition of revealed doctrine, and…their consensus through Christendom is the voice of the Infallible Church.”310 Some of the following witnesses, according to Newman, are also a way of consulting the consensus Ecclesiae (“mind of the Church”): “liturgies, rites, ceremonies, and customs, by events, disputes,

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309 Ibid., 92.
movements, and all those other phenomena which are comprised under the name of history.”

Samuel D. Femiano emphasizes that, according to Newman, a pope must consult the mind of the faithful prior to declaring a dogma because the pope can only define something that is “being handed on in the teaching, life, and worship of the Church.” Newman lists some of the possible ways of ascertaining the consensus Ecclesia: “Sacred Scripture, the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, the sacred liturgy, the decrees of councils, the work of theologians, [and] traditional beliefs and practices.”

Newman, quoting Father Giovanni Perrone, addresses the role of the Holy Spirit specifically in regard to this discernment: “‘it is the devout who have the surest instinct in discerning the mysteries of which the Holy Spirit breathes the grace through the Church, and who, with as sure a tact, reject what is alien from her teaching.’” Newman summarizes and draws out the implications of Perrone’s ideas, stating that the “consensus is to be regarded: 1. as a testimony to the fact of the apostolical dogma; 2. as a sort of instinct…deep in the bosom of the mystical body of Christ; 3. as a direction of the Holy Ghost; 4. as an answer to its prayer; 5. as a jealousy of error, which at once feels as a scandal.”

Edward Jeremy Miller describes what he has termed “Newman’s sacramental principle.” This principle is seen in the interactions between the members of the Church, the whole people of God who discern the “mind” of the Church. Miller writes:

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311 Ibid., 63.
312 Femiano, Infallibility of the Laity, 104.
313 Newman, On Consulting the Faithful, 72.
314 Ibid., 73.
“Newman places his sacramental emphasis on the totality of Church membership called to the service of the Christian idea.”

As we have seen, Newman roots his ideas of the *sensus fidelium* and the *consensus fidelium* in the Holy Spirit, and Miller’s notion of Newman’s “sacramental principle” implies a discernment of the Holy Spirit. However, the Holy Spirit was not as strongly emphasized nor as often discussed during Newman’s time. For a more developed theology of the Holy Spirit’s role in the *sensus fidelium*, we must return to Yves Congar.

Congar’s pneumatology of the Church as the temple of the Holy Spirit is very helpful in my endeavor, as I can apply this concept to the idea of the *sensus fidelium*, bringing the notion of the sense of the faith beyond a focus on legalism. The Holy Spirit brings this sense of truth to the faithful; continuously reminding them of this wondrous source can help the faithful to focus on the building-up of the Church and to prevent abuses of the ideas of the *sensus fidei* and the *sensus fidelium*.

The Holy Spirit enables the faithful to profess Jesus as Lord, and “the Church is the holy temple in which, through the strength of the living water that is the Holy Spirit, faith is celebrated in baptism and love or *agapē* is celebrated in the Eucharist.” Congar emphasizes the Temple aspect of the Church because the idea conveys the indwelling of the Spirit and thus the fact that the Church is made up of many living believers. The

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316 Ibid., 65.
318 Ibid., 2:54.
Church, “which is the house of the Living God, is the sacrament of salvation for all mankind.”

The charisms given to the members of the Church should not be seen in opposition to the institution, as the gifts of the Holy Spirit are for the whole Church. Congar writes, “What is required…is to recognize that each type of gift and activity has its place in the building up of the Church.” He also draws our attention to the reason the Church has this grace which allows the faithful to enrich the Church—to lift them up to participate in the “supranatural life” of God.

The role of reception in the Church is also an important component of a study of the Holy Spirit’s action in the sensus fidelium. Hermann Pottmeyer defines the theological concept of reception thus: “the faithful acceptance by the Church and its members of God’s word and the recognition of its truth based on discernment of its presence in the testimony of Holy Scripture, the tradition of the Church, and the teaching office.” Congar specifically addresses the relation of reception to the role of the Holy Spirit: “Consensus…is an effect of the Holy Spirit and the sign of its presence. It is the Holy Spirit who brings about the unity of the Church in space and time; that is, according to the dual dimension of its catholicity and its apostolicity or tradition.”

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319 Ibid., 2:55.
320 Ibid. 2:11.
323 Yves Congar, “Reception as an Ecclesiological Reality,” in Readings in Church Authority: Gifts and Challenges for Contemporary Catholicism, ed. Gerard
plays an important part in determining the *consensus fidelium* of the Church because it “attests that…decisions really arise from the Spirit which directs the Church, and that they are of value for the Church as such (and not primarily by virtue of their reception).”

However, Sullivan emphasizes, the role of the pope “cannot be reduced to announcing the results of a Church-wide opinion poll.” The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the document *Mysterium Ecclesiae* describes this aspect of the role of the magisterium: “‘its office is not reduced merely to ratifying the assent already expressed by the [Church]; indeed, in the interpretation and explanation of the written or transmitted Word of God, the Magisterium can anticipate or demand…assent.’” Sullivan adds that, in the case of a considerable portion of the faithful being led into error by bishops, it is the role of the pope to resolve the dispute by a decisive judgment.

As we have seen, the Holy Spirit gives all members of the Church special gifts that enable them to renew and foster the Church (*LG* §12). The nonordained members each have their own special charisms with which to accomplish their mission in the life of the Church, as do the pastors of the Church. As these gifts complement each other, so does the *sensus fidei* that the members of the Church receive. This sense of the faith is given to individuals so that they can collaborate together to discern the truth, and so keep the whole Church free from error. The Spirit of Truth gives the Church this gift to keep it

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324 Ibid., 323.


326 Ibid., 105.
connected to the truth. Part of the role of the magisterium in the Church is to make official those truths which the Church as a whole has discerned to be true. Clearly lay ecclesial ministries are becoming increasingly a part of the structure of the Church, and perhaps these roles should also be formalized and made “official.”

The recent focus on pneumatology in the Church has led to a deeper understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in maintaining the Church in truth. Now this understanding needs to be concretized in some ecclesiological models and concepts so that the faithful can draw out the implications of the sensus fidelium. At this moment in the life of the body of Christ, the various roles of the members of the Church (i.e., priest, bishop, religious, lay ecclesial minister, and lay member) are in a time of shift and reformation, so now is an important time to posit suggestions about the roles of these members. Next I will examine the role of LEMs since that is my main focus.

d. Implications of Notion of the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit (and the Sensus Fidelium) for the Formalization of Lay Ecclesial Ministerial Structures

The Holy Spirit, who sustains the Church with self-giving love, underlies all of these aspects of the one Church. The model posited by Gaillardetz can bring us a step closer to an understanding of the role of the sensus fidelium in the Church, and it also helps to address the question of how to consult the entire faithful of the Church. The cooperation between all of the members of the Church is essential. As Gaillardetz puts it, “the Church’s official teaching office is theologically bound to consult the faithful in its teaching process…because the nature of the Church demands it.”

327 Gaillardetz, By What Authority, 107.
Thus, we have seen that the Holy Spirit is sacramentalized, made present and visible, through the Church. The indwelling of the Spirit in the Church bears fruit in many ways, one of which is the *sensus fidei*, the sense of the faith given to each of us through grace. As the members of the Church together form the one body of Christ through the Spirit, so the collective sense of the faith, the *sensus fidelium*, sustains the one body in truth and prevents it from losing itself in error. An important implication of this understanding of the Spirit is that the roles of *every* member, whether by virtue of the official or the baptismal priesthood, are necessary and dynamic. Another implication is that the recent and necessary flourishing of LEMs in the Church is likely in response to the prompting of the Holy Spirit (calling ministers to the vocation, allowing congregations to feel the need for certain ministers within their parishes, etc.), and thus these ministries should be formalized. They are clearly already very important to the life of the Church and are becoming more so all the time.

I do not mean to imply that the ordained pastors of the Church have not taken steps to formalize these new ministries. It is a process, and the Church is on its way to ritually recognizing these ministers. “Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry,” a document issued by the USCCB in 2005, emphasizes the need for collaboration among and between all members of the Church—especially between the ministers in the Church, both lay and ordained. Lay ecclesial ministers, the document says, carry out responsibilities rooted in their baptismal call and gifts, and the LEM field is rapidly expanding, comes from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and shares in the mission of the Church. Since these
ministers serve publicly in the local church, the document continues, they must be authorized as well as treated fairly.

In “Co-Workers,” the bishops emphasize the Church’s obligation to provide proper workplace environments and supports for LEMs—including fair compensation—and this is essential, given the importance of LEMs in the Church. We have previously established the Church’s growing need for LEMs, explored the theology behind these kinds of ministries, situated LEMs in the ecclesiological structure of the Church, examined the role of the Holy Spirit in both calling these ministers and inspiring the churches to realize their need for them, and pointed toward the necessity to formalize these structures. Given all of these factors, to serve justice we need to treat these ministers fairly and compensate them well. Part of formalizing LEM is to establish some general rights of these ministers.

We are grateful that lay persons have responded to the call to ecclesial ministry in such great numbers….Lay ecclesial ministers—and indeed all lay Church employees and volunteers—function in a workplace that shares both the characteristics of a faith community of co-workers, as described by St. Paul, and the characteristics of a modern organization. Thus, in the ministerial workplace, one finds the special challenge of establishing policies and practices that integrate Gospel values and best organizational practices. This is particularly true as regards the management of human resources.

Best organizational practices are consistent with Gospel values. They balance the goals and needs of the organization, its workers and the community in which it is located. They imply respect for persons, justice, integrity, efficient use of resources, successful accomplishment of mission and goals, and an environment in which committed and skilled workers are treated fairly.

A national symposium held at St. John’s in Collegeville attempted to respond to the workplace needs identified by the bishops, and their conclusions are very useful in

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328 USCCB, “Co-Workers,” 53, 63.
329 Ibid., 61.
understanding what needs to be done to do justice to the lay ministers that are currently serving the Church.\textsuperscript{330}

Michael Brough’s “Raising Expectations in the Ministerial Workplace” defines the goal of establishing best workplace practices for ministers thus: “learning how the principles and methods of human resource management and organization development can be adapted and put into practice in an ecclesial context and how they can serve to make our mission more effective.”\textsuperscript{331} Part of this process is continuing to raise our expectations for workplace environments and compensation. Brough points to “seven key factors identified in fostering employee engagement” that should be applied to LEMs:

1. The purposeful selection of talent
2. Meaningful work
3. Clear work impact
4. Inspired leadership
5. Continuous learning and development
6. A sense of community
7. Results-based recognition and rewards

Brough applies these to the six elements outlined by the bishops in “Co-Workers”: recruitment and selection; orientation and support; evaluation and feedback; compensation, transitions, and terminations; and grievance procedures. More importantly, he situates these six human resource areas into the larger concerns of the bishops: “theology and ecclesiology of communion; integration of gospel values and best


organizational practices; ongoing process of development and dialogue; significant
degree of preparation, formation, and professional competence; mutual and fruitful
collaboration and comprehensive personnel systems.”

Part of meeting the needs of the Church’s LEMs is to offer them recognition.
“Co-Workers” and Brough’s suggestions help with recognizing their contributions
through compensation and just employment practices, for example. These areas are
essential to the flourishing of LEM in the Church, but so is community support of a less
tangible nature in the form of authorization or recognition. In fact, the two are connected:
workplace justice can be brought about in part through having official
authorization/recognition practices in place. The official and regular practices will
increase professionalism and solidify the perception of the rest of the Church regarding
the role and place (and official capacity) of the members of LEM; as these
transformations happen, the way that we treat LEMs will also begin to transform. Lay
ecclesial ministers need to be emotionally and spiritually supported in visible ways by
their parish communities, the larger diocese, and even the broader collection of U.S.
dioceses.

So workplace justice and some form of authorization/recognition are both
important—and connected—since formalization of these roles would bring about both.
But it is also important to note that both of these are a necessary dimension of a true
communion ecclesiology and Spirit-grounded sense of being Church, which I discussed

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332 “Summary of Workplace Issues Dialogue and Recommendations,” from the
conference “Working in the Vineyard of the Lord: A National Symposium on Lay
Ecclesial Ministry,” St. John’s University, Collegeville, MN, July 31–Aug. 3, 2007,
Sept. 13, 2012). Bulleted formatting omitted from the quote and semicolons inserted in
the place of commas to preserve meaning.
earlier. If the Church does, in fact, believe that it needs these gifted and called ministers, then the Church also must be open to discernment about how to respond to the movements of the Holy Spirit in this regard. This support will help with the recruitment and retention of LEMs as the Catholic Church builds a culture that supports and appreciates these ministers; but more importantly, it will convey a theological understanding of lay ministers as critical to the Church and begin to pervade the way that the faithful think of lay ministry. The changes will affect not only individual ministers, but also the whole notion of lay ministry—transforming, in turn, the way that future lay ministers will be perceived and treated.

The current research on authorization\textsuperscript{333} is presented and elaborated on in several documents from the St. John’s symposium. In “A Theology of Authorization for Lay Ecclesial Ministry,” Susan K. Wood describes “some liturgical ritualization of assuming this ministry” as one of five characteristics of LEM. What this ritualization looks like can vary: “Authorization may take various forms depending on the stability and ecclesial validation that accompanies the ministry, the person who authorizes, and whether the authorization is accompanied by a prayer or ritual within a prayer service or liturgy or is itself an official liturgy of the church.”\textsuperscript{334}

\textsuperscript{333} NB, I am using “authorization” as a general term here—it will be specified later in this work as I describe what it \textit{should} include. The current usage of the term “authorization” (and related terms such as “recognition,” “commissioning,” and sometimes even “certification”) is very fluid and ambiguous.

There are many forms of authorization, but the authorizer is generally a Church leader who has the authority to perform this act (i.e., a pastor or bishop). Wood describes several forms of authorization.\textsuperscript{335} One is “appointment,” in which a minister is designated in writing as responsible for the role performed, without liturgical action. “Delegation” is a process whereby the “minister is empowered to act on behalf of the person who delegates.”\textsuperscript{336} “Installation” is defined by Wood as a juridical and liturgical act by a bishop or his representative (acolyte and lector, according to current canon law). “Conferral” is the process whereby a minister gives a ministry to another. Such a ministry is an “ecclesiastical office, defined in law as a function constituted in a stable manner for a spiritual purpose” (canon 145) and is conferred by a proper authority (canon 147). “The rights and obligations inherent to a specific office come with the conferral of the office itself and cease with the loss of office.”\textsuperscript{337} Both installation and conferral forms of authorization, as used by Wood, involve liturgical action.\textsuperscript{338}

A “mandate” is a term that expresses an appointment for a specific, limited purpose—a responsibility for a part of a duty that belongs to an office that the person does not hold. “Entrusting” is used to describe the granting of an office “in which there is great discretion concerning specific programs or methods,” such as a diocese to a bishop.\textsuperscript{339} “Commissioning” is a less formal ministerial recognition and may be used for

\textsuperscript{335} Wood is facing the same difficulty regarding the fluidness of “authorization” and related terms. She uses “authorization” in a general way, and in her descriptions of the specific forms she denotes whether the forms include liturgical action. Unless I specifically mention that liturgical action is involved in the forms in this paragraph and the next several, it is not necessarily included.

\textsuperscript{336} Ibid., 2.

\textsuperscript{337} USCCB, “Co-Workers,” 58.


\textsuperscript{339} Ibid., 2. Wood cites “Co-Workers” here.
ministries that require less stability or permanence from the minister. This one, as it is used now, could include a liturgical act or not.

These various types of authorization are hierarchically related. Wood writes: “For example, in the sequence ‘commissioning, installation, and ordination,’ commissioning, often ritualized, is usually done by someone other than a bishop, does not confer a permanent status, and is repeatable. Installation is usually done by a bishop, is a liturgical act, and is permanent. Ordination must be conferred by a bishop, is a sacrament of the church, cannot be repeated, and confers a sacramental character.”

Authorization gives the “official stamp” to the vocation of the minister—which has been discerned individually and communally, but is now affirmed by the community. It expresses the communion of the minister with the Church and the identity of the minister as performing his or her duties in the name of the Church. Authorization that could be liturgical ritualizations can define the relationship of communion between the minister and the bishop, the ordained representative of the Church. It can also formalize the relationship between the minister and the particular parish community that he or she serves.

Authorization and other forms of recognition are not simply luxuries or something for theologians to speculate about—they are necessary. If the Church wants its ministers to fulfill their functions, then it has to allow them to be representatives of—and within—the Church. This can only be possible if there is some form of authorization associated with the ministry. Wood describes the situation: “Since ministry requires that the minister be authorized to minister in the church’s name, this requires structures and a process of

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340 Ibid., 2.
341 Ibid., 4.
accountability to the church. The bishops and their assistants, the priests, are to order and coordinate the various ministries and apostolates of the laity. To them belong the tasks of discerning, judging, and ordering the charisms given by the Spirit.”

There is a distinct difference between authorization and certification. Certification speaks to the accomplishments of the minister, allowing that he or she has met the educational and other requirements to perform the ministry. Certification is granted by ministerial preparation programs or professional organizations. Certification speaks to the competency of the minister for the particular ministry, but authorization allows this minister to perform the ministry in the local (particular) church. Authorization is how the person is granted responsibility for a particular church ministry by a competent ecclesial authority.

It is through authorization that new ecclesial relationships between the bishops and the ministers, and between the ministers and the parishes in which they serve, are formed. It represents and creates responsibility within the minister for the parish and the Church as a whole. It also emphasizes the spiritual dimension of the ministry while underscoring the responsibility of the Church and parish to support the minister. Just as the minister has responsibility for the parish (or for a task in a parish, for example), so, too, does the parish have responsibility for the minister. In the way that the parish has formally recognized the vocation of the minister, so, too, must the parish support the minister in service and fair personnel policies.

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342 Ibid., 3.
III. Current Authorization and Areas of Growth

Charlotte McCorquodale and Sean Reynolds examine the current practice of authorization for LEMs and point to some of the work that remains to be done in this area. The authors launch the discussion using the following section on authorization from “Co-Workers”:

Authorization is the process by which properly prepared lay men and women are given responsibilities for ecclesial ministry by competent Church authority. This process includes the following elements: acknowledgment of the competence of an individual for a specific ministerial role (often called “certification”); appointment of an individual to a specific position (in some dioceses called “commissioning”), along with a delineation of the obligations, responsibilities, and authority of that position (and length of term, if specified); and finally an announcement of the appointment to the community that will be served by the lay ecclesial minister.

McCorquodale and Reynolds then examine evidence from various dioceses in light of the elements conveyed in “Co-Workers”: “The Co-Workers framework of authorization appears fairly simple and straightforward, clear and linear: acknowledgment of competence, followed by appointment, followed by announcement.” This is not, however, the authors continue, the way that it works out in most dioceses. Instead of the “ideal framework of authorization based on solid theological and pastoral principles,” most dioceses simply hire the lay ecclesial minister.

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344 USCCB, “Co-Workers,” 54.
The process of hiring that is employed is most often identical to the hiring processes of businesses or nonprofits.\textsuperscript{346}

Also, while “Co-Workers” makes it sound as if authorization is already an established process, the current state of affairs is that a national (or even regional) consensus does not exist regarding how to educate or foster the development of LEMs—and this, in turn, leads to the question, “What, indeed, constitutes adequate preparation that warrants authorization?” If the Catholic Church does not have established standards for how it expects lay ministers to have been prepared, how can it determine the appropriate standardized authorizations or other relevant recognitions? Many different groups are proposing different methods of, and elements to, authorization. One reason this happens, the authors say, is because “There are multiple stakeholders (i.e., USCCB, national organizations, diocesan leaders, formators, academicians, etc.) advancing the conversation on varying fronts, with varying results.”\textsuperscript{347}

McCorquodale and Reynolds examine four models of authorization: authorization through hiring, ministry formation programs, certification programs, and national professional organizations. They especially note the Chicago and Trenton programs as examples of authorization through formation programs and certification programs.\textsuperscript{348}

\textsuperscript{346} Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{347} Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{348} These two programs call what they do with LEMs “commissioning.” Herein lies a difficulty with which I have struggled throughout my work. I am attempting to discuss authorizations and commissionings when, in fact, they do not have a common meaning attached to them yet—these terms are used variously by different groups in unlimited ways. The way I am proposing they be used takes greater shape later in this dissertation, but for now please note that I will use “authorization” in a general way. Later in this work I will tighten up the definition and specifically talk about authorizations as “liturgical authorizations.”
In the Archdiocese of Chicago the diocesan ministry formation program is a certification and then authorization process for the diocese.\textsuperscript{349} Their program is called Together in God’s Service (TIGS), and the candidate (who will eventually be a pastoral associate or a director of religious education) takes part in a three-year formation program that includes “the theology of lay ecclesial ministry, introduction to prayer forms, development of theological reflection skills, an annual retreat, four annual reflection days, ongoing spiritual direction, and participation in theological reflection groups.”\textsuperscript{350} The goal of the program is

To form ministers who embrace the fullness of the Catholic faith as handed on by the Apostles, the Archdiocese works with the theological schools in the Chicago area to assure that courses which help achieve that goal are consistently available to lay ecclesial ministry candidates.

The Archdiocese also wants to ensure that while students are pursuing their academic courses, they are also deeply immersed in a program of spiritual formation within a supportive faith community of peers.

The Archdiocese desires that students who hope to eventually minister in Chicago parishes develop an identity as Archdiocesan Candidates who are called, discerned, supported and commissioned to serve in the name of the Church.\textsuperscript{351}

The candidates also pursue and receive their master’s degrees at one of three degree-granting institutions. Once the ministers finish TIGS, they complete two years of ministry experience and compile a portfolio that had been generated throughout the program; they are then certified by the archdiocesan office. Hiring is through the individual parishes and the LEMs are commissioned to ministry in the parishes in which

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{349} In Chicago’s program the formation, certification, and then commissioning process is intertwined. One could not become certified without having undergone their formation program, and the certification is essential to their commissioning—which, as I will detail later, is itself an “authorization” with many liturgical elements.
\item \textsuperscript{350} McCorquodale and Reynolds, “Current Practices,” 4–5.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
they were hired by a letter from the cardinal. There is a benefit to the way that this system works: “commissioning establishes a relationship between the lay ecclesial minister and the archbishop, naming the individual a minister of the Archdiocese, not just an employee of the local parish.”

This commissioning happens every time a lay ecclesial minister is given a new ministerial appointment.

In the diocese of Trenton the Institute for Lay Ecclesial Ministry (ILEM) was formed for the preparation of LEMs. It involves a three-year formation program that includes “theological education, spiritual formation, and pastoral skills development.” The candidates, most of whom are already practicing LEMs in the diocese, must pass psychological testing prior to admission. The program includes completing graduate theology work (resulting in an MA or certificate) from an approved institution, two three-day retreats, eighteen daytime retreats, pastoral skills workshops, and individual spiritual direction. The hiring of the LEMs is done by the local parish, and commissioning is through the bishop at an annual gathering “of all ministry leaders of the diocese, both ordained and lay.” The commissioned ministers are included in the diocesan newspaper and directory. Also, “pastors are sent a blessing rite to be conducted in the local parish.” 

The institute’s website says that those who complete the program “become candidates for Commissioning as Lay Ecclesial Ministers by the Bishop of Trenton.”

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353 Ibid., 5.
354 Ibid., 5–6.
There have been several attempts at regional and professional organization authorization models.\textsuperscript{356} McCorquodale and Reynolds describe the Minnesota Catholic Education Association (MCEA) certification process, which is a collaborative authorization program through MCEA and the six (arch)dioceses of Minnesota: the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis, the Diocese of Duluth, the Diocese of Crookston, the Diocese of Winona, the Diocese of New Ulm, and the Diocese of St. Cloud. The catechetical leader or youth ministry candidate’s competence is measured according to the “established national certification standards and competencies for lay ecclesial ministers, through a peer review process.”\textsuperscript{357} The bishops involved have approved this authorization process.

The candidates complete a certification portfolio that demonstrates their competence in all five national certification standards.\textsuperscript{358} The pastor is still responsible for the individual hiring of the LEMs, but successful candidates are “certified at the MCEA state convention in a liturgy presided over by the Bishops of Minnesota. Additionally, some dioceses recommend the use of a parish blessing rite that can be used

\textsuperscript{356} There are also some diocesan-level certification programs such as one for youth ministry in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and the Archdiocese of Detroit certification for DREs, pastoral associates, and youth ministers. I do not examine these because both are attempts at implementing larger standards from regional and professional organizations.

\textsuperscript{357} McCorquodale and Reynolds, “Current Practices,” 11.

\textsuperscript{358} More about the five national standards can be seen in older information created by the Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers (composed of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, the National Association for Lay Ministry, the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership, and the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry), but it is important to note that in November 2011 these five standards actually became four, and dioceses are still attempting to catch up. For more information on the new four standards (human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral), see http://lemcertification.org/docs/ACLEM_Final_Standards_20111115.pdf (accessed Sept. 14, 2012).
to announce and celebrate the certification at the parish level.”\textsuperscript{359} The advantage to this type of large authorization process, and one that includes a “certification” of competency, is that the dioceses benefit from collaboration, but even more, the LEMs have a stronger sense of professionalism and empowerment for ministry—and their congregations see the minister as an actual professional. Another benefit to the Minnesota model is that these LEMs have credentials that are acknowledged in any of the participating dioceses—a critical advantage since it allows mobility by LEMs where the requirements for similar job duties are usually determined at the local level and can vary widely.

The National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) is one example of such national certification for specialized, nonparish ministry, and national certification for parish ministers is continuing to be developed by the Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers. They came up with the four standards mentioned above and will continue meeting, eventually, one hopes, helping to formulate not only the above minimum standards, but also to help put some best practices into place. These types of authorizations through national organizations are broader and farther-reaching. It is good that universal standards for formation and education (and hopefully best practices in the workplace and authorization practices, eventually) are being formulated so that people can relocate from one diocese to another and still meet the minimum requirements, thus being employable from one diocese to another. Still, how dioceses will respond to these standards, and if they will adopt them, remains to be seen. And, of course, the work of the Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers is limited at this point to only

looking at the formation (including educational requirements) necessary to certify LEMs, not ritual installations.

McCorquodale and Reynolds describe the certification process conducted through the NACC. This type of authorization does not reflect an appointment or participate in announcing the certification to the community that will be served, and the certification is for chaplaincy rather than parish ministry. Often the national organizations have within their process an endorsement by the bishop of the candidate’s diocese, but that is all. What is needed is authorization that involves a form of ritual recognition of the minister and his or her vocation and role in the particular parish or diocese. Thomas O’Meara helps the Church to develop this.

IV. O’Meara’s Three Types of Commissionings to Ministry: Ordination, Installation, and Presentation

Thomas O’Meara develops a theology of ministry based on grace and outlines three kinds of commissionings to ministry: ordination, installation, and presentation. He draws from Congar, who replaces the “bipolar division” between clergy and laity with a circle that has the combination of Christ and Spirit as the animating root of ministries in communities.\textsuperscript{360}

O’Meara highlights the current renewal of ministry since Vatican II as the rediscovery of the experience of the early church, which itself was revolutionary. Drawing heavily on Congar, he presents a theology of grace and Spirit to ground theology of ministry. In his framework, new theologies and practices of church life

\textsuperscript{360} Ibid, 11.
emerge from the intersection between faith and culture and are made manifest throughout salvation history by virtue of God’s revelatory and grace-filled actions. As he puts it, “The contemporary rediscovery of the word ‘ministry’ with its sharp etymological challenge in service as well as its dynamics of a diversified ministry looks towards a theological reappreciation of every church office as activity serving grace, and the style of that activity as inescapably one of service—service of people, service of the Spirit in people.”

Ministry is at the intersection of culture and grace and is a sign of the health of the Church. It has expanded as the result of a “deep encounter between the Spirit of the risen Jesus and the people of God.” A theology of ministry is thus a reflection on what it means to mediate the kingdom of God coupled with a theology of the Holy Spirit and a “contemplative analysis of grace.”

Ministry serves something beyond itself and its goal is the Church’s growth: “becoming the collective Body of Christ is the norm and power and destiny of ministry.” The universal Church points to and announces the Gospel message while individual churches are “clusters of people with a world to serve.”

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362 Ibid., 26.
363 Ibid., 33.
364 Ibid., 38; resonances with the aforementioned theology of Congar are clear here, especially O’Meara’s focus on the theology of the Holy Spirit (in both its general presence and its particulars). Also present in O’Meara’s thought is Congar’s notion of Church, the Temple of the indwelling of the Spirit, as the sacrament of salvation for all humanity but brought to fruition through the individual believers.
365 Ibid., 75.
366 Ibid., 5.
O’Meara points out that the current position of the Church (with a decline in priestly vocations, etc.) is part of a transformation rather than a devastation: “What a coincidence: as the needs of the church and society pointed to a wider ministry, there have emerged so many thousands of people intent upon ministry.”\textsuperscript{367} It is, in fact, impossible for one minister to meet the needs of contemporary, dynamic parish communities, and so the pastor has no choice but to be a leader of ministries. Growth of parish ministries is a “movement begun by conciliar suggestions, sustained by biblical and theological perspectives, and realized and confirmed by praxis.”\textsuperscript{368}

The form that ministry is taking according to these dynamic changes of culture requires a model of the parish as one with circles of ministry. That is, O’Meara is saying that the old models of ministry, which involved pastors and assistants, do not reflect the reality in churches today. His model reflects the larger diversity of ministries that are the reality in our contemporary Church. His circles of ministry model also necessitates that ministers are supported educationally, spiritually, and financially.\textsuperscript{369} Overseeing parish ministers involves a commitment from priests and bishops, who must assume certain new responsibilities and rework some old ones. Priests can no longer be part of the pre-Vatican II model of ministry in which they were seen as the only ministers of import—the mediators between God and humans and initiators of everything that takes root in a parish. Instead, they will need to develop skills as facilitators of many ministries. This involves some shifts in identity too, as there is a need for priests to find dignity in a vocation that has shifted: it is now seen as one of many vocations and involves a different

\textsuperscript{367} Ibid., 5.
\textsuperscript{368} Ibid., 12.
\textsuperscript{369} Ibid., 21.
approach. As O’Meara writes, “to be a leader of an adult community committed to prayer, service, and evangelization is quite different from being the solitary, sacral mediator for an audience.”\textsuperscript{370}

While the form of ministry varies, O’Meara tells us, there are six characteristics of ministry. The first is “doing something.” Christians are baptized into an active, dynamic community—into the Church but also into service in the church.\textsuperscript{371} Second, this doing something is for the service of God. Ministry is what “makes the kingdom explicit, turning its ambiguous presence into sacrament, word, or action.”\textsuperscript{372} The third characteristic is “public action”: visible in words and deeds while also nourished by liturgy. Prayer is also nourishing, but it must be “translated into concrete service.”\textsuperscript{373} The fourth characteristic is that ministry is for the Christian community. It begins with, flows out of, supports, and expands the community. The Church needs many ministries because there are many things to be done in “word, sacrament, service, and evangelism.”\textsuperscript{374} Fifth, ministry is a gift of the Spirit: its source “is the personal inviting presence of the Spirit of the risen Christ.”\textsuperscript{375} Lastly, ministry provides diverse services based on the various charisms the minister has been granted—however, O’Meara reminds us, all “result from union with God in Christ.”\textsuperscript{376}

\textsuperscript{370} Ibid., 22.
\textsuperscript{371} Ibid., 141–42.
\textsuperscript{372} Ibid., 142.
\textsuperscript{373} Ibid., 143.
\textsuperscript{374} Ibid., 146.
\textsuperscript{375} Ibid., 148.
\textsuperscript{376} Ibid, 148–49.
There are several sources of ministry: the interaction between the Holy Spirit and individual personalities, often called charism,\textsuperscript{377} the already-existing ministry or church leadership, which must stimulate and coordinate the charisms of the Holy Spirit; and the dynamic of sacrament and community since ordination is a liturgical, public petitioning for, and rejoicing in, the reception of grace. O’Meara says that we should distinguish between ordained and baptismal ministries (the distinction between which is correlated with the often-drawn distinction between the “ministerial priesthood” of the ordained and the “common priesthood” for all Christians), since this distinction allows baptism to “ground ministries differing in import but having a common nature and theological etiology.”\textsuperscript{378} In addition, he draws out another group that requires special attention from the baptismal priesthood—those who have been formed and approved for ecclesial ministry but not ordained. There must be a communal liturgy of public commissioning to ministry for the baptized who have been prepared and approved for ecclesial positions, he insists.\textsuperscript{379}

O’Meara, utilizing the insights of Karl Rahner (especially the notion of grace as God’s self-sharing) and Congar (Christ’s Spirit at the root of circles of ministries), outlines his model of circles of ministries. This model underscores the fact that all ministries are animated by the Holy Spirit in the community and grow from charism and personality “vitalized by baptism and drawn to ministry.”\textsuperscript{380} It also points to the similarity in mission of all ministries but allows for degrees of ministry such as leadership and

\textsuperscript{377} Which O’Meara describes as a grace, a “conversation between the Spirit and an individual Christian” that leads to service (ibid., 205).
\textsuperscript{378} Ibid., 223.
\textsuperscript{379} Ibid., 123, 124.
\textsuperscript{380} Ibid., 157.
occasional ministries. All ministry, he writes, is connected in many ways to faith: “it serves the content of faith; it is possible only through faith; it is responsible to faith.”

He places several ordained ministries at the center of concentric circles of ministries. Bishop, pastor, and vicars are at the center (classified under “leadership”), followed by full-time ministries that involve professional preparation and a “lengthy and life long commitment.” The next circle is part-time and can involve various degrees of intensity during different stages of life. He describes the preparation for this type of ministry as “brief but adequate.”

O’Meara asserts that every ministry should include some preparation and “some public commissioning.” The pastor and the bishop must oversee the development of ministerial identity and theology. The pastor must enable people in their ministries, and “that leadership is expressed in preaching and made manifest in leading the Eucharistic liturgy.”

O’Meara also suggests the following parish teams: peace and justice, health and aging, counseling, liturgy, education, and evangelism. This notion of “team” can invest secular activities/professions with a ministerial goal since the entire team contributes to the same primary goal—that of spreading the Gospel. For example, he writes, in a hospital the radiologists contribute to the one goal of health in a wider sense. So a bookkeeper can be engaging in ministry as part of the team ministry of the Church. These ministry teams form concentric circles around the church leadership, and some could be part of the full-time, professional ministry (with long professional preparation) circle

381 Ibid., 161.  
382 Ibid., 183.  
383 Ibid., 182.  
384 Ibid., 183.
while others could belong to the part-time ministry circle, which does not necessarily involve as much of a commitment in time and training. Ministry should be explicit, O’Meara insists: “Defining ministry narrowly does not produce an elite group of ministers but lets ministry challenge the potential ministry of every baptized person. When everything is ministry, ministry fades away,” and these “teams” allow the regular duties of Christians to be ministry through the primary goal to which every team member contributes.³⁸⁵

Ministry as a function of building up the Church begins with that community first understanding what it needs—from their goals they can formulate a ministry plan. “Needs and opportunities may indicate God’s will while offered talents may indicate charism.”³⁸⁶ The spiritual lives of ministers are what nourish them as they discern the ministry to which they are called as well as throughout the ministry that follows discernment. However, O’Meara and others caution us, the expansion of ministries requires support—financial and otherwise.

V. Relational Ministry Expressed in Concentric Circles

Edward Hahnenberg draws on O’Meara’s work but further defines the specifics of which LEM roles require formal recognition and what forms the recognition should take. He begins with a study of the nature of ecclesial ministry, writing that seeing it in terms of relationality conveys the diversity of service in the Church (without separating the ministry of the laity and that of the clergy) and provides “potentially fruitful language

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 190.
³⁸⁶ Ibid., 192.
with which to address the theological, pastoral, institutional, and liturgical questions facing new and old ministries today.”³⁸⁷ All ministry, he points out, is done through relationships, and since the very call to ministry comes from the mission and life of the Trinity, he posits a relational model of ministry. His Trinitarian approach underscores that ministry is an outpouring that is celebrated in sacrament and liturgy: “from God, through Christ in the Spirit…outward to others in the church and in the world.”³⁸⁸

In the same way that the persons within the Trinity are separate and yet united, so too is ministry. Hahnenberg draws on the mystery that is the Trinity, the persons in relationship, to express:

The missions of the triune God evoke from us metaphors of movement and this activity expresses the very reality of God. Thus, a purely individualistic conception of ministry, or ministry by only one type of person in the church, becomes virtually impossible to justify. Using Trinitarian theology as a foundation, ministry is understood as existing within the network of relationships which make up the church.³⁸⁹

This relational emphasis avoids the difficulties encountered in the more traditional distinction (unwarranted, in Hahnenberg’s opinion) between the “being” of the ministry (ontology) and the “doing” of the ministry (function). Instead, this relational ontology demonstrates the minister’s relationship to the community by way of charism, vocation, and the public nature of the ministry. It allows the minister’s identity to develop and evolve in a dynamic fashion—through relational engagement. This relational approach is grounded in (and flows from) the three sources of God, Church, and sacrament.

³⁸⁷ Edward P. Hahnenberg, Ministries: A Relational Approach (New York: Crossroad [Herder & Herder], 2003), 5.
³⁸⁸ Ibid., 213.
³⁸⁹ Ibid., 93.
The Church is an ordered communion—the community participates in the triune love of God, and the structures of the Church “are not primary, but exist to serve this fundamental mystery of communion among God and people.”\(^{390}\) For this type of community, Hahnenberg asks, “What shape should ministerial order take? On what is this order based?”\(^{391}\) His reply, which builds explicitly on both Congar and O’Meara, is that the order is based on the model of concentric circles. The innermost circle includes leaders of communities (i.e., those who “recognize, promote, and coordinate all the various ministries in the church under their care,” including the bishop, pastor, and pastoral coordinator who oversees the church).\(^{392}\) In the next circle are leaders of areas of ministry (who are prepared, recognized, and committed to it for a time); next are occasional public ministers (such as lectors and catechism instructors); and, lastly, general Christian ministers (including the whole people of God, “those called by baptism to serve the church and the reign of God in witness, charity, and service”).\(^{393}\) This model allows for a recognition and development of the lay minister’s ecclesial position (the minister’s commitment, significance and public nature of the ministry performed, and the recognition by the community), not just the minister’s function.\(^{394}\)

\(^{390}\) Ibid., 122.
\(^{391}\) Ibid., 123.
\(^{392}\) Ibid., 126–27.
\(^{393}\) Ibid., 127.
\(^{394}\) O’Meara’s model has leadership in the center (with only “bishop, pastor, vicars” listed as the leaders). The next circle is full-time ministers (with greater professional preparation and a longer time commitment than the next circle out) and then part-time ministers. Across these circles are groupings of parish “teams.” For more information about O’Meara’s model, see his *Theology of Ministry*, but I do not spend much time on it here because Hahnenberg’s model is, in my opinion, more helpful and balanced. For one thing, I disagree with O’Meara that we should have the center, the “leaders” of parishes, limited to ordained ministers. I simply mention O’Meara’s model...
Hahnenberg further describes which types of rituals are appropriate to the specific types of ministries. Tradition, he says, “gives witness to a variety of commissionings and ordinations to ministry.”\(^{395}\) Blessings are appropriate commissionings for occasional ordered ministries (e.g., catechists, lectors, choir members, etc.), while installation, which includes the laying-on of hands, is more appropriate for official LEMs who are examples of the “leaders of areas of ministry” comprising Hahnenberg’s second circle. Hahnenberg says that ordination is a sacramental recognition and a repositioning of a baptized person into a new relationship of service. Some progress has been made in this area, but much needs to be accomplished: “If following Vatican II ordinations were expanded (to include the bishop and deacon) and installations introduced,\(^{396}\) these developments have only begun the important task now facing the Church of restructuring its ministries.”\(^{397}\)

According to Hahnenberg, the conferral model of ordination (in which the laying-on of hands coupled with an invoking of the Holy Spirit connotes a transfer of power) is insufficient both for the ordained and as a basis for a theological understanding of other types of ritualization for ministers. Equally insufficient is the ratification model (in which the laying-on of hands is “the simple ratification of the community’s choice for a

\(^{395}\) Hahnenberg, Ministries, 179.

\(^{396}\) Here Hahnenberg seems to be referring back to his discussion of Ministeria Quaedam and so is speaking only of the lector and acolyte (ibid., 183ff). Hahnenberg objects both to the fact that the practice of installing these ministers has not really become widely implemented, and also that these are the only two ministries that can, thus far, be installed (and especially, but not only, because the current state of all of this excludes the possibility of the installation of women entirely).

\(^{397}\) Ibid., 194. Note that Hahnenberg critiques how installations are actually used—generally the only people able to be officially installed at this point are those on the way to priestly ordination; the installed ministries are restricted to men; and so on. He tells us that “it is again time to petition Rome for new local, but official, installed lay ministries” (184).
Instead, a recognition model\(^{399}\) sees the laying-on of hands as the community’s recognition that the Holy Spirit is present in the person, “enabling her or him for the ministry at hand.” In this model ordination is seen as a “process involving discernment on the part of the community of the Spirit’s gifts in an individual, ecclesial recognition, sacramental actions, and the acceptance of ministerial responsibility.”\(^{400}\)

As noted above, Hahnenberg’s notion of ordination is relational: “Ordination is the sacramental recognition of significant public ministry within the church and the repositioning of a baptized person to a new relationship of service within the community.”\(^{401}\) It a sacramental act, since it is both a sign and a cause of grace. As a result of Hahnenberg’s understanding that Holy Orders has found its expression in different offices throughout history and that grace underlies all ministry, Hahnenberg argues for a plurality of rites (“ranging from commissioning blessings to official installations to ordinations”) to reflect the diversity of ministries in parishes.\(^{402}\) He proposes the following liturgical recognition of the circles of ministry in his model: ordination for the two innermost circles (i.e., leadership of communities and of areas of ministry) commissioning blessing for the occasional public ministries, and baptism for the general ministry.

This model allows for a recognition and development of the lay minister’s ecclesial position (the minister’s commitment, significance and public nature of the

\(^{398}\) Hahnenberg relies heavily on J. Kevin Coyle, who named the first model (but does not advocate it). See ibid., 197, for a description of the ratification model.

\(^{399}\) For this model Hahnenberg draws from the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas and, especially, Karl Rahner.

\(^{400}\) Ibid., 199.

\(^{401}\) Ibid., 195.

\(^{402}\) Ibid., 209.
ministry performed, and the recognition by the community), not just the minister’s function.

VI. Conclusion

Ministry is more than a sacrament of orders, but what is it? How should it be recognized and supported? In the early Church there were commissionings with prayer and a community focus, but these shifted to ordinations (with a corresponding narrowing of the understanding of ministry as exclusively the role of priests) and exchange of “power.”403 Now we are beginning to reclaim the deeper notion of “ministry” as rooted in Baptism—but much work on this remains to be done. If we are to stretch beyond our current rigid forms, as Hahnenberg proposes, we must seek out distinctions that affirm diversity of ministries and ministers rather than a “dividing-line model of church and ministry, a model that assumes every distinction implies separation, and that the act of affirming any one group necessarily detracts from another.”404

Formalizing our system of recognition for LEMs will lead to better acknowledgment of issues for parish workers, which would include both understanding and addressing these issues. One of the conclusions of the above-mentioned symposium documents drew on the USCCB’s “Co-Workers” to emphasize that the call to ministry is rooted in Baptism, with the bishop in the role of the authorizing agent. We need to involve “the USCCB, theologians, canon lawyers, ordained ministers, lay ecclesial

403 The shift during the patristic and medieval periods from the notion of “king and priest” to “laity and priest” and the corresponding emphasis in ecclesiology to seeing priestly “power” as “magical” with a confiscation of the baptismal priesthood was discussed in chapter 1 of this work, and this notion of priestly power was also examined above in the context of the conferral model of ordination.

ministers, and national organizations in the dialogue to develop structures that support the consistent authorization of lay ecclesial ministers with sensitivity to diversity.” There also needs to be an official ritual in use in the United States for “public commissioning and authorization of lay ecclesial ministers.”

The same document also includes a summary of general workplace issues, including the need for human resource training for priests and seminarians and clear expectations regarding training for undocumented workers and other people of various cultures called to LEM.

Gerard Austin provides us with an important reminder that the priesthood of Christ, the baptismal priesthood, and the ministerial priesthood are interrelated, and he explains the relationship. The ministerial priesthood gathers the Church together in the Holy Spirit, and so the two priesthods (baptismal and ordained) are collaborative: they “join together to bring the Eucharist to completion by entering into the one eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ.”

In conclusion, the growing field of lay ministry is theologically grounded and significant to the Church in our contemporary culture. The Catholic Church needs these ministers who have been called and inspired for their respective tasks, and we have a duty to formally recognize and support them.

Congar’s pneumatological approach helps to remind us of the importance of the unity of the body of the Church and can combat the overt christological focus of the notion of the priest in \textit{persona Christi} which contributed to the polarization of clergy and laity. Richard Gaillardetz helps to build a theological case for why we must have an

\footnote{405 “Summary of Workplace Issues Dialogue and Recommendations.”}
ordering of ministries and divides these ministries into ordained, installed, and commissioned ministries. The models of Thomas O’Meara and Edward Hahnenberg carry forward Congar’s thought by ordering lay ministry within the larger ministries of the Church through an emphasis on relationality rather than division. These models also situate the different branches of LEM in relation to the other and point out the recognition appropriate to each.

I have discussed the ways that LEM is essential and relational, emphasizing the need for ritual authorizations to help form new ecclesial relationships. But what is the nature of these relationships? How can ritual shape relationships between the bishops and the LEMS and between the LEMs and the churches in which they minister? Could ritual actually express and create transformations in social status and self-identity which are beyond our conscious understanding? What could be the results of ritual and liturgical practices on the authorization of LEMs? These are the topics to which I now turn.
Chapter 3. The Ramifications of Ritual and Liturgical Practices on the Authorization of LEMs

I. Introduction

In the first two chapters, I asserted that LEM is a vocation that is assumed in response to a call and that professional ministers, in order to fulfill their vocations in the Church, must have some form of ritual authorization associated with their ministries. Ritual authorizations help to form new ecclesial relationships between bishops and LEMS and between LEMs and the parishes they serve, allowing LEMs to be representatives of the Church within the Church. Ritual can represent and create responsibility within the minister for the parish and the Church as a whole.

In this chapter we will explore the likely ramifications of ritual and liturgical practices on the authorization of LEMs, including an emphasis on how ritual changes social status and self-identity. First, I will examine liturgy, ritual, rite, and sacrament theologically and practically—i.e., examining the effects of liturgy and ritual on individuals and communities. This section will include the ways that liturgy can impact the role of LEMs in the community, especially within the universal Church and local parishes. Next, I will examine forms of authorization, the effectiveness of authorization by means of liturgical celebration, and its concrete practice in Chicago’s “Calling Rite.” Last, I will address some common objections to the installation of LEMs, distinguishing it from ordinations and explaining how ritual can indeed sometimes express the “inexpressible”—and how it is, in fact, the best vehicle for that expression.
II. Ritual Celebration and Efficacy

It has long been acknowledged that liturgy, by bringing people from the sign to the signified and from the visible to the invisible, can initiate people into the mystery of Christ. Liturgy, as a time when our lives intersect with God’s mystery and when we encounter God’s self-communication through Christ, has a pivotal role both in identity formation and in catechesis. Given the exploding LEM field and its rapid theological development, there is an increasing need in the Catholic Church for both developing an understanding of LEMs and passing it on in parishes. It is important to acknowledge the role of public ritual—particularly liturgical installations—in forming the identity of LEMs, to look at the ways that ritual can situate them in a new relationship with the Church and parishes, and to outline how liturgical catechesis can help the rest of the Church understand the new developments in the structure of the Church.

Edward P. Hahnenberg summarizes the tensions in our current theology of vocation and LEM well:

Lay ecclesial ministry represents a call to a new way of doing ministry, but it also represents a new way of being a minister. For here we have a significant, long-term, and full-time commitment to a position of ministerial leadership outside of the clerical state and distinct from religious life. However, it will not do to imagine lay ecclesial ministry as a new vocation alongside (or overlaid on top of) priesthood, religious life, and married life—if our primary association is that of a state of life. And our theological response will founder if it expects a static status or the kind of life-long commitment from the individual that marks these other venerable vocations. Lay ecclesial ministry is not a state of life, but a living commitment. As a way of embodying a life of Christian service, lay ecclesial ministry has shown a remarkable freedom and fluidity. This reality calls for a theology of vocation to match, a theology articulated in more dynamic, developmental, and relational terms.407

407 Edward Hahnenberg, “Serving in the Name of the Church: The Call to Lay Ecclesial Ministry,” in In the Name of the Church: Vocation and Authorization of Lay
Part of articulating and communicating a relational theology such as that for which Hahnenberg calls is to develop ritual installations of these ministers, transforming their relationship to the congregation they serve and vesting the lay church leaders with authority. Liturgical installations can highlight the relational aspects of this ministry, but also teach our new theological understandings. It is through ritual that we can understand that which sometimes cannot even be expressed in words, and liturgy can teach both at the rational/expressible level and at the inexpressible level.

Thus far I have been discussing terms such as “liturgy,” “ritual,” “authorization,” and “installation” without properly defining them. Part of the reason for this is the difficulty inherent in attempting to choose just one definition. These terms can, and often do, mean different things to different people in different contexts. Given that the focus of this dissertation is LEM in the U.S. Roman Catholic Church, I can automatically eliminate some of these difficulties (e.g., the restriction of the term “liturgy” to Eucharistic celebrations in some Eastern Orthodox definitions) and arrive at common working definitions. I will begin with the etymology of the term, the historical development of the usage of “liturgy,” and then examine contemporary understandings of what “liturgy” entails. Next I will briefly explore what is meant by the terms “rituals” and “rites” and look at the action of liturgy and ritual.


“Liturgy” is from the “Greek λειτουργία, which is a combination of λειτός, an adjective meaning pertaining to the people (λάος), and ἔργον, a noun meaning work.”

For the Greeks “liturgy” was any service or donation for the sake of the common good (e.g., to further “education, entertainment, or defense”). The contribution could be voluntary, or it could be forced labor. Later, the term was extended to include any action that had repercussions in the social and political sphere.

The translators of the Hebrew Bible into Greek (the Septuagint) used λειτουργία “almost exclusively for the chosen people’s prime purpose for existence, the worship of Yahweh. The word liturgy was used also, though less frequently, for something done for state (1 Kgs 19.21; 2 Chr 17.19; 22.8). The New Testament writers used “liturgy” in much the same way, but subsuming what we sometimes now call “ministry” under the term. So “liturgy” in the early Church conveyed “official or community service” rather than private devotions, and it was seen as the “work of the Christian People of God, for

408 Ibid., 37.
409 Ibid., 37.
410 Ibid., 37.
411 J. H. Miller, “Liturgy,” New Catholic Encyclopedia (NCE), vol. 8, 2nd ed., ed. D. W. Krouse, and G. Austin, 727–29 (Detroit, MI: Gale, 2003) 727. The NCE includes these examples of the New Testament authors’ usage. Luke, for example, speaks of Zechariah’s liturgy in the Temple (1:23). Paul calls himself “the liturgist of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles” (Rom. 15:16) and also uses the word “liturgy” to refer to the collection taken up for the poor in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 9:12) and to the services rendered to his own person (Phil. 2:30). The Letter to the Hebrews employs the term for the priestly work of Jesus Christ, liturgy in its specifically Christian sense: “We have such a high priest…a minister [λειτουργός, “liturgist”] of the Holies, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord has erected and not man….But now He has obtained a superior ministry [λειτουργίας, “liturgy”], in proportion as He is the mediator of a superior covenant, enacted on the basis of superior promises” (8:1–6).
through Christ’s liturgy they are able to offer acceptable worship to God and receive from Him the fruits of Christ’s redemptive work.”\textsuperscript{412}

The Middle Ages made more use of such terms as \textit{ministerium}, \textit{munus}, \textit{servitus}, and \textit{officium}. During the Renaissance, “liturgy” began to be consistently incorporated into the titles of works about the Church’s worship. The term continued to be used almost exclusively in this way until the renewals prior to and at Vatican II. In \textit{Sacrosanctum Concilium} (\textit{The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy}),\textsuperscript{413} the Second Vatican Council describes liturgy thus: “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 the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church” (\textit{SC} §2).

The liturgy is a prefiguring of the heavenly liturgy (\textit{SC} §8) and “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” (\textit{SC} §10). The very nature of liturgy demands active participation of all members of the Church (\textit{SC} §11ff). So liturgy, in the light of this document, is more than just a way for us to speak with and worship God: it is a way for all of the Church to be united and become the instruments of Christ. Especially important for our purposes is the mention in the document of the importance of “liturgical catechesis,” which, following a discussion of Lent, says: “This twofold character [of Lent] is to be brought into greater prominence both in the liturgy and by liturgical catechesis” (\textit{SC} §109). It seems from this phrase that liturgical catechesis is somewhat

\textbf{\textsuperscript{412} Hahnenberg, “Serving,”} 37.\textsuperscript{413} NB: Liturgy was the first topic debated at Vatican II, and \textit{Sacrosanctum Concilium} was the first document issued.
separate from liturgy (and this is the only mention of the phrase in the document). Noting this for the moment, we will return to this point when we examine the implications of liturgy. For now, let us continue laying the foundations for an understanding of liturgy itself.

According to David Power, liturgy is “common and ecclesial worship” composed of “the bodily, of ritual, of verbal images, of myth, narrative, and modes of prayer.”\textsuperscript{414} In the \textit{New Catholic Encyclopedia (NCE)} it is a “term for the official worship of God by the Church in the West for centuries.”\textsuperscript{415} This definition uses the term to speak of the Church’s communal worship as distinguished from other group or individual devotions. So, for example, a Mass service could be called a “liturgy” while a recitation of the rosary alone (i.e., without other liturgical elements present) could not.

The nature of liturgy is sacramental, since “all liturgical actions are sacramental; that is, they are signs and symbols that give expression to the conferring of divine life by Christ on His Church and the offering to the Father, through Christ, of the homage and worship of His people.”\textsuperscript{416} Christ, as the first of all sacraments, the Word incarnate, “is the Sacrament of God in the most perfect sense.”\textsuperscript{417} Every liturgical action is “an external sign enabling the worshiper to participate in that supreme act of worship in which God’s plan of salvation was brought to fruition by Christ’s suffering, death, and resurrection.”\textsuperscript{418}

\textsuperscript{415} \textit{NCE}, 727.
\textsuperscript{417} \textit{NCE}, 728. Also, Karl Rahner and Edward Schillebeeckx make the distinction between Christ as the primordial sacrament and the Church as the fundamental sacrament.
\textsuperscript{418} \textit{NCE}, 728.
Liturgical theology “recognizes the liturgy as a privileged source (*locus theologicus*) for understanding the Church, its sacramental actions, and its fundamental creeds”\(^{419}\) and, based on this catechetical component of liturgy, I will propose that within a perpetual cycle of catechesis and self-discovery, lay ministers, parishes, and the Church as a whole can discover and pass on a new and developing theology of LEM.

So liturgy is public worship, a way to bring to effect the nature of the Church as the body of Christ, a way to bring to fruition the salvific mission of the Church, and a sacramental action of the Church. I will examine the implications of these aspects of liturgy (and especially its implications for authorization rituals of LEMs) later in this chapter and the next.\(^{420}\) Ritual and rites are part of liturgy, but what exactly are they, and how are they related to liturgy?\(^ {421}\)

\(b.\) **Foundations of Rituals and Rites**

“Ritual” also is very difficult to define. Part of the reason is that ritual is such a part of the human experience that many different disciplines examine it. I will, however, focus on religious rituals, especially those which together form liturgy. The definition adopted by Evan Zuesse in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* is useful: “those conscious and voluntary, repetitious and stylized symbolic bodily actions that are centered on cosmic


\(^{420}\) *SC* §7 emphasizes the importance of liturgy: “every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.”

\(^{421}\) Here I am speaking specifically of rituals that together compose liturgy. It is true that all religions have rituals, whereas “liturgy” has been defined as official Church actions—so I am not including rituals that are outside of liturgy in this discussion.
structures and/or sacred presences.”⁴²² Ritual includes intentional body involvement and so brings the body’s “social and cultural identity to the encounter with the transcendental realm.”⁴²³ Ritual also allows individuals to link together in a unity that transcends the self, forming a community. It is composed of rites and in turn is a part of liturgy.

Religious ritual is self-consciously symbolic and also hieratic (i.e., sacerdotal), which is why it often includes things such as “the special clothes, the altered manner of speech, the distinctive places and times. But above all, behavior is repetitive and consciously follows a model.”⁴²⁴ Roy Rappaport emphasizes that ritual not only conveys “religious ideas and experiences,” but also creates them.⁴²⁵ This especially happens when rituals are combined, creating a liturgical event. In fact, Rappaport distinguishes between “the understandings generated by liturgical orders themselves and understandings imported into them.”⁴²⁶

Rituals are not only essential to religious life and culture, but secular life and culture as well. There are many studies of rituals in light of sociological and

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⁴²³ Ibid., 7835.

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 7835.

⁴²⁵ Rappaport quoted in Catherine M. Bell, “Ritual [Further Considerations],” in ibid., 7849–50. Bell adds: “In [Rappaport’s] early work he argued that ritual communicates both indexical (self-referential) messages and canonical (pertaining to cultural tradition) information. The later analysis expands this to include how ritual activities generate, ratify, and normalize ‘the Holy’ in a set of ‘Ultimate Sacred Postulates.’ . . . Ritual communicates, Rappaport argues, but it communicates an informationless and unquestionable order of things in which the performer and the performed are indistinguishable from the certainties expressed and, inevitably, accepted.”

anthropological principles.427 Even a handshake upon meeting someone in our Western culture is a regular ritual—and without it being offered upon meeting someone, one’s opinion of oneself in relation to the other person might be altered. The rituals performed in society help to transform both the individuals and the society. For example, the ritual categories in life cycles “employ symbols in repeated patterns to effect transformations in the lives of the participants.”428 We know through cultural studies and an examination of history that there have been many festivals to different deities, for example. The rituals that both stem from, and perpetuate, culture are many and various, as I will examine in the next chapter.

As for “rites,” we need not dwell on formulating a definition. Rather than follow the common North American practice of simply equating rite with ritual, it is better to use the term “rite” to refer to the elements that form rituals—this allows us to look at the elements of rituals in greater detail, an endeavor that I will undertake later in the work.429 So, we will say that rites are elements of rituals (and thus the reverse is true, that rites can combine to form rituals) and that rituals, when celebrated as more than one person, can combine to form liturgies. The problem with these distinctions is that they are not obviously and unanimously delineated. However, they are clear enough for our purposes.

427 These will be examined in detail in the next chapter. Here I am simply surveying the arguments for, and against, the effectiveness of ritual briefly enough so that I can insist that the installation for LEMs should be liturgical. In the next chapter I look at the impact of ritual and, especially, sacramental liturgy, in greater detail—and then I will outline specific elements that should be present in the liturgical installation of LEMs. 428 James L. Cox, “Introduction: Ritual, Rites of Passage and the Interaction between Christian and Traditional Religions,” in Rites of Passage in Contemporary Africa, ed. James L. Cox (Cardiff: Cardiff Academic Press, 1998), xii. 429 For this approach of viewing rites as elements of ritual I am following Jan A. M. Snoek’s definition. For more information, see Madeline Duntley, “Ritual Studies,” Encyclopedia of Religion, 2nd ed., vol. 11, ed. Lindsay Jones, 7856–61 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 7860.
Let us take, for example, the Catholic Mass. It is a liturgical celebration, and has within it what the Church traditionally calls the Liturgy of the Eucharist (we could do this same analysis with the Liturgy of the Word or other liturgies). This is a communal celebration (Mass involves a gathering together), and it has constitutive elements that, under our definition, would be thought of as “rituals,” one of which is the Eucharistic Prayer. There are four versions of this prayer, but they all have a doxology of praise by the priest followed by the people’s Great Amen. I would consider both of these elements a rite according to our definition, given that we are using rites simply to describe elements of rituals. The argument could be made that, actually, each part of these two elements could be called a rite—and yes, I would agree with that. If we wanted to specifically address the priest saying “Through him” when speaking of the doxology, we could call that specific element a rite. I will call elements “rites” for ease of discussion and to have a common vocabulary for this work.

c. The Action of Liturgy and Rituals

Liturgy and ritual are very important to my study because of the effects of ritual on us as humans. As we shall see, ritual installations can provide a break from the everyday, and the regular repetition of ritual in liturgical celebrations can impact the ways that we think, and they can form in us a common identity. This will lead us to an understanding that ritual can determine the ways that LEMs are viewed within both the parish and the Church as a whole.

Liturgy can indeed be both an expression of, and a source for, theology. Louis-Marie Chauvet explains that in the early Church, liturgy was an important way to
interpret the Christ-event. It is through the readings of Scripture that the journey of applying the mystery of Christ to the rest of Scripture and the life of the community was undertaken. Chauvet writes extensively about the understandings created by ritual. In fact, he tells us, “the Bible was born of the liturgy.” He qualifies this a bit later to explain that the liturgy “under the obvious influence of multiple political, economic, and social factors…left its imprint upon them [the biblical traditions] and played a decisive role in their being preserved as the “Word of God.” So liturgy does not only express beliefs, it also helps us to formulate and develop them.

Liturgy is more than its constitutive rituals; it is an action of the heart. There are permanent elements to liturgy that cannot be changed, but there are other elements that must be adaptable so as to keep liturgy active and dynamic—to allow it to speak to us. The liturgy, and the rites that are part of it, must be balanced between preservation and adaptability. Chauvet tells us that the Church must constantly “resist the temptation to imprison itself—as well as God—within them [liturgical rites].”

There is something special about liturgy (and its constitutive rituals and rites); liturgical celebrations can be so effective because they can be sacramental. Chauvet tells

430 Chauvet, Symbol and Sacrament, 191: “the texts which the Bible retains ‘have survived because of their use in the liturgy.’”
431 Ibid., 195. “A confession of faith in act, the liturgical practice of the first Christian communities seems to have functioned as the catalyst allowing the different factors (doctrinal, apologetic, moral, liturgical) and the diverse agents (the Christian communities themselves with their concrete problems, internal and external; their various ministries of government, prophecy, teaching, prayer, and so forth) to come together in order to flesh out little by little these Gospels confessed as the gospel of the Lord Jesus” (200).
432 Later, this project will examine more about how to know what can and cannot be changed.
434 Ibid., xi.
us that “we can classify under the rubric ‘sacrament’ all the church’s forms of celebration.”\(^{435}\) Funerals, religious professions, and other celebrations not called formally sacraments are nonetheless full of sacramentality: “Under the paradigm ‘sacrament,’ we classify everything that pertains to the thankfulness which the church expresses to God.”\(^{436}\) Whether or not one agrees with this position, it is important to know that when Chauvet talks about sacraments in general, his perspective is wider than that of the seven official sacraments. And for him, the sacraments must become incarnate in the various cultural forms. We saw recognition of this necessity in the liturgical changes proposed at Vatican II (e.g., the change from Latin to the languages of the people).

In fact, Chauvet tells us, sacraments “attest that the recognition of the grace of creation and the exigency of a counter-gift are inseparable: humankind is commissioned to offer this return-gift throughout history by ordering this world in such a way that it corresponds to its primordial divine plan.” This requires the “passage from language to body, from word to practice.”\(^{437}\) The ways that the return-gifts are offered to God can vary from culture to culture, from situation to situation, from person to person: they do not necessarily involve grand gestures and large sacrifices, however. The important return gifts are habits of living in that they inform all of our life actions as we help accomplish the divine plan. Return gifts are part of co-creating with God. They are expressed in the ways that we live our lives.

\(^{435}\) Ibid., 30.
\(^{436}\) Ibid., 30–31.
\(^{437}\) Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 554.
Sacramental celebrations occur in the memory of a past and a hope for a future, but still through ritual and language. There are many different ways of celebrating the sacraments all over the world.

George S. Worgul proposes that we understand the sacramental model as “celebration,” “a communal activity by which a community manifests, symbolizes, and makes present to their individual selves and the members of the community the reality of a joyful, consoling, enriching reality-event.”\(^{438}\) The celebration is more than a model: it is also a symbol in that “A celebration points to a reality and makes it present, without being identical to the reality. It also structures reality into a particular form or order so that a particular reality-event can be understood.”\(^{439}\) The reality event being celebrated becomes more present through the celebration both to the individual and the community as a whole. The celebrations are repetitive and occur in a cycle. Worgul says these events participate “in human historicity exhibited in its triple modality, i.e., past (anamnesis), present (kairos), and future (eschaton).”\(^{440}\)

The danger of speaking of liturgical celebrations such as installations of LEMs, to which we will apply all of these ideas, as “sacramental” in the way that Chauvet uses it is that many will view this “installation proposition” as usurping the dignity and authority of Holy Orders. They will wonder what, exactly, will remain to distinguish ordained ministers who have received the sacrament of Holy Orders from installed LEMs (whose jobs may look similar to those of priests). This is something that absolutely must be addressed in our discussion. Let us first come to an adequate understanding of what

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\(^{439}\) Ibid., 213.

\(^{440}\) Ibid., 214–15.
installation is since it is essential to the forthcoming argument, and then we will look at this, and other, objections to the installation of LEMs.

As this chapter will assert, the role of ritual and liturgical celebration of installation can help to form the identity of the LEM, teach the congregation essential theology of ministry (such as the notions of vocation and call), and allow for another opportunity for the congregation to petition the Holy Spirit to gift the minister in the ways that the congregation particularly needs assistance—calling forth the fullness of that minister’s gifts and engaging the congregation in the leadership of the church through the authority of the minister who is serving them as leader. I will begin, then, with an examination of authorization, which is the context for the installation I will be discussing (since installation, as I describe it, is a form of authorization).

III. LEM Authorization: Forms, Practice, and Effectiveness

The USCCB’s *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* makes clear that the roles and numbers of LEMs in the Church have been growing and that these roles need something to accompany them: authorization. The document says, “Many of these roles presume a significant degree of preparation, formation, and professional competence. They require authorization of the hierarchy in order for the person to serve publicly in the local church.”441 In fact, authorization is one of the characteristics of LEMs.442

441 USCCB, *Co-Workers*, 5.
442 “Within this large group is a smaller group on whom this document focuses: those men and women whose ecclesial service is characterized by [a]uthorization of the hierarchy to serve publicly in the local church[;] [l]eadership in a particular area of ministry[;] [c]lose mutual collaboration with the pastoral ministry of bishops, priests, and
a. Forms of Authorization

*Co-Workers* defines authorization as “the process by which properly prepared lay men and women are given responsibilities for ecclesial ministry by competent Church authority.” Authorization, according to the document, includes certification, which is an “acknowledgment of the competence of an individual for a specific ministerial role”; commissioning, which is an “appointment of an individual to a specific position” with an outline of its attendant responsibilities; and “an announcement of the appointment to the community that will be served by the lay ecclesial minister.”

The document says that this authorization can take many forms—a letter from the bishop, publication about who is assuming the new position at a parish in a diocesan magazine, etc. The bishop is the one who knows the needs and the resources of the diocese and should “be responsible for determining if and how any authorization should occur in his diocese, in keeping with canon law.” However, the document also says that “When such authorization does occur, it is important to emphasize a spiritual dimension within the process.”

Susan K. Wood has examined theologically what kinds of authorization, if any, are required for which types of ministry in the Church. An expert ecclesiologist, she views LEM and authorization within the context of the communion of the Church.

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443 Ibid., 54.
444 *Co-Workers* interestingly describes authorization as if it is in place in all dioceses, although this is not the case. This is especially true if the above three elements are required to make one “authorized.”
445 Ibid., 54.
446 Ibid., 54.
“Authorization” is from “author,” which indicates “the source from which the mission arises. The source of all mission and ministry in the church is the triune God.”

Vocational discernment for LEM “requires the participation of the ecclesial community since it is in their name that ministry is given…. Thus, vocation to lay ecclesial ministry has both a personal and an ecclesial dimension. A person must be called by both God and the ecclesial community,” and authorization represents that this communal discernment has happened. Further, when authorization is “ritualized in a context of prayer, this emphasizes the spiritual dimensions of ministry at the same time that the relationship between the lay ecclesial minister, the community gathered in prayer, and the authorizing minister becomes visible to all present.”

So authorization is the fruit of individual and community discernment and can make visible the changed relationships that happen when one enters LEM. It is important in leadership and stable positions. Authorization allows one to minister in the name of the Church and makes a person’s ministry the Church’s ministry rather than an individual’s; it assigns the minister a specific task in the Church (for a certain length of time, etc.). Wood explains: “the power of lay ministry lies in the ecclesial status, graces, and charisms received sacramentally in baptism and confirmation, while the exercise of these charisms in certain ecclesial situations is ecclesially authorized by commissioning, appointment, or installation.” The authorizer should be the local church rather than the formation program of the minister, since “authorization creates a bond of communion

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448 Ibid., 100.  
449 Ibid., 100.  
450 Ibid., 101.
between the authorizer and the minister and empowers the minister to actually engage in the ministry over which the authorizer exercises oversight.\textsuperscript{451}

I must express a concern here. I argued earlier that the identity and function of the minister should not be separated. With this focus on “power” and the “exercise” of the charisms by Wood, it may sound like a step back to that. This is a concern, and one that I suspect can only be avoided by keeping the risk in mind and trying to avoid it while speaking about the terms as necessary.

Additionally, this focus on power risks bringing us back to the same problem that I pointed out earlier about the minister being separated from the community (which we saw happened with the priesthood as the priest was seen as becoming more distanced from the “profane” in his “sacredness”). This is another concern. Part of the reason we have this danger is simply that we have limited language and that when we talk about ministers we have to use the terms that we have (since we operate within our current language game). But the perversion that could happen when we start talking about power is something about which we should be aware, and we cannot accept the use of this word uncritically. This distinction between power and the exercise of charisms is dangerous, and we must tread carefully here, but I think what Wood is trying to say here is important.

I will attempt to rephrase it in a way that does not perpetuate the “power” motif and hope that in so doing I am remaining true to her meaning (and if not, I am conveying something that is important regardless): the root of what makes LEM strong is its transformed relationship and the graces the ministers receive throughout life and for their

\textsuperscript{451} Ibid., 102.
particular ministry. These transformations can be expressed and enhanced\(^{452}\) when a minister is situated within the relationship that allows this to happen. This situation within relationship can happen through authorization. Additionally, while Wood is not addressing formation in this context, I would add that formation is likely to be, in the way that charism is, a contributor to the relational transformation and graces—a part of the “build-up”—that is enhanced and given expression in authorization. It is important to remember that the minister is acting on behalf of the community, exercising the threefold ministries shared by all faithful.

Now we return to our discussion about forms of authorization. Wood points out that a letter of appointment from a bishop or priest, which is a commonly used form of authorization, has more of the connotations of hiring someone for a job rather than “creating an ecclesial relationship.” This transformation of relationship should be honored, and “the lay ecclesial minister needs to be acknowledged, affirmed, and supported through public recognition and clarity about their rights and responsibilities.”\(^{453}\) What form should authorization take to represent and bring about these transformations of relationship that happen in authorization?

The answer, Wood says, varies depending on the stability and ecclesial validation of the ministry.\(^{454}\) For example, “Is the ministry a lay ecclesial ministry within the present operative definition? Does this ministry exercise leadership responsibility for some area of ministry, usually within a relationship of coordination and direction of others in the community? Is this a stable ministry or an occasional service? Is there official ecclesial

\(^{452}\) “Enhanced” is my notion here.

\(^{453}\) Ibid., 103.

\(^{454}\) Ibid., 105.
authorization by the bishop or his representative? Is this service in the name of the church?" 455

Answering these questions can be difficult. There is the case of lectors and acolytes: some are officially installed according to canon law (which limits the roles to men), but most are not. These ministers are not LEMs, since they “do not exercise leadership for an area of ministry within a relationship of coordination and direction of others in the community.” 456 On the other end of the spectrum, there is the case of pastoral life coordinators or parish directors—i.e., those who assume the responsibility for a parish (which is supposedly extraordinary and temporary but is often long term). This ministry is technically also an office and a participation in the ministry of the bishop. 457 But those who hold this office are still LEMs, as Wood tells us when she answers the above questions in light of this ministry: “They exercise leadership that requires the coordination of others, minister out of a vocation that is ecclesi-ally discerned, receive the appropriate formation and education for their tasks, and are authorized by the local bishop to assume these responsibilities.” 458

Wood looks at a third category of LEM which is, according to her phrasing, “ordinary” (“catechists, directors of liturgy, directors of faith formation, parish administrators were understood to be those charged with overseeing the material goods of the parish, etc.”). 459 These are truly LEMs, but they are different from the above pastoral life coordinators because the latter requires official (and ritual) installation/authorization

455 Ibid., 109.
456 Ibid., 111.
457 Ibid., 111.
458 Ibid., 112.
459 Ibid., 113.
by the bishop. Still, Wood asserts, “Insofar as the service of these people is characterized by a personal vocation ecclesially discerned and affirmed, a pastoral charge for leadership in the church with a relationship of coordination and direction of others in the community, authorization by the appropriate ecclesial authority, and appropriate formation, they can be considered as lay ecclesial ministers. Their ministry requires structures and a process of accountability to the church.”

The many different forms of LEM in the Church may require a plurality of forms of authorization—but simply a letter of appointment stating the minister’s new job is not enough, not in a vocation rooted in a call by, and enrichment for, the Holy Spirit. This is more than a simple job, and the Church is more than a human resources department—it transforms relationships and should be expressed as such. This expression also helps to create the relational transformation. We have seen several theoretical options for possible forms of authorization. Let us now look at an example of an existing authorization, one that includes rituals and is on the way toward accomplishing what I am suggesting: the Archdiocese of Chicago’s “Calling Rite.”

b. The Practice of Authorization: A Concrete Example

Graziano Marcheschi, who played a prominent role in the formulating of Chicago’s “Calling Rite” for LEMs, summarizes the state of, and some of the questions related to, authorizations in our contemporary U.S. Roman Catholic Church. He explains that the need for “rites of authorization” (he uses the term “rites” in the way

\(^{460}\) Ibid., 113.

\(^{461}\) This rite includes what Marcheschi calls “authorization,” although another diocese (which he does not name) adapted it and avoids “authorization” language by referring to it as a “commissioning.”
that I use “ritual”) is becoming clearer as the questions surrounding LEMs arise. In designing (what I call) rituals, Marcheschi insists that we need to have an “informed theology”—but he also acknowledges that there are some questions that will probably remain: “Does one focus on Baptism, asserting authorization flows from that sacrament and needs only to be acknowledged by ecclesial authority, or does one assert that while Baptism is indispensable, so is hierarchical approval? Does emphasis on church authority result in too clerical a model for lay ministerial authorization?”

Despite these remaining questions, Marcheschi acknowledges that authorization rituals can change the way that ministry is shaped. If we root the rituals in communion, and keep unity as our focus, Marcheschi says, “rites of calling can make explicit what the experience of the past forty-five years has already proven: new charisms and ministries still arise within the Church in response to the needs of society.”

Marcheschi’s work (along with that of his cohorts in the archdiocese—those who worked with him to set up this ritual) in the Archdiocese of Chicago is at the cutting edge of designing authorization rituals. He reflects in depth on the theologies that can (and should) be expressed through these types of rituals. The Chicago rite was formulated to express some important theological ideas, and Marcheschi explores the motivations for these “liturgies of calling/commissioning/sending.” He posits that for bishops to approve rites of authorization, they must believe that laypeople can be “called ministers”;

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463 Ibid., 171.

464 Though the Chicago “Calling Rite” is an annual diocesan-wide event, Marcheschi uses the plural because he is including the adaptation made by the other diocese (which he does not name) in his theological reflections.
and bishops must recognize that the call issued by the Holy Spirit to a lay minister is more than just a personal call—it must be for the good of the whole Church. Further, “Rites of authorization must tell ministers that their service is exercised not only on their own initiative, but also as a publicly recognized and authorized action within the local church. Lacking that, laity can’t be expected to seek or value participation in such rites.”

Marcheschi includes in his study a narrative of what happened when the team was planning the Archdiocese of Chicago’s first calling rite, and this is an excellent illustration of the difficulties involved in attempting to strike a balance between acknowledging the ecclesial aspect of ministering and the personal aspect of the personal call to ministry by the Holy Spirit. It also raises a question that I will address later, namely, should authorization ritual be for a particular task in a diocese or to ministry in the Church as a whole? Here is what happened when Chicago was formulating this first ritual:

Cardinal George asked that all current ministers “discern” whether they had a “vocation” to ministry and then request “calling” to that ministry in the Archdiocese, so a plan was designed. But the Cardinal questioned the theology inherent in the design that asked people to discern “the vocation they received years ago from the Holy Spirit.” The Cardinal explained that “No one has a vocation until the Church says they have a vocation, because vocation comes through the church.” In response to “What do we say about these people and all the years they’ve been working?” he responded that the Calling Rite would “make explicit the vocation that had been implicit for these many years.” However, the Cardinal concluded it was inappropriate to require people who had been serving for decades to discern if they had a vocation, so the discernment process for veterans was scrapped.

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465 Ibid., 163.
466 Ibid., 163–64.
When Cardinal George says that no one has a vocation until the Church says so, this is in contrast to what I said about vocation in the opening section of this work—my notion of vocation is that recognizing your vocation is a process of discernment and an acknowledgment of the already-existing vocation. George did, however, acknowledge that there could have been an already-existing vocation (the “implicit” vocation) before the Church formally declared it so in ritual. Perhaps he was thinking that by discerning to hire this person in a local church the Catholic Church was somehow “approving their vocation” already. It is difficult to understand exactly what is happening in this exchange—and the exact role that everyone’s theological assumptions play in these decisions, but I can certainly see the interplay of theology and practicality as well as of individual and communal elements in this situation.

In examining the adapted form of this rite (that is, the alterations made to Chicago’s rite by another, unnamed diocese as recounted by Marcheschi), other theological interplays become clear. Marcheschi’s reflections on these alterations help us attempt to understand the theological motivations behind these changes. The adapted form of Chicago’s rite conveys these central ideas, according to Marcheschi:

1. that lay ecclesial ministers are called by virtue of baptism
2. that the commissioned are a professionally trained group within the church who make a public commitment recognized by the bishop of the diocese
3. that the commissioning liturgy parallels the other liturgies that bring individuals into ministry.

In contrast, Chicago’s rite was designed to manifest

1. the need for authority in addition to baptism
2. the “calling” of candidates, rather than their “recognition” by the diocesan bishop.\(^{467}\)

\(^{467}\) Ibid., 167.
There are many motivations for having liturgies of calling, commissioning, or sending, according to Marcheschi, from the viewpoints of both the individual and the diocese as a whole. The desire to provide personal affirmation for laypeople is a pastoral motivation for many ministry schools to commission their graduates at the end of a degree program. He is quite critical of this motive for diocesan rites, stating that “they don’t answer the student’s question, In whose name will I serve? [sic]. Affirmation is important, but it was not the primary motive of either of the rites examined. Affirmation can be given in other ways than a formal, diocesan rite.” I agree with him: this kind of celebration is lacking an essential element of a diocesan installation—there is no true authority, or even role, given to the LEM. Yes, the person has accomplished a lot and may have some authority by virtue of their new education, but this type of celebration seems more proper to the particular school (some kind of graduation celebration) than to a diocese.

A second motivation listed by Marcheschi is that of role affirmation, in which the role of the LEM, the ministry itself, is the focus. Interestingly, in Chicago, “only Pastoral Associates and Directors of Religious Education can be ‘called,’ and only those who have been called are designated Lay Ecclesial Ministers.”

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\(^{468}\) Ibid., 167.  
\(^{469}\) Ibid., 168.  
\(^{470}\) The next two chapters will detail more essential elements of diocesan celebrations (especially the last chapter). I do not, in any way, intend to use the Chicago rite as an example of the essential elements that I will recommend be included in diocesan installations. I find that this concrete example helps to contextualize the discussion and bring to light some of the issues that we will be confronting when suggesting necessary elements to include. This example, given that Chicago is one of the pioneers in establishing installation rituals for LEMs, also helps the readers to understand the current state of affairs regarding installations for LEMs, and so contextualizes the discussion.
George, whom he quotes, use the term “called” to refer to those who have been authorized through the diocesan calling rite. This is because they see those who have been called as having entered into a new relationship with the Church community (and also, perhaps, because Cardinal George—given his statement that people do not have a vocation until the Church says they do—believes that only those authorized or engaged in a process that can lead to authorization are called).  

The third and fourth goals of these kinds of rites could be preserving doctrine and situating the person in a new relationship. In preserving doctrine a concern could be to guard the integrity of church teaching by having the candidate swear to remain faithful to Church teaching. Central to authorization through rites like Chicago’s “is a conviction that calling is an invitation to a new relationship with the church community, not merely to a new function in the church. Unlike marriage, there is no permanent bond established, but the new relationship defines the individual’s role and sets out his or her agenda.”

A fifth motivation behind an authorization ritual could be the “episcopal role,” the fact that the bishop is the one who establishes a new relationship between the minister and the community. Chicago’s rite makes it explicit that while Baptism makes LEM possible, authorization makes it happen. So while many LEM think that they are authorized because they have an official job in a parish or special degrees in theology/ministry, or are called by the Holy Spirit, those who have not participated in the authorization ritual would not be official “ministers.”…Cardinal George would call the work of those who are not designated ministers of the diocese “a job” instead of “ministry,” arguing that a more restricted use of “ministry” avoids a subjectivity that views anything and everything as ministry.

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471 Ibid., 169.
472 Ibid., 170.
473 NB the role/function separation here.
474 Ibid., 170.
Chicago’s calling rite is a form of liturgical installation. While Marcheschi does not speak in terms of relationality as I did when I drew on O’Meara and Hahnenberg, we can remember that the authorization that happens—that takes shape—through the ritual creates a new relationship between the installee and the community. The individual being installed, the parish, and the Church as a whole are all in a transformed relationship.

c. Effectiveness of Authorization

As we have seen, “authorizations”—in the way that the term is used now—and liturgical installations are not necessarily the same. In this work I advocate for liturgical installations as an important form of authorization. A common form of “authorization” today is simply a letter of appointment from a bishop. Why is this insufficient for LEMs? For one thing, our expanding understanding of grace has developed our notion of vocation to include understanding vocation as dynamic and relational. Hahnenberg says, “discernment is a holistic, embodied, and relational process…. It is something that we do with others because God calls us through others. The soul is not so separate from the self or its surroundings. And an incarnational and sacramental sensibility suggests that God’s call is never unmediated.” I touched on Hahnenberg’s treatment of relational theology in chapter two, and will thoroughly examine his “concentric circles” approach in chapter five. For now, I will focus on the fact that ministry is relational—coming from and impacting the LEMs’ relationship within the ecclesial order.

\[475\] Here I am drawing on Hahnenberg, “Serving,” 37–39; but the points about grace from the earlier chapters of this work also provide the background for this developing understanding of grace and what it means for vocational discernment.

\[476\] Ibid., 39.
This same sensibility and our innate “Catholicism” tell us that the call to participate in the mission of the Church in the particular and distinctive way of LEMs (i.e., as public representatives of the Church) needs explicit community recognition. This is especially true since the call is not to a special state in life or a certain function but to a “distinctive set of relationships within the ministerial life of the church.” Also, this call is broad (rather than a simple morning-to-evening job): what a lay ecclesial minister does in the Church affects his or her “identity, lifestyle, and service.”

Hahnenberg says that LEMs, those “who minister ‘in the name of the church,’” are in a new relationship with the community, which is “signified and further empowered by some form of authorization.” It is important for us to situate authorization within

477 Hahnenberg (ibid., 46ff) distinguishes the call to LEM from the call to discipleship and ministry, which belongs to all Christians. Like all Christians, lay ecclesial ministers are called to lives of holy discipleship and to participation in the mission of the church. They too are baptized and thus called into a relationship with God that is oriented outward to relationship with others. However, the call to lay ecclesial ministry brings with it a further dimension, the call to minister on behalf of the church. By virtue of their preparation, leadership, close collaboration with the ordained, and authorization, lay ecclesial ministers are called into a new set of relationships, a new position within the ecclesial community: they minister in the name of the church. Another way to say this is to recognize that every contribution to the mission of the church—every ministry—is ecclesial, in the sense that it is rooted in baptism and flows through the church community. But not every ministry is ecclesial in the sense of serving formally and publically in the name of the church…. Obviously, lay ecclesial ministers are not the only ones who minister in the name of the church, but they are the ones who do so minister as lay persons in collaboration with the ordained, in positions of ministerial leadership, with the preparation and authorization appropriate to such a role.

478 Ibid., 48.
479 Ibid., 48.
480 Hahnenberg’s next sentence implies that the hiring of a LEM by a pastor is an authorization: “usually it is the bishop’s delegate, the pastor, who hires a lay ecclesial minister and, in doing so, authorizes this minister” (ibid., 48). This perhaps explains why he thinks that authorizations are happening in all dioceses. I see why Hahnenberg is calling this an authorization—and it certainly is one if you define authorization as simply allowing someone to represent the Church in whatever capacity for which they have been
the “organic and involved process of cultivating, recognizing, challenging, and
celebrating the call to serve the reign of God. Thus any formal authorization is a
designation, a naming of an ecclesial relationship that both already exists and, at the same
time, is enhanced in the naming.”\textsuperscript{481} So a formal authorization of LEMs can not only
recognize the already-existing shift in relationship that happens when a LEM is called but
it also creates and actualizes that transformation of relationship, thus making it
sacramental.

Why is it important to have this authorization occur within a liturgical
celebration? Zeni Fox specifically addresses this when she answers the question, “Why
include ritual as part of the authorization process of lay ecclesial ministers as leaders in
their communities?” She recounts the following anecdote to underscore the need for ritual
authorization:

Years ago, a colleague in a diocesan office with responsibility for DREs described
the difficulty they had by saying: “The parishioners think she is just Mrs. So and
So, and what right does she have to make decisions about religious education.”
This captures a dimension of the culture which did not grant legitimacy to the
person who had been designated by the pastor as precisely the one to make the
decisions about religious education. In a culture where the legitimacy of the priest
(and also of the vowed religious) is quite taken for granted, the legitimacy of the
lay ecclesial minister often must be earned over a period of time. The issue here is
not primarily the difficulties this poses for lay ecclesial ministers, but rather the
limitations it places on their ability to lead effectively in the parish. The research
of Ruth Wallace with pastoral administrators of parishes suggests that one way to
augment the perception of legitimacy is by the use of a ritual of authorization.\textsuperscript{482}

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\textsuperscript{481} Ibid., 52.
\textsuperscript{482} Zeni Fox, “Leadership, Ritual and Lay Ecclesial Ministry,” in \textit{In the Name of the Church: Vocation and Authorization of Lay Ecclesial Ministry}, ed. William J. Cahoy,
\end{flushright}
Ruth Wallace studied pastoral administrators of parishes without a resident pastor (Canon 517.2). She explains that “The principal function of the installation ceremony [described in her previous sentence as a “public ritual”] is the legitimation of the new pastor’s leadership.” The result, according to Wallace’s research, of these public ritual installations (specifically by the bishop) is that the ministers were more easily accepted as leaders by the parishioners. Wallace details one of these rituals that was designed by a parish, citing the feeling of ownership and excitement the parish felt over what was happening in its midst, so much so that they “wrote into the ceremony the symbolic moment when the power was to be passed on [by the bishop] to the pastor.” Fox interprets what Wallace observed in her study of ritual installations: “the mantle of authority was visibly extended over them, allowing them to function more fully in their roles, from the beginning. The public, ritual authorization facilitated their exercise of leadership—in the language of leadership theory, it granted them legitimacy in their role.”

Fox conducted her own anecdotal research into ritual installations of LEMs, asking interviewees about authorization rituals they knew about. Her findings indicated that the celebrant was usually a bishop, it usually occurred within a Mass, and sometimes the ritual was in parishes, though most often in the cathedral. Families were invited. Other elements varied: “participants entered in procession with the liturgical ministers;

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484 Ibid., 108.
486 Albeit with a very small sample size, thirty-two individuals from three dioceses.
unlit candles were carried, then lit by previous graduates of the program; pins were given; certificates were conferred; people were called forth."

The LEMs in Fox’s study found a lot of benefit from the authorization liturgies, both for them personally and for their ministries. Interestingly, Fox found that those who had been authorized in their parish (often in addition to a diocesan authorization, but sometimes as a reception after the diocesan event or simply as a local, single-parish liturgy) articulated more benefits from the liturgy.

Another fascinating aspect of Fox’s study is that the LEMs she interviewed did not express a perception of the diocesan authorization ritual as strengthening their “influence” and “authority.” Fox’s explanations for this (based on further questioning of the subjects) are several: “Interviewees said that in part this is because the ritual took place after, sometimes long after, they began their ministry, and in part because parishioners (and some priests) do not see the ritual as granting legitimacy, in fact, may not even be aware of the ritual.” Still, most of the respondents said that the ritual was very personally meaningful to them, and those who had participated in only the diocesan liturgies speculated that a parish-based one would have been helpful in helping the parish to see them as more legitimate ministers who have authority within that parish.

Fox concludes her study by underscoring the importance of authorization rituals while emphasizing that the meaning of these rituals needs further development:

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487 Fox, “Leadership,” 200. Note that the reference to previous graduates of a program, the “pinning,” and the handing out of certificates sound like our graduation rituals. It is interesting to see that the respondents were likely considering their graduation from their ministry formation program as an “installation.”
488 Ibid., 203–5.
489 Ibid., 204–8.
490 Ibid., 204–8.
This research does suggest that good order in the community, more effective leadership and a deepened personal commitment and sense of meaning can be facilitated by public authorization of lay ecclesial ministers, with attendant ritual. However, the theological understanding of the place of lay ecclesial ministers in the life of the Church, and of the meaning of any rituals that will be developed, needs maturing, both in the Church as a whole, and among parish clergy and people in the pew.\footnote{Ibid., 206.}

It will be interesting at some point to see the results of studies that gauge the congregation’s actual perception of their leading ministers. Do these change with meaningful and well-developed rituals? Fox’s hypothesis is that they will, and ritual theory seems to support this.

David Power sees liturgy as foundational theology. It is essential to our faith practice in that liturgy has a privileged place in the life of the Church. It is a place for mediation of grace to believers and helps to also bring about this belief and communion with God.\footnote{Ibid., 11.} Furthermore, it is through liturgy that “human and Christian experience is given shape and direction and faith in Christ.”\footnote{Ibid., 11.} Christian liturgy is historical and a communal celebration—but one that remains relevant, celebrating grace, freedom, and gift.\footnote{Power, Unsearchable Riches, 93–94.} To maintain that relevancy, the Church sometimes needs “fresh understandings of the bodily, of ritual, of verbal images, of myth, narrative, and modes of prayer.”\footnote{Ibid., 3.} I will examine possible ways to adapt rites later. First, I will establish the effectiveness of rites/liturgy in general, and then can look at specific elements of liturgy (rituals and rites) and their meanings.
What is unique about rituals? What purposes do religious rituals serve that nothing else can? Chauvet tells us that, in the Christian context, ritual brings the faithful into the mystery of God because it works beyond human reason. He points out that when one looks at the practice or celebration of all the aspects of the ecclesial life—e.g., Scripture, sacraments, ethics—they all have symbolic and ritual characteristics or functions. Ritual embodies and enacts belief(s) through symbolic action, shaping the lives of those involved through the ritual processes. To continue to be meaningful, it must meet what John H. Westerhoff III calls the “challenge faced today”: “to provide communal life and ritual which will support healthy Christian faith and life, that is, which keeps together the sacred and secular dimensions of human life, the communal and personal, the interior experience of worship and the exterior action of daily life, the intuitive transcendent and the intellectual immanent aspects of existence.”

Vatican II states that the purpose of sacraments is to sanctify the faithful, to build up the body of Christ, and to worship God. God is present in the sacraments and in the Church through liturgical celebrations. In fact, Sacrosanctum Concilium tells us that, to accomplish salvation,

Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass….By His power He is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes. He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20). (SC §7)

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496 Chauvet, The Sacraments, 67.
Clearly ritual—in the form of liturgy, and so sacramental—is an important way for Christians to grow in the spiritual life and to discover themselves as people of God, both individually and as the one body of Christ.

Like all rituals, liturgy and sacraments can help to form and to express personal and communal identity. Once one is initiated (or in the process of being initiated) into the ritual forms and meanings of one’s religion/culture, one can be united with the other participants in the performance of that ritual. Rituals are important because they can convey more than their sensible form. For example, in the consecration of the Eucharist in Roman Catholic celebrations, the transubstantiation of the bread and wine to the body and blood of Christ is not perceptible to the senses, but once one understands the significance of the rituals that form the consecration, one can begin to learn what is happening through them.

IV. Common Objections to Ritual Installations of LEMs

I have looked briefly at whether or not ritual installations can be effective for authorization of LEMs. This will be examined more in the next chapter when I look at ritual installations practically and in light of sociological and anthropological perspectives. However, before I proceed with the ritual and liturgical theory behind the installation of LEMs as I am proposing it, I need to eliminate two common objections to the ritualized (and especially the liturgical) installation of LEMs. Doing this will not only eliminate two often-cited barriers to my project, but it can also help us to explore the nature of installation through negating these objections. First, a common question: “Is
this similar to or the same as ordination?” Second: “Is it possible to create a ritual that expresses the inexpressible?”

a. **Objection #1: Installation and Ordination**

Is installation the same as the ordination of priests that happens in the sacrament of Holy Orders? Some proponents of ritual installations of LEMs would undoubtedly say that these should be the same as ordinations, which is one reason so many people are wary of ritually installing lay ministers. Marcheschi captures this tension in his description of the stances on lay installations. He asserts the difference between calling rites and ordinations, but claims that calling rites “must be more than an individual’s declaration of willingness to serve or a bishop’s acceptance of that service.” Calling rites must never be reduced to “lay ‘assisting’ or lay ‘helping,’” emptying the notion of LEM of true meaning and reducing authorization to “an ecclesial pat-on-the back of those who help the clergy do their ministry.”

Those Church authorities who design installation rites, Marcheschi says, must first be convinced that laypeople can, in fact, be called to be ministers. Canon law primarily uses “ministers” to refer to the ordained ministers, and there are some bishops, Marcheschi reminds us, who think that this term should be reserved for the ordained. There are some bishops who advocate for this out of fear of blending the two forms of ministry (i.e., lay and ordained), and there are others who do so out of concern that a “new class” is being created in the Church, one of a “lower rank” of clergy.\(^{498}\)

To examine this issue thoroughly, let us examine the nature of the one who is ordained—or, looked at another way, what happens in ordination?

i. The Official Church on the Nature and Function of Priests

The first draft of Vatican II’s *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests* (entitled “On Clerics”) focused too exclusively on “the cultic model of thought that had dominated Catholic thought for centuries.”\(^{499}\) It “saw the priest as a sacred figure, a mediator between God and humanity. His whole identity revolved around offering the sacrifice of the Mass on behalf of the people. Thus the priest was ‘set apart’ from others—called to a special and more perfect state of holiness.”\(^{500}\) As a result, the council fathers required that it be expanded. The final version emphasizes the preaching, teaching, and leadership roles within the community in addition to the offering of the Eucharist. The document looks at the mission of the Church as a whole to situate the priest’s ministry within it; then, from the context of the priest’s ministry, it looks at the life of the priest.

Priests share in the ministry of, and are in service to, Christ the teacher, priest, and king, through which ministry “the Church here on earth is unceasingly built up into the People of God, the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit.”\(^{501}\) Priests can act in the person of Christ the head. They proclaim the Gospel and are “signed with a special character” through the Holy Spirit (*PO*, §2). Priests have a special role in the Church.


\(^{500}\) Ibid., 83.

“Exercising the office of Christ, the Shepherd and Head, and according to their share of his authority, priests, in the name of the bishop, gather the family of God together as a brotherhood enlivened by one spirit. Through Christ they lead them in the Holy Spirit to God the Father” (PO, §6).

Priests are also given special “spiritual power”: “For the exercise of this ministry, as for the other priestly duties, spiritual power is conferred upon them for the building up of the Church” (PO, §6). Teaching is also part of the “priestly mission” (PO, §11).

ii. Priestly Power and “Sacramental Character” as Ontological Change

The Council of Trent taught that an instant, indelible mark upon the soul was conferred at ordination. This was formulated not just in response to the Reformation, but also because the foundation for it had already been laid by the way that our notion of the priesthood had developed.

We saw in chapter 1 how the focus in the early Church on the foundation of sacrifice as ethics and the consequent emphasis on the priesthood as belonging to the whole faithful began to shift in the third century, and the terms “priest” and “sacrifice” came to describe the Eucharist and those ministers who presided over it. In addition, David Power posits that thought about the priesthood followed a new path in the Latin West beginning with Isidore of Seville (ca. 600–36 CE). Because the cultic priesthood was emphasized, the way of speaking about the priesthood changed: it focused on
“eucharistic and sacramental actions.’’

Isidore’s treatise on ecclesial office set the tone; in it he underscored the “sacramental action to sanctify things.”

This emphasis, according to Power, “moved the primary use of the language of priesthood in the Church to its application to the ordained.”

It was the Carolingians, Power asserts, who definitively put the focus on Eucharistic sacrifice: they drew stronger connections between the Levitical priesthood and the ordained priesthood. As the faith neared the end of the first millennium, the worthiness of ordained ministers was examined (as a result of widespread simony and concubinage). The resulting debates about the validity of a priest’s sacramental ministry as unconnected to his virtue helped to “define the priesthood more narrowly as a power to consecrate and offer sacrifice.”

The Scholastics, in defining the priesthood, emphasized that the priesthood is “focused on the eucharist,” is a “power,” and terminates in the priest rather than the bishop. The first element, a focus on the Eucharist, centered the ministry of the priesthood on liturgy; this tended to overlook the leadership and teaching functions of priests. Preaching was seen as preparing people for the Eucharistic table. The emphasis on the power of priests, Osborne tells us, led away from the New Testament aspect of “ministry as service.”

Paul McPartlan also says that the Scholastics’ focus on the


503 Ibid., 103.

504 Ibid., 103.

505 Ibid., 104.

506 Nichols, Holy Order, 85.

507 Ibid., 85.

508 Osborne, Priesthood, 208.
Eucharist, along with the delineation of the idea of transubstantiation, changed the notion of ordination. The role of the bishop began to be seen more as governmental: “The Eucharist, the real body, was the priest’s job; bishops governed the Church, the mystical body.”⁵⁰⁹ The Church’s structure was increasingly seen as a pyramid, with the pope at the top and lay people at the bottom.⁵¹⁰

Chauvet discusses the effects of this emphasis on priestly power. The Scholastics, when they separated the power to consecrate from the care of souls, furthered the detachment of the ordained priesthood from Scripture and the Church community.⁵¹¹ Also, the Pauline concept of many complementary charisms was eclipsed, and the nonordained members of the Church were seen only as receivers rather than contributors to the building up of the Church.⁵¹²

This is not to say that we did not need the clarification of the ideas that the period of the Scholastics gave us. My point is that some other notions were necessarily eclipsed while thought focused on other beliefs. Looking back from a contemporary standpoint, we can reclaim and reintegrate some of the ways of thinking which were lost while still taking advantage of refinements provided by the development of doctrine. One way that this might take place is in broadening our notion of what it means to be ordained and how the sacrament itself functions. Already growth in this area has happened and is still happening.

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⁵¹⁰ Ibid., 38.
⁵¹¹ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 471; e.g., Aquinas, *ST Suppl.*, q. 36, a. 2, ad 1.
The Reformation brought a storm of criticism against the Catholic notion of Holy Orders, and the reformers emphasized the priesthood of all believers.\textsuperscript{513} They denied the sacrament of Holy Orders and saw ministry as ordained by God—specialized human ministry was opposed to the one and only specialized ministry of the Word.\textsuperscript{514} Only preaching was seen as a legitimate ministry; all other activities were valuable only insofar as they contributed to preaching.\textsuperscript{515}

The sixteenth-century reformers, because of their different views on sacramental character and ordination, were intent on blurring the distinction between baptized and ordained ministers. One way they did this was to apply Christ’s functions of priest and king to spiritual matters rather than temporal concerns. Martin Luther joins the two functions together.\textsuperscript{516} According to him, all Christians have a share in the kingship and priesthood of Christ because of the “freedom they [Christians] have been given through Christ and their faith in him…the Christian is king and lord of all things spiritual and cannot be harmed by evil.”\textsuperscript{517} John Calvin, in his \textit{Institutes of the Christian Religion}, expressed the belief that baptized persons participate in the functions of the priesthood (offering and prayer), although no one other than Christ can be called a “priest.”\textsuperscript{518}

As Osborne observes, the Council of Trent asserted that the hierarchy was instituted by a divine decree, and the ranks contained therein do not contradict the unity
of the sacrament of Holy Orders. Bishops have special abilities, such as the power to ordain; but the pope could possibly empower priests to function as “extraordinary” ministers and thus give them the same duties as bishops, including ordaining. The Council of Trent allowed that the faithful could partake of Christ’s priesthood through sacrifice, but not that they could share actively in “Christ’s priesthood in the sacraments or in the Eucharist.”

In the Counter-Reformation period, the relationship between the office of bishop and the sacraments was acknowledged, although the theology for this relationship was not clarified. A unified Catholic priestly group had developed from 1850 onward, and this group now became more educated through the seminary system: a common priestly spirituality developed.

Power discusses the period immediately leading up to Vatican II, and he posits that “the French school associated with Saint Sulpice” had a strong influence on the way priestly spirituality developed—which, in turn, affected the terms chosen to explain the priesthood at Vatican II. The notion of the priesthood put forth by the school of Saint Sulpice was broad, and, according to Power, it “was based on the symmetry between activity and holiness of life.” Christ is a priestly mediator between humanity and God. He taught, healed, made sacrifice, and interceded. Priests by ordination must reflect these activities in their lives and must focus on their holiness of life in communion with Christ. The French School also emphasized the priesthood of all of the faithful because of the

519 Osborne, *Priesthood*, 278.
522 Ibid., 305–6.
524 Ibid., 108.
unity with Christ to which all of the baptized are called. These writers did not, however, have the faithful actively involved in liturgy.

The liturgical movement and the other developments in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (e.g., the writings of Lambert Beaudoin) brought to the fore “the active part of all the baptized in the life, liturgy, and mission of the Church.”525 The application of priestly terminology to presiding at the liturgy, however, limited the development of the notion of the priesthood of the faithful.526 This was somewhat improved by the Second Vatican Council.

Vatican II brought many changes in how we understand the clerical roles as well as our perception of the sacrament of Holy Orders itself. The Council of Trent stressed that Christian ministry should reflect Jesus’ own ministry, and this widened the priestly function beyond solely the administration of the sacraments.527 As Jesus was called by the Father, so are our ministers. The threefold office (sanctifying, preaching, and leading) is conferred through ordination, and the spiritual focus of the office should be one of love—the basis of Christ’s mission.528

Kenan Osborne’s commentary on current thoughts regarding sacramental theology explains that it has been defined that sacraments confer grace, but not how. In the Thomistic/Dominican view, the words and actions of the priest are “efficient instruments” used by God to “produce” grace.529 Theologians following a more Franciscan approach saw this notion of efficient causality to be a limitation on God’s

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525 Ibid., 108.
526 Ibid., 109.
528 Ibid., 339.
power and freedom—after all, God, they said, does not need tools to cause grace, which is a free gift from God. These Franciscan theologians were of two general camps themselves, some saying that the sacramentals such as a priest’s words, bread, etc., were “moral causes,” that they resulted in grace because they were a request for it—like a prayer. Others, following Scotus, said that sacramental grace comes about because of “occasional causality,” and so “when a community of Christians celebrates eucharist in the way that God has instructed, God gives grace not because of anything Christians do, but basically because God promised to give his grace on such occasions. It is the promise of God…that is the basis for sacramental grace.” Others, especially Jesuits, have nuanced or elaborated upon these basic approaches, but there is no official teaching of the Church regarding how grace comes from a sacrament. Still, from what the Church says about sacraments, we can know three things: “1. it is God who acts through the sacrament to give grace; 2. Christians can set up obstacles to grace, such as sin; and 3. Sacraments confer the grace they signify.”

Given the historical “character” items we have looked at and adding them to this current sacramental theology, I strongly suspect that the emphasis on the ontological change in the priestly character developed as a result of the notion of sacramental change in general and the particular “power” of the priesthood. That is, as priests became more “powerful,” able to effect magic, even, in the administration of the sacraments, and more separate from the rest of the community, the perception of their “differentness” and

530 Ibid., 170–71.
531 Ibid., 171.
532 Ibid., 171.
permanent status as “other-than” the rest of the body led to a strengthening of this notion of a permanent change in character.

iii. The Church on “Sacramental Character”

What does the Church say about the “character” conveyed through the sacraments? The position of the Church is similar to the one on how grace is conferred—there is a character imparted through Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders, but “what this character is has never been defined.”\(^533\) Church teaching about sacramental character is focused on the fact that these three sacraments (and Confirmation is included because of its “intrinsic connection” to Baptism) cannot be repeated.\(^534\) In my opinion, this lack of definition is probably for the best, since the character conferred or grace received is—in a postmodern view which sees each event as a distinctive and unrepeatable phenomenon—unique to the person and experience. And our language for speaking about it is limited and historical anyway. Kenan Osborne puts it thus:

> Every sacramental action…is exquisitely unique. There are no replicated sacramental actions. In each sacramental action the unique God is revealing something of God’s own self to unique selves, not to “sames.” Each self is unique and irreducible. The sacramental event is a moment involving a unique God and a unique self, at a unique time, in a unique place, in conjunction with others who are uniquely part of the…event. Solemn proclamations about some sort of “objective,” atemporal, ahistorical, nonexistent sacramentality become less and less hermeneutically meaningful as these proclamations move into an area of so-called atemporality, so-called ahistoricality, so-called nonexistentiality, so-called objectivity, all of these are only abstract generalizations about something that never exists, that never can exist.\(^535\)

\(^{534}\) Ibid., 175.
\(^{535}\) Ibid., 188.
He also notes later (citing Chauvet) that a sacramental event only occurs if there is a human response, and that “Sacramentality, in the dimension of its human response, is an event that is thoroughly existential, historical, temporal, singular, and unique. Universality, unsurpassability, and fullness are qualities only applicable to God.”\textsuperscript{536} It makes sense that sacramental action, because it expresses and impacts a human’s relationship with God, would be different from relationship to relationship. No human is the same as any other and no human’s relationship with God would be exactly the same, either.

iv. Roots of Sacramental Character

The crux here is the special character conferred on priests, briefly mentioned in Vatican II but not explained. Section 10 of \textit{Lumen Gentium} points out simply that the priesthood of all the faithful differs from the ministerial priesthood in “essence.”\textsuperscript{537} One can assume here that the Second Vatican Council is speaking of the permanent mark

\textsuperscript{536} Ibid., 196.
\textsuperscript{537} “Though they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless interrelated: each of them in its own special way is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ. The ministerial priest, by the sacred power he enjoys, teaches and rules the priestly people; acting in the person of Christ, he makes present the Eucharistic sacrifice, and offers it to God in the name of all the people. But the faithful, in virtue of their royal priesthood, join in the offering of the Eucharist. They likewise exercise that priesthood in receiving the sacraments, in prayer and thanksgiving, in the witness of a holy life, and by self-denial and active charity.”
made upon the soul that the Church has traditionally pointed to as an effect of the sacrament of Holy Orders (as well as that of Baptism and Confirmation). \(^ {538} \)

The ontological change effected by the sacrament of Holy Orders has often come under fire by postmodernists who, like (and often drawing from) Heidegger, point to the fact that growth is a process: you choose which potentiality you will become. The focus is then on temporality, on an ongoing event, and not just a single moment of grace or divine intervention. As you grow in the life of a priest, you become more priestly, these proponents assert. Then the question sometimes becomes, “Are these rituals such as ordination calling us to go forward as this type of a (priestly) person?”

v. Installations and Ordinations of LEMs

Ordination may leave some form of an indelible mark upon the ordinand, although we know very little about this permanent character. Still, this tells us something that informs our decision making about ordination for lay ministers. If ordination—as it is now—were allowed for them, it seems unlikely that many would want it. Lay ministers are a more transient population than priests. Most lay ministers will hold various positions in churches throughout their careers, and often they will come to their ministry later in life, perhaps after a second career or once the children are grown. They may leave Church ministry completely at some point too.

\(^ {538} \) Sullivan (Creative Fidelity, 131) provides us with the historical background of (and a critical commentary on) the concept of sacramental character in the canon from the Council of Trent, emphasizing that it is not defined dogma.
There could be some form of particular “commissioning to ministry” like an ordination that would be general and permanent, but I am not convinced this would be appropriate to a ministry where we expect more transience. And would it be meaningful to permanently commission someone to a ministry that they will eventually leave?

The advantage to rituals of authorization for LEMs over ordination is that the rituals respect the dignity of the individual’s vocation and acknowledge the authority of that LEM in that particular role within that particular diocese. At the same time, the rituals of authorization, as I am proposing them, understand the ministry in a different way than ordination does, in a way that underscores the possible transience of the role and position. The ecclesial relationships of the person have shifted, but this will not be permanently altered as happens in ordination when the priest enters into a new state in life. When the lay ecclesial minister and the congregation recognize their roles in service and obligation to each other, working together to bring the Gospel to the world can be much more fruitful. But surely we do not want to “ordain” LEMs if we continue to say that ordination initiates a permanent state in life. They may not be in this ministry for the rest of their lives.

O’Meara disagrees with my thoughts on ordination:

People and actions prepare a Christian to enter ministry in the church. For public, full-time ministry especially, but also for other part-time or assisting ministries, symbols, words, people, and movement come together in the constellation of public commissioning, a moment that is both climax and beginning, both charism and the source of further charism. A new theology of ministry cannot (as some Reformation traditions intended) turn ministry into laity nor eliminate ordination liturgies as excessively cultic. Just the opposite is needed….Ordination is a visible invocation and affirmation of charism, a celebration of the church’s diverse life and mission, a symbol of the Spirit present in the church. Ordination is sacrament

539 This whole notion of state in life in relation to ordination and LEM needs more development.
with celebratory liturgy and communal structure. Ordinations should be enhanced, not diminished; expanded, not reduced.  

It is true that grace lies behind all ministry and that we want to accomplish all the things in the latter half of O’Meara’s statement above. But the expression of the effects that O’Meara attributes to ordination, “a visible invocation and affirmation of charism, a celebration of the church’s diverse life and mission, a symbol of the Spirit present in the church,” can take many forms. Installation rituals can do this as well. O’Meara also says that “Ordination is sacrament with celebratory liturgy and communal structure.” While this is true, it is also true that “Installation is sacramental and includes celebratory liturgy and communal structure.” This can be done while leaving ordinations to bishops, priests, and deacons. Of course, any liturgical celebration can be a special vehicle for grace, and unless permanence as LEMs is somehow essential, I do not see why ordinations per se are needed. In fact, the “permanent character” of Holy Orders may be seen as a drawback to these ministers and can certainly set back our development of a theology of ministry.

vi. Possible Drawbacks to Equating Installations with Ordinations

Irrespective of whether or not ordaining LEMs is theologically sound, would LEMs want it? And would it be good for the development of our understanding of LEM as a whole? I think “ordination” terminology is best avoided, for two reasons. First, as already discussed in the preceding section, ordination connotes a permanency and a notion of vocation as a “state in life” that is not true for LEMs—our theological understanding of vocation has grown beyond the limited notions of vocations as “states-

\[^{540}\text{O’Meara, Theology of Ministry, 215–16.}\]
in-life.” The vocation of a LEM can be to be married or single, but the vocation also can be to a particular ministry. Second, LEMs can avoid other baggage that is currently weighing on ordained ministers by using “installations” instead of ordinations.

Regarding the first objection I have to ordinations for LEMs: the crux of the matter here is our notion of vocation, which, according to “Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord” and common sense, needs further development. Hahnenberg suggests that our notions of vocation as states in life are much too limited; and he is surely correct, especially when looking at LEMs. They are assorted ages, genders, races, and can be married or single. These roles are not the same as “the married, religious, ordained, or single” life. Vatican II emphasized that everyone has a vocation, which opened the concept beyond the four traditional vocations; but “despite this broadening, many of the older theological assumptions have remained in place.” Today we have a vast notion of vocation that basically means discipleship and a narrow one that is synonymous with God’s call to a state in life. Lay ecclesial ministers are in between. They are called to a direct ministry in the Church that feels like more than just the common call to discipleship (although, of course, grounded in baptism like all ministries), but their calling is certainly not the same as a state in life.

To address this dilemma, Hahnenberg suggests that we “begin by rethinking the strong identification between vocation and state of life.” We need to move from the static

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543 Ibid., 74.
language of states to something dynamic that allows for a “developmental sense of human life and commitment,” acknowledging that we “grow and change in and through our commitments.”544 Here is how Hahnenberg puts it:

The experience of lay ecclesial ministers breaks open an older identification between significant, public ministry and a state of life. Lay ecclesial ministry represents a call to a new way of doing ministry, but it also represents a new way of being a minister. For here we have a serious, long-term, full-time commitment to a position of ministerial leadership outside of the clerical state and distinct from religious life. But it will not do to imagine lay ecclesial ministry as a new vocation alongside (or overlaid on top of) priesthood, religious life, and married life—if our primary association is that of a state of life. And our theological response will founder if it expects a static status or the kind of permanent commitment from the individual that marks these other venerable vocations. Lay ecclesial ministry is not a state of life, but a living commitment.545

The other issue I pointed out with “ordinations” for LEMs, that of the “baggage” associated with ordination, is important. Ordained ministers are still too often seen as having authority “from above” (which can refer to both divine or hierarchical granting of authority), whereas “Lay ecclesial ministers serve in a leadership position relative to these many lay ministers active in the parish, providing direction and coordination for the efforts of all. Their ability to lead is a function of their use of the power and authority received from the followers.”546 It seems as if a revitalization of our notion of holy orders is in process and that our notion of the ordained priesthood may become less and less “top down”; but for the moment, this baggage is associated with the priesthood and may color the Church’s perception of LEMs as well, if they were ordained. So one difference between installations and ordinations, to my mind, is that installations can happen freed from the ways that the Church still seems to think of priests. The notion of lay ecclesial

544 Ibid., 74–75.
545 Ibid., 75.
minister installations can seem to the parishes accepting the ministers as a welcoming into the community of the parish instead of that minister seeming to be representative of the organization in the way that priests are. Zeni Fox, when looking at organizational models of leadership, looks at a model outlined by Peter Senge.

The understanding of leadership developed by Senge places an emphasis on the leader as within the community, part of the community, not standing outside it, certainly not above it. It is from within the body that the leader is able to exercise influence. Whereas at one time in history, a strongly hierarchical model of leadership was the norm in society, today there is greater and greater emphasis on participation in creating and working toward goals, and on leaders who are working with their communities in doing this.\textsuperscript{547}

As we progress toward a more community-based understanding of the priesthood, perhaps we will see our priests more and more in this light as well. At present, however, as I presented in chapter 1, we are still quite far from recovering this notion of priest as community member that stands with the community rather than somehow outside and above it. Installing our LEMs rather than ordaining them can allow for this to happen without the historical associations that priesthood has gathered over the centuries.

\textit{b. Objection #2: Can Rituals Express the Inexpressible?}

According to Chauvet, symbols can speak to human beings even before they begin to talk; it is similar to the way that stories can work on us at a level that is deeper than regular speech. Or, as Chauvet puts it, “What do novelists do but give voice to these many unperceived symbols which ‘make’ our daily life?”\textsuperscript{548}

Some will question whether it is possible to create a ritual expressing the inexpressible (which is a problem that some have with sacramental theology in general,

\textsuperscript{547} Ibid., 6.  
\textsuperscript{548} Chauvet, \textit{Sacraments}, 70.
too, of course). We can say things like “LEM is a vocation, and the minister is inspired by the Holy Spirit, the congregation is moved toward discernment for this minister,” etc.; but what can these statements really mean?

Yet expressing the inexpressible is exactly what ritual is for. Obviously, worship through liturgy cannot capture, for example, the entire essence of what it means to be inspired by the Holy Spirit (or even what the Holy Spirit truly is); but it can hint at these things. In the same way that we can only begin to grasp what the Holy Spirit is, we can only begin to see and feel what the action of the Holy Spirit is in our community, in our hearts, even within the Trinity. However, our endeavor is not pointless. In fact, the opposite is true. It is through liturgy and ritual that we can begin to hint at the mystery of the Trinity’s action. Liturgy is the vehicle of mystery and a good expression of that which cannot be said.

Merold Westphal’s discussion of the critique of ontotheology can be helpful here. His notion of speaking of God as a creator is helpful in the way that he attempts to allow for an assertion of God while retaining the mystery. In the same way, by analogy, but even better, ritual can convey truths but preserve mystery.

The believer might speak as follows: In affirming God as Creator I am affirming that there is an explanation of the whole of being and I am pointing in the direction of that explanation; but I am not giving it, for I do not possess it. To do that I would have to know just who God is, and just how and why God brings beings into being out of nothing. But both God’s being and God’s creative action remain deeply mysterious to me. They are answers that come loaded with new questions, reminding me in Heideggerian language that unconcealment is always shadowed by concealment, or in Pauline language that I only see “through a glass, darkly” (or “in a mirror, dimly,” 1 Cor. 13:12). My affirmation of God as Creator is not onto-theological because it is not in the service of the philosophical project.
of rendering the whole of being intelligible to human understanding, a project I have ample religious reasons to repudiate. 549

The Christian religion is a symbolic faith, an incarnational and “enfleshed” faith. In it, ritual actions are “understood in their integrity”—i.e., in the context of the “liturgical components whereby they are celebrated.” 550 Rituals allow us to both adopt and express the belief that God touches our lives.

David N. Power posits that only liturgy demonstrates how God’s presence can be experienced in and through the limitedness of language and symbol. Liturgy is the Church’s activity and its self-expression, since it is through liturgy that the Church’s belief in the Gospel and the mediation of grace is given form. Liturgy from our long tradition offers that which “precedes any such expression. It is what is passed…through a living tradition from the time of the community of first believers who were chosen to be the witnesses of the teaching, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.” 551

Liturgy shapes us as Christians, forming us into a community and transmitting beliefs that we cannot intellectually understand. It is forming us as a community and as individuals in ways that go beyond what can be imparted in our university classrooms. In this same way, grace, which cannot be grasped by human understanding, is a free gift of God that can only be explained symbolically; and the granting of grace and our response can be expressed, albeit in a limited form, symbolically in the liturgy. 552

What Power sees conveyed in the liturgy is an opening up to the mystery that is grace rather than the dispensation of grace. Faith in Christ, expressed in words, actions, objects, etc., is part of the liturgy and is a response to the invitation we are all given to enter (through Christ) into the communion with God—but this invitation, the process of entering, the gifting that occurs, the consequences of participating in the acceptance of this invitation, for example, is all beyond our imagination, understanding, and speech. Despite these limitations, “symbolic language is the only access to dealing with certain experiences, such as evil, since they are not available for philosophical thought and reasoned explanation by reason of their negative nature.” Symbol and word are our only access to the real and give way to true worship. We must be careful not to allow a preoccupation with rubrics, etc., to lead us to a reductionistic approach—to make us think that we grasp all of what is happening.

Clearly ritual and the liturgies they form can be meaningful and express (in a way deeper than that of language) truths about LEM in general and the ministers and the community in particular. But how can we know what kind of rituals we should have? How can we formulate these? What might these rituals look like?

V. Conclusion

It is clear from our examination that the seven sacraments are not our only sacramental experiences. Liturgies in many forms can be sacramental experiences or

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554 Ibid., 99.
sacramental celebrations; and clearly liturgical celebration of the vocation, call, and particular role in a parish of a particular lay ecclesial minister can bring about, or make more present, the grace associated with these aspects.\textsuperscript{556} At the same time, I hesitate to propose concrete alternative sacramental rituals—it would be irresponsible for one person to do this without the consultation of the community. And indeed, the rituals and liturgies would have to be flexible and allow for variations among cultures, etc. Even within the narrowed topic of this work, which focuses on North American Catholic LEMs and their communities, there will exist variation between the various dioceses and parishes about what meaning is conveyed through which actions, items, and all the various sacramentals.

So is the endeavor to formulate some meaningful rituals pointless? Certainly not. As we review rituals in the past, make a study of some present rituals, and explore sacramentals that are meaningful within the general North American culture, we can underscore some significant elements that might be included to convey some of the important theological truths that have been developing. Without proposing actual sacramental liturgies, we can allow parishes and dioceses the freedom to adopt forms that are useful to them.\textsuperscript{557}

\textsuperscript{556} Bernard J. Lee expresses this tension well in the preface to his edited volume: “The liturgical rite is but one moment in this thicker-than-rite sacramentalization of life. It is a privileged moment though. Ritual is a moment of high value if it illuminates and intensifies the meaning of sacrament.” \textit{Alternative Futures for Worship: The Eucharist}, ed. Bernard J. Lee (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1987), 10.

\textsuperscript{557} Power is supportive of this as well, when he acknowledges that theoretical discussions about liturgy and culture are many in number, but “it is in the practice of worship that one sees what is involved and from it that insight is gained into the process and its norms. Innovations found serviceable in any church provide models for other churches as they endeavor to assess their own developments.” See David N. Power, “Foreword,” in F. Kabasela Lumbala’s \textit{Celebrating Jesus Christ in Africa: Liturgy and Inculturation} (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), ix.
How do we go about formulating rituals? Should we simply think of some theological bases for some rituals, imbue them with meaning by describing their significance, and then make some prescriptive recommendations for what must be included in the installation of a LEM? No: surely it is clear that liturgies and rituals must evolve. They develop slowly and over time while that which is meaningful to a culture is retained and the outdated—and thus less than meaningful—becomes transformed into that which fits the cultural context. Rituals in general are recurring gestures and words that have been standardized in social activities, but they can still have various meanings according to the angle at which they are examined. The meaning of a ritual is “partly predetermined by the surrounding culture but…, at the same time, does not say too much, so that individuals or communities can get in touch with what is relevant to them while expressing a variety of meanings.”

That rituals can mean different things does not mean they are not necessary. On the contrary, they are essential to human life and culture. Ritual allows us to preserve and pass on our cultural traditions; at the same time, it forms a bridge to the changes within the community. In fact, it is often through the development of ritual that change begins to happen—and this is certainly the case when the changed aspect of a culture becomes part of the tradition that is preserved through ritual. Ronald Grimes summarizes some of the reasons that we must have rituals: “Without rites that engage our imaginations, communities, and bodies, we lose touch with the rhythms of the human life course, just as

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we become temporally disoriented without seasonal and commemorative rites that recreate our connections to the natural world and the course of human history." 561 Ritual shapes and expresses personal and communal identity, not only through what it expresses in its sensible form, but also through what lies beyond the sensible.

Liturgies can teach, and help expand upon, the theology of ministry. Transmitting theology through liturgical installations will help our understandings become more a part of the deposit of faith. It has long been acknowledged that liturgical catechesis "aims to initiate people into the mystery of Christ…by proceeding from the visible to the invisible, from the sign to the thing signified, from the ‘sacraments’ to the ‘mysteries’" (CCC §1075).

Unfortunately, however, the connection between liturgy and catechetics is not often capitalized upon. The General Directory for Catechesis says that all too often, the "practice of catechetics testifies to a weak and fragmentary link with the liturgy [including] limited attention to liturgical symbols and rites." 562 This same document points out that "Catechesis is intrinsically bound to every liturgical and sacramental action." 563 By bringing people from the visible to the invisible and from sign to signified, liturgy helps our lives intersect with God’s mystery (and encounter God’s self-communication through Christ); it helps us acknowledge God’s action in our lives. How should this inform our liturgical celebration as we consider the role of a lay ecclesial

minister? Are there ways to preserve, develop, and transmit in the liturgy the theological notions of vocation, gifts of the Holy Spirit, call, and response? Are there certain ritual elements that can aid us as a Church in upholding the integrity of our theological notion of the mission and vocation of LEMs?

To answer these questions we must look at past, current, and possible future liturgical installations of LEMs. What have we learned? What seems to work well and accomplish our liturgical goals of fostering human communication with the Holy Spirit and can potentially increase the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the minister for that particular parish ministry? That is, by the communal liturgical celebration of the vocation of a minister, that minister’s tools for the vocation (“gifts”) could be increased. And the congregation, by their participation in this divine-human celebration, will also take part in the subsequent leadership within the parish of the minister.
Chapter 4. Ritual Installations of LEMs: Formalizing the Relational Transformation

I. Introduction

Thus far in the work we have seen that LEMs in U.S. Catholic parishes are growing in number and leadership roles; traced the theological and liturgical development of LEMs in Scripture and Church documents, especially noting references to their roles and authorization/recognition; analyzed selected theological treatments of LEM with a focus on authorization/recognition; and explored the meaning of, and potential inherent in, ritual and liturgical celebrations.

Throughout this project we have seen that there are tensions (in the whole Church and in local churches) due to the expansion of LEMs. Here we will address these tensions, discovering how to develop and communicate the theology behind the significance and roles of LEMs, helping LEMs and congregations understand more intentionally why and how the LEMs are a gift and have important contributions. In this chapter we will also explore how theological development and communication could result in a better understanding of LEM in general, LEMs in particular, the relationship between LEMs and their receiving congregations, and the relationship between ordained and nonordained ministers. Furthermore, we will examine how liturgical installations—which, I will argue, are sacramental and thus transformative—can alter these relationships, helping to actualize the potential of our LEMs and the Catholic Church.

At the root of my argument for the necessity of liturgical installations for LEMs is an application of liturgical and sacramental theory, and, in turn, much of our understanding of what transpires in liturgical and sacramental theory comes from
phenomenology, given that this field of study has examined how, and what, transpires in the particular phenomena of sacramental liturgy. So I will begin my study with an examination of the liturgy and its relationship to the Church and then discover ways to carefully adapt liturgy to express and create new truths (so that, in the next chapter, I can, while staying within these guidelines and operating according to these principles, actually adapt liturgy to the situation of LEMs).

The understanding of liturgy and the relationship changes that it can effect, as conveyed in this chapter, will be critical for my argument that we need liturgical installations of LEMs. When the implications of what we know about the results, or “effect,” of liturgy are brought to bear on the situation of LEMs (both in parishes and ecclesiologically), it will become clear that liturgical installations can, in fact, ease the growing pains that are happening within the Church as its ecclesiological structure expands and the number of LEMs grow rapidly.

Alexander Schmemann points to liturgy as bringing about the Church and breaking into that which is to come, and the implications of this for our argument that LEMs need to have a transformative liturgy are important since this “bringing into being” could be seen (and I posit that it should be) as creating not only the Church, but also “creating” LEMs. Liturgists and sacramental theologians, including Power and Chauvet, have set down guidelines for formulating rituals and resymbolizing rites that will guide us in formulating and adapting liturgy (and its specific rituals). We will then apply our knowledge of liturgy, both theoretical and practical, specifically to the case of LEM. A main question of this chapter will be “How can we preserve, develop, and transmit through liturgy the theological underpinnings for a theology of ministry such as the
notions of vocation, gifts of the Holy Spirit, and call, upholding the integrity of our theological notion of the mission and vocation of LEMs?”

Liturgy can mean many things. Anscar J. Chupungco in his contribution to The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship (entitled “Inculturation”) defines liturgy as a ritual action that is a “confluence of texts, gestures, material objects, music, time, and space.”564 Liturgy, and its constitutive ritual, is ideal for forming theology and passing it on, as well as transforming relationships of ministers and congregations.

Roy A. Rappaport takes this notion of ritual that informs theology even further: he says that ritual creates religion. He draws together anthropology, history, communication theory, philosophy, religion, and other fields to conclude that religion is made through ritual: “religion’s major conceptual and experiential constituents, the sacred, the numinous, the occult and the divine, and their integration into the Holy, are creations of ritual.” He characterizes “ritual as a structure, that is, a more or less enduring set of relations among a number of general but variable features.”565 Rappaport describes the nature of liturgy as ritual activity, and emphasizes that it is where the people of God share in the life of God. In addition, he points out that the liturgy has a social dimension in that we reach beyond the assembly and participate in God’s work through ministry.

Developing and communicating knowledge, especially that which is preconceptual—nonpropositional—can happen through the body in liturgy. Catherine Bell, a well-known pioneer in the field of ritual studies, says that rituals are different

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from conceptual ideas within religion.\textsuperscript{566} They “formalize” community gatherings by following a regular pattern, which she describes as “following a fixed agenda and repeating that activity at periodic intervals.”\textsuperscript{567}

Rituals, as fundamentally nonconceptual in nature, engage the body at a level different than that of the mind. Bell writes that rituals admit of “critical circularity” so that when the body participates in ritual it not only expresses an inner state, it brings it about. For example, Bell says, “required kneeling does not just communicate subordination to the kneeler…kneeling produces a subordinated kneeler in and through the act itself.”\textsuperscript{568} David Power agrees that rituals can accomplish both of these purposes, although some just do one. Following Ronald Grimes, he distinguishes between instrumental and expressive rituals. The first type attempts to accomplish something and the second simply communicates feelings or ideas.\textsuperscript{569} This distinction seems limited to me—if a ritual successfully communicates a feeling or idea, it has brought something into being, even if that something is simply an idea. It would make sense if this distinction came about simply as a way to be able to describe the effects of rituals rather than limit certain effects to certain rituals.

Alexander Schmemann, a well-known liturgist and Orthodox priest (and observer for the Orthodox of the Second Vatican Council), says that the liturgy brings the Church into being.\textsuperscript{570} It both actualizes the presence of the Church and hints at future

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\textsuperscript{567} Ibid., 92.
\textsuperscript{568} Ibid., 100.
\textsuperscript{569} Power, \textit{Unsearchable Riches}, 89.
\textsuperscript{570} Schmemann says that through liturgy we are able “to realize the church by revealing her (to herself and to the world) as the epiphany of the Kingdom of God.”
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manifestation: i.e., liturgy both brings about, and intimates, future presence. So the Church, in this view, is eschatological—it belongs to that which is yet to come.

Schmemann insists that we cannot practice theology apart from the liturgy, especially the Eucharist. The separation of theology from liturgy, he says, is due to the “‘westernizing influence.’” Theology in his context includes the liturgy: it is the insights of the community gathered together and rooted in the liturgy, the expression of the “Paschal Mystery in all its cosmological and eschatological significance.” The West looked at—and so experienced—the sacraments and the liturgy functionally. The result of this separation was to compartmentalize the sacraments, “dividing them up into seven individual events (moments) in the life of the Christian, thus severing their more unified relationship to Baptism and Eucharist.”

When these are united, however, and theology is rooted in liturgy, “the schema of world, Church, and Kingdom” is understood as a unified source from which the Church is anticipated, brought forth, and manifested as the eschatological Kingdom of God. The liturgy in Schmemann’s thought, then, is the point at which the present erupts into the world to come: “This Kingdom, which for ‘this world’ is yet to come and forms the ultimate horizon of its history, is already present (revealed, communicated, accepted, ...) in the Church. And it is liturgy which accomplishes this presence and this parousia, and


571 Michael J. Woods, “Ecclesiology and Eschatology in the Eucharistic Theology of Alexander Schmemann” (a thesis submitted to the Faculty of the School of Religious Studies and Theology of the Catholic University of America, 2004), 110–11. While Schmemann is Eastern Orthodox, his insights are helpful to Catholicism.

572 Ibid., 111–12.

573 Ibid., 111.

574 Ibid., 112.
which, in this sense (in its totality) is the *sacrament of the church* and thus the *sacrament of the Kingdom.*\(^{575}\)

Let us apply this thought to the installation of LEMs. Our theology of LEM stems from liturgy—and the Church is anticipated, brought forth, and manifested in the liturgy. This notion can underscore the potential that liturgy has for LEM. When Schmemann says that the Church is brought forth in the liturgy, this would have to be an ongoing happening. That is, because the liturgy is ongoing and continually (or at least repeatedly) happening, the Church must be continually being created. It is a dynamic “creating.” Because of this, the liturgy could be an important vehicle for the re-creation of relationships in the Church. Again, in the continual creation and expression of the Church that is the liturgy, relationships would be continually expressed and re-expressed. As a result, two things (at least) can happen: wounds can be healed and new relationships emerge. Bringing this to bear on our understanding of the need for the resituation of relationships given the changing dynamic within ministry caused by the influx of LEMs and decline in ordained ministers, we can see that the liturgy provides a lot of potential for the re-expression and re-creation of relationships.

In the same way that the Church can be brought forth in the liturgy, as Schmemann says, so, too, can the one body of Christ be recreated in the liturgy—transformed. He says that “the schema of world, Church, and Kingdom” is understood as a unified source from which the Church is as the eschatological kingdom of God.\(^{576}\)


\(^{576}\) Ibid., 112.
liturgy in Schmemann’s thought, then, is the point at which the present erupts into the world to come, and in our thinking we can envisage the liturgy as the point at which the present Church and the Church-to-come meet; the liturgy can be a point of contact between the present situation of LEM in the Church and the future that is LEM in the Church. Liturgy both manifests and creates ministry.

For liturgy to manifest and create ministry, it must be relevant so that it can manifest and create culture. David Power speaks of liturgies as “new cultural creations,” since when revising liturgy you do not just add new elements to old liturgies, but instead liturgy emerges, and forms, a culture: “Revising liturgies is no simple matter of incorporating some ritual actions or images into the Roman liturgy; in the long run the question is whether the Roman tradition or the new local rites or liturgical families are in the process of emerging as new cultural creations.” This cultural relevancy is important for liturgy to be efficacious—both in its worship aspect and in its teaching aspect. In our particular case of formulating/adapting rituals for LEMs, an important focus to keep in mind is the purposes of identity formation and congregational education, since these two tasks are so needed right now—i.e., as our numbers of, and theology of, LEMs grow, so too does our need for developing a theology of LEM and expressing this theology, both to the ministers themselves and to the receiving congregations. The liturgical elements in liturgical installations of LEMs will need to come from, and create anew, the culture of the Church. Let us look at how ritual (which, remember, is the building-block of liturgy when celebrated in community) works—that is, how is it that liturgy can help us to

accomplish these lofty goals of forming and communicating theology and new ministerial
and congregational relationships?

II. **Liturgy as Community and Identity Formation through Grace and Transformation**

*a. A Sampling of Liturgy in Church Tradition*

_Sacrosanctum Concilium_ demonstrates the expectation for participation in the
liturgy—the community is to go beyond cognitive and verbal participation and involve
their bodies as well. The document says: “To promote active participation, the people
should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody,
antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures and bodily attitudes” (_SC_ §30). This
notion of the importance of liturgy and involvement of the body is not new, of course.
Saint Paul, in his Letter to the Romans (12:1–2), emphasizes the bodiliness of worship: “I
appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your
bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.
Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so
that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Joseph Fitzmyer, in his _Jerome Biblical Commentary_ article on this letter, says
that in the selection (from Saint Paul) above that literally says “your bodies,” the verb
refers to giving something to another, but also has the nuance of “offering, presenting,
something in a sacrificial context.” Since this is in the context of the phrase that
immediately follows: “as a living sacrifice,” we can see that bodily involvement is
important because it impacts the thoughts and disposition of the person. Note this, because it can help support my assertion that bodily involvement forms ministers.

Fitzmyer sums up this section of the letter saying that “Christians who strive to do what is right give a cultic sense to their lives. Paul implicitly compares them to animals slaughtered in Jewish or pagan cults, but adds a distinguishing note that their entire offering of themselves is alive and living.” This entire offering could not be complete without bodily worship. The liturgy cannot end with this internal and heavenly focus, either. The next verse, 12:3, says “For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned,” and then the next several verses are familiar to the reader from chapter 2 of this work, when we talked about how the Church is one body with many members who all have different gifts that are complementary but varied.

Timothy Brunk, in his exegesis of Romans 12:1–2, summarizes Paul’s view this way: “the body, inhabited by the Spirit and given life by the Spirit, is the place of servitude and the place of sacrifice.” According to Brunk’s work with this, Paul views the body as the site of liturgical practice. Paul’s perspective on the body extends well beyond the need for participation in the rites of the liturgy—it includes making the life of Jesus visible in those same bodies. In 2 Corinthians 4:10–11, Paul says that we are, ideally, “always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also

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be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh.”

According to Saint Paul, then, in this section, all “apostles” are called to live as Christ did, and our body should function in this same way. A person’s life “has a twofold aspect just as did Christ’s here on earth: one of continual dying through which it contributes to the realization among men of the redeeming death of Christ; the other of spiritual successes that show the efficacy of the redemption and the consequent diffusion of grace among those who, being justified, await future glory.”

b. Liturgy as “Body”: Communal and Individual Identity Formation

Sources other than Scripture within the Church speak of what it means to be embodied and how the Church is formed into one body. Some liturgists and phenomenologists have analyzed what happens in the phenomenon of liturgy and concluded that liturgy helps to form the faithful’s “selves”—both communally and individually. Let us follow this liturgical and phenomenological thought because it is at the foundation of one of my assertions: that liturgy can form the identity of the minister as “minister” and shape the community’s acceptance of the minister’s authority through empowerment by the body, the corporate Church.

Nathan Mitchell, the renowned liturgist, insists that it is at liturgy that the congregation receives their identity. Liturgy is not the same as culture, but happens within culture and is mediated by culture. Mitchell defines culture as: “the sum total of all

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the ways human persons interact and live together.” Culture, he says, is not simply the context for liturgy, but it is “the indispensable means by which [people] recognize and respond to God’s action among them.” In this same way, liturgy—which is transformed by and also transforms culture—helps form and is formed by the identities of the leaders and participants—by all of the members of the culture.

So liturgy conveys that which cannot be explained in words or measured by reason. But it also conveys things that might not be felt consciously. Jean-Yves Lacoste (a phenomenologist who adapts Heidegger’s revision of Husserlian phenomenology in his essay “Liturgy and Coaffection”) takes prayer and focuses on the community in liturgy, pointing out that there is an implicit and an explicit “we” in liturgy (just think of “we” in the recitation of the Creed at Mass, for example, which is explicit but conveys the implicit “we”). He phenomenologically explores the implicit “we” that is made explicit in liturgy, insisting that through understanding the “we” that is part of liturgy, we can understand better both the nature of liturgy and what is happening in it.

In Lacoste’s examination of the existence of the “we” prior to a person feeling the existence of the others in liturgy, he emphasizes that the other person is always and already there with me, before I even wonder if that person is there. That is, the experience of liturgy occurs prior to any distinctions between subject and object. Lacoste

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582 Jean-Yves Lacoste, “Liturgy and Coaffection,” in The Experience of God: A Postmodern Response, ed. Kevin Hart and Barbara Wall (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 93–103. Just to contextualize Lacoste’s discussion of the “we”: in this essay Lacoste is addressing the human experience of distance from God and positing that the fact that we have liturgy demonstrates that there is a sense of distance between God and humans. We have common gestures and words because of our desire for there to be an Absolute.
583 Ibid., 101–2.
describes it thus: “He who reaches the liturgical experience allows for an appearing of the ‘with’ that exceeds its common appearing.”\textsuperscript{584} Instead, the others present are no longer others—even though we may not experience God or one another at the level of feeling, through liturgy the “withness” happens at a deeper level. This is important to my examination because this notion of a being-with that is already there no matter the emotions one feels, supports my conclusion-to-come that liturgy forms people, plural, into a “one”—and that this would be the case whether or not there were a strong sense in each individual of unity during the liturgical celebration.

Lacoste is helpful to my argument for liturgical installations for LEMs in another way. He emphasizes that what happens in liturgy is more than just representations of events or items. While there is “sensation and perception” in liturgical celebration, the “visible, audible, [and] tangible” elements point to what is beyond the “horizon of the world,” beyond the “realm of representation.”\textsuperscript{585} What happens in liturgy is a rupture. “The things of the liturgy are not the sole beings to be things (even the most profane work of art, for example, also exists in the nonobjective mode of the thing). The things of the liturgy are nevertheless nonobjects in a pure state. They are signs and symbols.”\textsuperscript{586} So Lacoste here is saying that what happens in liturgy is more than we can imagine. It is a mystery.

We can, Lacoste insists, experience mystery—we do it, rather than contemplate it.\textsuperscript{587} When we keep this in mind, we can avoid the errors of “objectifying manipulation”

\textsuperscript{584} Ibid., 103.
\textsuperscript{585} Ibid., 97.
\textsuperscript{586} Ibid., 97.
\textsuperscript{587} Ibid., 98. He is drawing on Maria Laach’s axiom of “A mystery is something one does, and not something one contemplates.”
and “representational consciousness.” In liturgy, humans do not exist “in the mode of subject,” nor ask if the other person does. In liturgy a person is not faced by the other person. Lacoste says, “The liturgy is a brotherly work in common—it is a pure case of existence as coexistence, of Dasein as Mitdasein. Beyond subject and object, beyond subjectivity and intersubjectivity, the liturgical space is that of a recall and an affirmation.”

It is the place where the “we” is expressed in the “with” “that governs the relations among men and where we verify the pre-objective familiarity that governs the relation of men and things.” Further, the place where we encounter strangeness in the sacrament and the manifestation of the “existential primacy of the ‘with’” is in a new way—in a different mode—in ways that are “not included in the logic of the fundamental words of the experience.”

Liturgy, though happening within the world, can hint at the “ultimate realities.” It makes words “un-everyday” yet in the everyday world. There is a being-with that exceeds the normal “with.” Lacoste puts it thus:

Ritualized, codified, cantillated, the words of the liturgy set themselves at a distance from ordinary words. That he who prays says the prayer of the church or that he speaks in the name of Christ, these words are words that “they” cannot utter. Put at the service of praise, the words say and seal the unity of a “we.” To utter them is to open a discursive space where only the important belongs. The liturgy makes words un-everyday.

Because of this, the liturgical assembly becomes a community. The praying together forms a community in which “communion is the fact of the living among them, it is also the fact of the living and the dead, the assembly of those who are and those who

588 Ibid., 98.
589 Ibid., 98.
590 Ibid., 98.
591 Ibid., 99.
were, a unity that knows no barrier, neither temporal nor spatial.” The visible liturgy is so much more—it is “the image of an invisible: of the ‘with’ over which death no longer exercises any right of preemption.”

In liturgy we pray “with,” and are open to all those with whom we do so, “visible and invisible, near and far, known and unknown, nameable and anonymous.” This is true even if one does not have the affective “feeling” of communion and unity. Affectively speaking, when the “with” in the liturgy does have that feeling of “being-at-peace or of shared joy and the like,” we have intimations of our ultimate destiny, and it “signifies here and now an order of experience that is no longer that of the world, an order of manifestation that exceeds all being-in-the-world.” This allows for a rupture, a transcendence, and a finding of ourselves together that is beyond theory. This being together is not particularly an experience—or, as Lacoste puts it, the being-together in liturgy is too full of experiential content to be thought of as a particular experience. In liturgy we can formulate the goal of true interrelatedness since the “present of the liturgy can harbor more than co-being-there. We can form the goal of perfect communion (of being as being-toward, of existence lived integrally as ‘relation,’ etc.).”

Lacoste helps us see the communion and transcendence that confronts us when we are a worshipping liturgical community. Michael J. Scanlon emphasizes that this liturgy takes place in a cultural context. In Catholicism, Scanlon says, the experience of God is expressed through the “intersubjectivity of a community that celebrates its liturgy with

592 Ibid., 99.
593 Ibid., 99.
594 Ibid., 99–100.
595 Ibid., 100–101.
596 Ibid., 101.
597 Ibid., 101.
critical attention to the culture of which it is a part.” Liturgical reform must happen with concurrent efforts “to reform the culture in which it is embedded.” Because “worship and witness” accompany each other, they must be reformed together, and success in reforming worship and witness will be limited and provisional since our cooperation with the “Gift” is only made possible for us by the “Impossible,” the divine. This gift then becomes our ethical responsibility to spread: “In and through each other we may experience the Impossible Who graciously becomes possibility for us.” This notion of ethical responsibility is important to my discussion of the liturgical installation of LEMs because, in fact, we must ask if prayer (and, for our purposes, communal prayer that takes place in liturgy) carries with it an ethical obligation? And if it does, then what might some of the obligations of the Catholic Church (and, for that matter, the congregation in which the lay ecclesial minister operates) to one of its LEMs be? The same question applies to the reverse: What would some ethical obligations of LEMs to the Church and their specific congregation be? Let us now look at the phenomenological theory regarding ethical obligations so we can address the above questions in the next chapter.

c. Ethical Obligations Conveyed through Liturgy

It is important to note that there is more to the nature of liturgy beyond our encounter with God and becoming community. In “Praise—Pure and Personal,” Christina M. Gschwandtner draws on Emmanuel Levinas and Jean-Luc Marion to underscore not only the communal and liturgical function of prayer, but also its ethical significance.

Marion, she tells us, writes of prayer in two ways: “On the one hand, he focuses on the function of prayer and on the kind of language it employs. On the other hand, he describes the phenomenon of prayer as a loving exchange of gazes between the praying person and God.”

In Marion’s notion of prayer, she says, two gazes “cross each other, hold each other in balance as they weigh upon each other,” and she points out the similarity of this depiction of the phenomenology of prayer to Marion’s description of the erotic relationship.

For Marion, we need distance to be in relationship, so there is a gap between those in relationship. The Trinity has this distance as well. God is present in the distance but this is the opposite of “ontological difference,” which makes the “referent disappear.” Distance guarantees Otherness and becomes our longing, our desire for the other and for relatedness, and allows for the invitation of participation. “The icon upholds the distance between the image and the imaged, making the invisible present (absent) in the visible....In Christian revelation, the power of the icon consists in making visible the invisible mystery of the Word incarnate. The icon brings to visibility, the invisible reality of God. This takes place through a crossing of the gazes on the ‘face.’”

The face is the crossing of the visible and invisible: “With the face (painting) iconically understood, we have a crossing of the gazes in the icon (in the visible), i.e., the (invisible) gaze of the one

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600 Sebastian Madathummuriyil, Sacrament as Gift: A Pneumatological and Phenomenological Approach (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters Press, 2012), 185; see also Marion, The Idol and Distance, 153–54.

601 Ibid., 186.
in prayer…and the gaze (invisible) of the benevolent one. Thus, two invisible gazes cross in the icon of the face.”

This crossing of gazes of which Marion speaks cannot, Gschwandtner points out, “possibly be accomplished by more than the two gazes involved.” While Marion attempts to draw on Levinas to say that prayer is communal, his depiction is, Gschwandtner says, instead, personal and individual. In act, she says, this kind of prayer (the only kind Marion describes) leaves “the praying person…alone with God and invisible to the world. Such prayer cannot happen within community,” she says, “and in effect it serves to shut out the fellowship of others, since it exists in splendid isolation—a soul intoxicated with its individual mystical experience of divine love.” In his defense, Marion does say that liturgy brings an individual to prayer and that the gaze can be seen by others prior to the crossing of the invisible by the visible. Gschwandtner even acknowledges that Marion says that in liturgy we are brought to “the ‘decision’ of ‘accepting to pray,’ which ‘signifies allowing the other to observe my gaze.’”

Given the fact that the crossing of gazes that Marion claims happens in prayer is not a completely private or individual experience (it can be observed prior to the meeting of the two invisible gazes), which means that other can, in some way, participate in it, in my opinion it still seems to be a depiction of a shared and possibly communally transformative experience.

Even if Gschwandtner is correct in positing that a focus on individualism is an unintended limitation within Marion’s work (i.e., if he does try to say prayer is

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602 Ibid., 186, cf. see also Marion, The Crossing of the Visible, 1.
603 Ibid., 174.
604 Ibid., 176.
communal, but is unable to phenomenologically analyze communal prayer), it does not
limit our exploration of the ethical responsibility of liturgical prayer—because clearly
Marion believes that prayer can be communal and this is a future direction for expanding
his work. Indeed, Gschwandtner attempts to draw out the implications of the ethical
responsibility of prayer. Her critique of Marion’s isolation in prayer gives us what we
need: an outflow of prayer (i.e., a response) that is communal. I see no problem with
saying that the same response is called for by liturgical prayer, despite the (possible)
limitations in Marion’s phenomenological analysis of communal prayer.

Gschwandtner insists that prayer should ideally transform our way of living in the
world, not only “the subjective mental or emotional state of the individual at prayer.”605
There should be an ethical dimension to prayer: prayer connects believers and “shapes
them into a people commissioned to transform their world. In prayer, people cease to be
isolated individuals and participate in each other.”606 They become one in their prayer
and thus something new. In liturgy the world becomes more the communion it should be
and in Christian prayer, this transformation is Eucharistic.607

The Eucharistic transformation is described by Gschwandtner in two ways: as
eschatological (“the Church’s transformation into the body of Christ is ongoing and never
fully accomplished”) and performative (since “the liturgical prayers of the community are
centered around the performance of the Eucharist”).608 The bread that is broken is the
body of Christ that can only happen within the body of Christ that is the Church. This is
possible only if the individual believers actually cease to be isolated selves and become

605 Ibid., 176.
606 Ibid., 176.
607 Ibid., 176.
608 Ibid., 176.
one body. Prayer then, has a performative function—it is transformative. Gschwandtner asserts that prayer is transformative in two ways: first, the worshipping community “gathered in that particular time and space” become transformed in that they become a new people and, secondly, “the world that they carry to God in their prayer and that they reenter as they leave” is transformed. This worldly transformation happens as a result of the first change. It is because they have become a “new people” that they then try to change the world, “to transform it also into its eschatological reality, to make it become that which it shall be.”\(^{609}\) This prayer is public in that it is accomplished together and visibly through the bodily involvement of individuals and through the liturgical actions that are involved in communal prayer.\(^{610}\)

Marion clearly believes in the power of communal prayer and points to the transformative nature of the Eucharist. In *Prolegomena to Charity*, Marion (while looking at the Ascension) connects presence and blessing:

> Only in the disciples’ blessing of God can God become present and be recognized. The gift of God’s presence is given when it is received as gift and blessed in that reception. In recognizing the gift and blessing it within the temple, the disciples are transformed into Christ and become themselves a paschal gift of presence. They imitate Christ’s gift, repeat his sacrifice, and become “actors of presence.” Marion links the body of Christ that has ascended into heaven to the body of the Eucharist and to the disciples constituting Christ’s body as the Church. This gift of presence can be assimilated when it is recognized as such in prayer and blessing.\(^{611}\)

This gift of presence, recognized in prayer and blessing, should then be expressed in mission. The disciples must act like Christ and perform the mission of Christ. The community is newly created by the Resurrection and must complete the drama, bringing

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\(^{609}\) Ibid., 174–75.  
\(^{610}\) Ibid., 175.  
\(^{611}\) Ibid., 175.
about what Christ was working on. In the gift of presence, one makes oneself present to Christ—open to him—so that one can receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, enabling one to actively bless Christ as he does the Father until the end of time. One can participate in the relatedness of the Trinity.

Yet, Gschwandtner still critiques Marion’s notions of prayer and liturgical celebration as too individualistic. She points out that “it is the individual believer who is inscribed into the divine life of the Triune God and is patterned upon Christ. Marion claims that in the liturgy all our senses are brought together and directed to God. But he describes this sensual experience as a ‘spectacle,’ something that the believer observes the celebrant perform.” The interactions during liturgy (such as seeing, hearing, touching, and eating Christ) do not change the body, just the gaze.

Enriching Gschwandtner’s perspective on the gaze is Sebastian Madathummuriyil’s analysis of the gift and the sacramentality of the Church. Through the notion of givenness and sacramentality—God’s kenosis—coupled with return gift, the element that Gschwandtner is looking for in Marion’s thought, that of the giving-back, is present. Marion has developed a metaphor of the gift in which God’s self-communication is the gift. This metaphor is, according to Madathummuriyil, basic to what it means to be human. It reflects not only human relations, but also divine relations—and because it is given and received freely, the reception of it should be acknowledged, “at least by a gesture of gratitude.”

God’s self-communication is the gift and it becomes concrete for us in the sacraments of the Church. There are, of course, limits to our ability to

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612 Ibid., 175.
613 Ibid., 175–76.
614 Madathummuriyil, Sacrament as Gift, 154. Note, the blessing discussed just above could be this type of a “gesture of gratitude.”
understand the gift. Marion says that there is a point at which the saturation—our “fullness” of the gift—is so mind-blowing, so in excess of what we could intend or comprehend that we can only sense it, and he calls this intuition. “I cannot intend saturation; it comes over me, reversing my intentionality. The saturated phenomenon can, therefore, be explained as a phenomenon that I do not really expect; hence, it is paradoxical.”

Givenness is more than any gift of which we can conceive. It is a “kenotic self-communication of God to the human being in the divine love of the Holy Trinity as an ongoing gift from the Holy Spirit.” The Church is viewed as the icon of God’s self-giving, something that “contains and mediates the givenness of God in Christ and the Spirit.” In the sacramental understanding of the Church that Madathummuriyil formulates, a “crossing of the visible and the invisible” takes place, just as happens in the icon.

So with Madathummuriyil’s insight into how we can extend Marion’s thought to explain the sacramentality of the Church, the issue highlighted by Gschwandtner (that Marion’s notion of the crossing of the gazes, and thus prayer, is too individualistic) is somewhat mitigated. With Marion and Madathummuriyil we are making progress toward understanding what it means to be a community in prayer at the liturgy. Being transformed from many bodies into one body would certainly impact the identity formation of a community in many ways, including their self-identity and their notion of responsibility to and for each other. Additionally, if we accept Lacoste’s point about

615 Ibid., 176.
616 Lambert Jan Leijssen, “Foreword” to ibid., v.
617 Madathummuriyil, Sacrament as Gift, 226.
618 Ibid., 226–27.
unity within a liturgically worshipping body happening whether the individual participants emotionally feel this shift or not, this impact on the identity could occur even without the participants consciously knowing or intending the union.

In Chauvet’s thought the sacraments are a part of the structure of Christian identity—they are connected to the other components: Scripture (which functions at the level of cognition) and ethics (the level of action). The sacraments, which are at the human level of thanksgiving, are very significant to Chauvet. After all, God actually took on a body and joined/joins with us corporally through the sacraments.

David N. Power describes the notion of a gift which says that the ongoing development of sacramental identity is the gift of life one receives, and the return gift appropriate to this is one of respect, and a living out of responsibility, for the gift. Power strives to find imagery that is more appropriate to the Eucharist than sacrifice. The resulting imagery is gift (expressed in table fellowship), but my focus here is his reflections on the Eucharist along the way. In his exploration of the origins and purpose of the Eucharist, he reflects on God’s self-giving to the Church and what it means to respond to the “divinely offered gift and act of giving which is the foundation and heart of koinonia or communion in the divine mystery.”  

Power tells us that the Eucharist “in its action is gift proffered, given, received, and lifegiving. It is proffered in the proclamation of the Word, proclaimed again and received with thanksgiving in the prayer, and shared at the table as the nourishment of the community.” His discussion of the imagery of koinonia and gift reflects back on

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620 Ibid., 597.
“God’s gift of the Word made flesh, given in the power of the Spirit that is likewise poured forth, and makes the table the centerpoint of proclamation, communion prayer, mutual in-being, and mission.” This gift he describes is “received within the community of the body and ritually identifies or shapes the community.”

Chauvet would agree that there is a gift-exchange in the sacraments. He outlines a structure to the gift process while still attempting to uphold that grace is a freely given gift. All sacramental celebrations follow the same pattern of gift, reception, and return-gift. Furthermore, Chauvet insists, this threefold process is one “concretely corresponding to the figure of Scriptures/Sacrament/Ethics.” He asserts that the Scripture is the Gift, the reception of the Gift is the Sacraments, and then Ethics is the return gift. This structure and correspondence is intentional, he concludes. In fact, Chauvet says that “such a process can be understood as the very process of Christian identity.”

Sacramental grace, for Chauvet, should be looked at outside of the metaphysical (causality) view and seen in the context of graciousness and gratuitousness. Grace is experienced in a sacramental relation with God (Chauvet talks about a “living-in-grace” as the fruit of this), but Chauvet insists that this relation can only be understood by the path it takes us on toward thanksgiving and the love-for-neighbor actions that it spurs within us. That is, we cannot talk positively about the nature of grace or attempt to “own” an understanding of it. Instead, we can conceive of grace only by feeling thankfulness and responding with ethical action in the world. Gratuitousness is “givenness,” which

621 Ibid., 598.
622 Part of this apparent limiting is, of course, the limiting that necessarily happens when attempting to put any theology into images.
623 Chauvet, Sacraments, 145.
624 Ibid., 145.
requires a return-gift—we must be ethically engaged. Madathummuriyil sums up Chauvet’s perspective on grace thus: “God’s grace can be received as grace only by a return-gift by way of thanksgiving, gratitude and love.”625

So the liturgy creates, among other things, newness: a new people, a new living-in-grace for these people, and a new ethical responsibility for the other. The effects of liturgy will happen whether the worshippers feel it happening or not, according to Lacoste’s point. But surely knowing about these transformations can enrich our experience of them, in the same way that being intellectually convinced of our ethical obligation would enrich our ethical practice. It is important to our exploration of the impact of the liturgical installation of LEMs to discover how our theologies (both the general theology of ministry that we looked at in the beginning of this work and the transformations that could be happening in liturgy) could be passed along in liturgy.

III. Liturgy as Forming and Teaching

Liturgy has traditionally been seen as a teaching tool. In her well-reviewed book dealing with religious manuscripts in the Latin West through 1274, Leslie Smith explains that theology came into existence to “instruct and build up faith.”626 Its primary expression was through the liturgy. Just prior to and during the time of the Carolingians, elementary teaching on doctrine used Boethius’s *Opuscula sacra*, “five short works focusing mainly on the nature of the persons of the Trinity and their relationship” and,

625 Madathummuriyil, *Sacrament as Gift*, 260–61. Interestingly, he notes on the next page that Marion seems to think that a return-gift annuls the gift.

even simpler than that, was theological teaching through “reading and expounding the psalter, the liturgy and the Creed.” Theological masters (such as there were) during the time would likely, Smith explains, begin with “instruction in the liturgy, and the psalms, followed by expositions of the Creed and a choice of books of the Bible. Boethius would be studied to answer questions about the nature and persons of God. More advanced students would go on to florilegia of extracts from the Fathers.” However, it was likely rare for people to study more than just the Bible. In our time, though we may have grown in our education and have improved access to resources such as books and research on the Internet, one of the most important educators for Catholics is still the liturgy. It reaches us in a way that simple words cannot.

a. **Bodily Knowing Compared to Propositional Knowledge**

One reason that liturgy is such an important way of teaching is because it teaches in a different way than mediums that do not engage the body. Winifred Whelan defines “bodily knowing” as “a kind of knowing that is felt by the body before, after, or alongside the understanding of the mind.” She points out that there is a lot the body knows that

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627 This section is important, and the notion of bodily performance as enriching our knowing is critical to an understanding of liturgy and thus the need for liturgical installations of LEMs, but a concern that I have about all of this talk about “embodied knowing,” “bodily knowledge,” etc., is that I might reinforce the unconscious dualism that is prevalent in the minds of some people (particularly Catholics, thanks to Manichaeism and other influences). I do not intend to say that body and mind are completely separate or that intellectual knowing is somehow separate from our bodies—how could it be, after all, since we are embodied creatures? I avoid implying dualism where possible. When talking about the ways that bodily participation enhance our knowing, I am really emphasizing the connectedness of the mind and body.

the mind does not, such as how to circulate blood and digest food. But even beyond that, she says, there “is an inner knowing or ‘feeling’ of the subject at hand.”

The way that the body has been viewed over time has changed and developed in many ways. The Greek and Roman philosophical context in which early Christianity developed saw the body as “an inferior ‘other’ to the soul.” Gnosticism viewed the creation of more bodies as only continuing death—without bodies, souls could be free. Origen (ca. 185–253) thought that our bodies were provisional, soon to be transformed on the spirit’s journey. The notion of the spirit-body dichotomy grew so that sex came to be seen as a pollutant to the soul. By the sixth century, priests were to be unmarried. This negative emphasis on the body has been changing slowly, but there is still a strong thread of disgust for the body—especially the notion of the body as that which leads us astray—in the Catholic Church.

Winifred Whelan makes a good point. She writes about embodied knowing and posits that a theology that reunites the body and spirit could help us on the way to theologies that connect other elements. So, for example, (and this extension of her thought is mine), the reuniting of body and spirit—achieved through a recognition of the importance of the body to the spiritual and vice versa—could be a first step toward a more developed relational ecclesiology. She draws on Bernard Cooke to suggest that the reuniting of the body and spirit in our thought could reunite the notions of ritual and sacrament, bringing us to the understanding that liturgy is something that we do, and that

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629 Ibid., 274.
630 Ibid., 276.
631 Ibid., 276.
all experience is “‘able to function as word of revelation if a person is willing to listen to it in honesty and respond in fidelity.’”\(^\text{632}\)

Bruce Morrill takes it further. More than experience simply functioning as revelation, he speaks of a ritual body as the space where redemption happens:

> The assembled person-bodies together constitute the unique members of the body of Christ, the Church. The ritual body, in word and sacrament, obtains a knowledge of the Church and the world in relationship to God, but always within a body of culture, a social context wherein the story of salvation is mysteriously coming about. The Church takes confidence in a multiplicity of bodies and histories as the very “place” of humanity's redemption on the basis of the Gospel, wherein the Holy Spirit creates, guides, and raises up the body of Jesus as Christ, animates the Church as Christ’s body for the life of the world, and sustains believers with the eucharistic body of the Lord at the center of all the ritual sacraments.\(^\text{633}\)

So Morrill is saying that liturgy as an assembly of “person-bodies” brings us along on the process of getting to “know God, the world, and ourselves in the light of the One who has created and redeemed us.”\(^\text{634}\) The liturgy, which requires bodies, leads us to our redemption and salvation. Morrill, drawing on Chauvet, explains what is meant by body: “Chauvet conceptualizes each of us as an ‘I-body,’ a human subject whose corporality is, nonetheless, a ‘triple body’ comprised of culture, tradition, and nature. The key to this notion is recognizing that each of us does not have a body but, rather, is a body.”\(^\text{635}\)

\(b\). \textit{Liturgal Gesture as Epistemology}

\(^{632}\) Ibid., 277–78.


\(^{634}\) Ibid., 15.

\(^{635}\) Ibid., 12.
Jon P. Mitchell and J. Hildi, in their oft-cited article “For Belief: Embodiment and Immanence in Catholicism and Mormonism,” detail the ways that embodied activity forms belief. In fact, the thesis of the article is that “through bodily practice and performance, religion is generated as an immanent force in the world—people come to believe.” One criticism sometimes leveled against the article is that it limits embodiment to the actual moving of a physical body—but this is not the case. There is no way to separate the physical movement of the body in ritual activity. The bodily movements cannot be separated from culture, tradition, and nature, as Chauvet asserted above. This is not possible, especially when looking at bodily movement within religious ritual.

Mitchell and Hildi argue that both popular Catholicism and Mormonism have as much immanence as transcendence, since “the experiencing body” is at the center of both. The body “serves as the key site for the acquisition and incorporation of religious knowledge and orientation to the world—a process that…takes place beyond the linguistic field within which the translation of the concept [of belief] becomes problematic.” I use their presuppositions and proofs to detail the ways that liturgy can be instructional. It forms belief in doctrines and conveys those doctrines as well, but at a level beyond language.

Mitchell and Hildi use an example of the rituals taught in Catholicism to first communicants. They detail some of the rituals (dressing in white, processing slowly toward the altar with hands folded, etc.) in rural France and other areas that are taught to

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637 Ibid., 81.
the communicants. These rituals are akin to those in Malta, where “their gestural practices during Communion are similarly reverential and deferential.”638 Here is their explanation of the significance of the rituals of First Holy Communion:

They are taught to approach the priest with eyes lowered in humility and to bow at the knees after the host has been ingested, avoiding eye or other contact with their fellow communicants until they have finished a prayer of thanks and returned to their seats in the congregation. We argue that the reverence with which these Catholic communicants act does not demonstrate an inner orientation to the host in Communion—a “belief in” its capacity for salvation—but actively constitutes it. Their performance of deference is deference, not a representation of it. They are not “acting out” belief, but performing it. As Hérault (1999: 7) puts it: “The children are not merely allocated a particular role ... [in Holy Communion] ... but have imposed on them, through correct bodily postures, the expression of an appropriate internal attitude.”639

The rituals taught and practiced thereafter at the First Holy Communion play an important role in the generation of faith in transubstantiation. Mitchell and Hildi write that “informants report a tingling sensation or feeling of warmth as they ingest the host and so internalize Christ. This is a pre-objective and spontaneous consequence of the successful embodiment of Catholic habitus, generated within and through bodily performance.”640 Action and knowledge are mutually constitutive. As Mitchell and Hildi say, bodily practice and performance is “the locus of the production and reproduction of religious knowledge.”641

IV. Liturgy as Sacramental

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638 Ibid., 84–87.
639 Ibid, 86.
640 Ibid, 87.
641 Ibid., 91
Not only can liturgy produce and convey knowledge, but it can create sacramental change. Chauvet’s view of the sacraments is such that he emphasizes language and symbol rather than the traditional ways of speaking of sacrament (such as cause and instrument). One benefit of this is that it emphasizes process and abandonment (i.e., avoiding mastery). We are constantly becoming, and this is beyond the realm of “being”: becoming can only be a process, a possibility of being something or other.\(^\text{642}\) Also, language possesses us as much as we possess it. Our universe is structured, ordered by us (and those in our culture) through language, which also orders us. In effect, humans bring language into being but are also brought into being by it.

Chauvet attempts to negate the notion of sacrament as cause and the result of a first cause (a common argument in the metaphysical tradition), saying that symbol is ongoing and not grounded in a stable presence.\(^\text{643}\) In breaking free of metaphysics we undergo a continual conversion, one that is an integral part of us (i.e., each person),\(^\text{644}\) repeatedly shedding the desire to find an ultimate foundation, and instead starting “from the uncomfortable non-place of a permanent questioning.”\(^\text{645}\) This ongoing process, this active self-transformation, can allow us to abandon the god of ontotheology and instead experience the radical otherness of God and the presence of the absence of the Risen One.

We can meet Christ in the living body of the Church when we are willing to do so—when we are able to let go of turning Christ into an object that we can control and understand—a “dead body.”\(^\text{646}\) We must acknowledge his absence, that he is not present

\(^{642}\) Chauvet, Symbol and Sacrament, 23.
\(^{643}\) Ibid., 44.
\(^{644}\) Ibid., 54.
\(^{645}\) Ibid., 53.
\(^{646}\) Ibid., 174.
in a way that allows for our manipulation. Instead, he can be encountered in a living way through the symbolic mediation of the Church, which itself comes from the dynamic interplay of Scripture, sacrament, and ethics. “For the Christian believer, the concrete modality of authentically engaging this absence is living in the church as the symbolic Body of the risen Christ.” Lieven Boeve explains Chauvet’s thought very clearly and succinctly: “Only a Christ who is not turned into an object, into a presence, but is (in onto-theological terms) absent, can be symbolically mediated. Only as such can Christ become sacramentally present (la présence du manque de Dieu).”

Boeve outlines how Chauvet’s “resistance to metaphysical theological foundations and his openness to symbolic thinking as the way to escape onto-theology [is] confirmed in psychoanalysis.” Lacan, he says, insisted that no identity was completely permanent or secured, although we like to imagine otherwise. Humans all live out of this realization, and so we all struggle with the insatiable desire for secured identity and here we must enter a symbolic order. “Identity construction, therefore, is coping with the rupture in one’s identification, learning to live with the desire of desire without fulfilling it completely.”

Sacraments, like human communication, are a symbolic exchange. They generate their own reality. They are efficacious, and “this efficacy moreover is not only of an

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648 Ibid., 14.
649 Ibid., 10.
intralinguistic nature, but urges—on theological grounds—an extralinguistic referent, even if one can only intralinguistically bear witness to it."

In the same way that reality is always mediated to us, always constructed by the symbolic order, knowledge is as well (and really, reality is what presents itself to us in the symbolic order—so the distinction between reality and knowledge cannot be clear). Theology, according to Chauvet, is relating with the Incarnate Christ (since it is through Christ that God’s self is revealed), not forming an idea of “God.” Thus, the language of Christianity should be as self-giving and self-effacing as Christ, the point—and source—of it all. The message of the cross of Christ cannot be completely spoken in language, since it is an always-present void, an emptiness that reopens theology. Our corporality articulates the message of the cross. It is lived out in our Church and our very lives, our ethics. God’s being “crossed out” at the cross represents that God is other, but yet not.

People often like to think that they can rise above the mediation of symbols, but this is what Chauvet teaches us: we need the sacraments. We cannot say that we can sufficiently apprehend God with our minds (that would be turning God into an object), but we can, through the process of engaging our bodies, begin to know God in various ways. This brings us into the symbolic order which brings us our identity. It orients us, as individuals and a culture, in a space and time “to find [our] identity in a world that makes

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650 Ibid., 10. See also Chauvet, Symbol and Sacrament, 140 (as Boeve, “Theology in a Postmodern Context,” cites): “if this kind of symbolic work is to be correctly placed within the purview of intra-linguistic efficacy, it cannot, as far as God’s grace is concerned, be reduced to this socio-linguistic process: this would be to transform theology into nothing more than a peculiar form of anthropology and to diminish the absoluteotherness of God. We must say, then, that ‘sacramental grace’ is an extra-linguistic reality, but with this distinction, in its Christian form it is comprehensible only on the (intra-linguistic) model of the filial and brotherly and sisterly alliance established, outside of us (extra nos), in Christ.”

651 Chauvet, Symbol and Sacrament, 72.
‘sense.’”\textsuperscript{652} We both constitute, and are constituted by, the symbolic order. This is also true of language—“subject and language build themselves up in tandem.”\textsuperscript{653}

For Power, body and bodily actions in sacramental celebrations are very significant—just look at the materialistic nature of the sacraments. He says, “the sacramental order is built around bodily actions done in bread, wine, oil, and water, actions performed in giving and receiving the body/self in marriage, and the giving or receiving the laying on of hands in other sacraments.”\textsuperscript{654}

The necessary bodily-ness in sacraments can be seen, Power says, in the historical development of its use in liturgy. He reviews some of the changes that have occurred from Scholastic theology through contemporary culture, noting especially the section of the “Roman Instruction on Inculturation” that deals with adaptations of the bodily actions in liturgy without changing the essentials of the sacraments. According to Power, sacrament signifies and celebrates the divine in the practical living (such as the common table and the washing).\textsuperscript{655} In the Eucharist, Power says, we can express many cultural elements, since “keeping [the] memory of Christ in sacrament must mean keeping alert to the memories of peoples in whom he is embodied. This means placing present efforts to open sacramental action to a greater cultural diversity within the context of history.”\textsuperscript{656}

Here we have seen the contributions of phenomenological thought to our understanding of liturgy as communal, participative, transformative, and expressed in ethics. These are important in our examination of installation rituals of LEMs, both to

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\textsuperscript{652} Ibid., 85.
\textsuperscript{653} Ibid., 86; emphasis in original.
\textsuperscript{654} Power, Sacrament, 123.
\textsuperscript{655} Ibid., 148.
\textsuperscript{656} Power, “Foundation for Pluralism,” 194.
\end{flushright}
establish that these rituals can be meaningful (often an objection from continental philosophers and theologians who do not believe that those things which are apophatic can or should be communicated in other ways) and to establish which essential elements of liturgy should be included in an installation ritual. This will be explored further in the next chapter, although it has likely become clear that I will claim that the Eucharist, in a Catholic installation liturgy, should be present; this is especially true given the information about its transformative effect above.

The information about the dynamic relationship between liturgy and culture is also essential to my study. While there is a need to set up a basic and consistent framework for installation rituals for LEMs, knowing that there should be cultural variations can help keep the rupture. Understanding that there must be space to “relax and let liturgy happen” will create the place Lacoste spoke of above, the place where we discover strangeness in the sacrament and are formed into a new way of “withness.”

As we near the conclusion of this section of the work, I must acknowledge that I have attempted to speak about the unspeakable and will soon formulate some guidelines for that which is truly beyond describable “experience.” And I have done all of this for mysterious phenomena, nonetheless. Further, I will attempt to prescribe rituals and particular liturgical elements in these installations even more in the next chapter. Some scholars may find these endeavors—attempting to define the indefinable, speak about the unspeakable—scandalous and irresponsible. But what other choice is there? Should we wash our hands of the task of installing ministers and formulating rituals to do so simply because our efforts will be incomplete? Should we, likewise, dismiss any attempt to understand the Trinity—because we clearly cannot understand that mystery either?
Attempts at comprehending, no matter how limited and incomplete, still bring us closer on the path toward knowing—or at least bring us closer toward beginning to know. Additionally, even acknowledging the need for these rituals would be helpful given the plight of the profession as it grows beyond any of the Church’s official understandings of, and structures for, LEMs.

V. Liturgy as Identity Constituting

The identity developing component of ritual is relevant to my discussion of installations of LEMs because it provides an important foundation that underlies the need for these liturgical installations. As Chauvet said, the symbolic order mediates reality. It determines our individual and corporate self-identity. It is necessary to transmit the living notions of vocation, gifts of the Holy Spirit, and call. It is through liturgical transmission—which is of the symbolic order and brings about what it represents—that our theological notions of the mission and vocation of LEMs can be brought about and passed on. (Although it is important to note that, according to Chauvet, our understanding of these ideas would be on a level other than that of the intellect—we would need to avoid “grasping” at these ideas and trying to master them, because the inspiration and grace of the Holy Spirit is beyond us. Paradoxically, at the same time, this grace is brought into our lives by the symbolic order and we can grow in it by our permanent “becoming.”)

The late Mark Searle, in his last book, Called to Participate, emphasizes, like Chauvet did, the action, the activity, of liturgy. Liturgy, he says (drawing on the work of
Roy Rappaport here), “is something that is done. It does not exist in books, but comes to be at particular places and times as people get together to enact it. Liturgy’s meaning is only realized in the doing.” The meaning flows out of the social act itself. Searle points out that “custom and convention” determine the meaning and consequences of the act, and the participants discover the “meaning and implications as it were from the inside.”

It is also important to note Searle’s next point: that liturgy is efficacious. It is not just something that conveys information, a process that makes a difference. “Ritual words and actions do not just express feelings: they make things happen.”

Rituals, he says, bring about new situations. “Above all, they make a difference by creating, modifying, or sustaining relationships. Marriage rites, for example, are not only an expression of love: they marry people.”

In this same way, ritual installations will not only express the theology of LEM that has been developing, but it will help create the theology of LEM. In this same way (since one impacts the other), liturgical installations will not only express the changed relationship between the minister and his/her congregation, it will help to create the new relationship. It will resituate the minister. Searle explains it thus: “Participants, by participating, accept the (new) role given them by the rite—an act of role definition that

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658 Ibid., 23. Roy A. Rappaport, in *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), draws together anthropology, history, communication theory, philosophy, religion, and other fields to conclude that religion is made through ritual: “religion’s major conceptual and experiential constituents, the sacred, the numinous, the occult and the divine, and their integration into the Holy, are creations of ritual” (3).
659 Searle, *Called to Participate*, 3.
660 Ibid., 3.
can turn outsiders into insiders, strangers into brothers...many individuals into one body, and so on."\textsuperscript{661}

What would these rites (added together to create rituals) look like? When we begin to formulate ritual installations of LEMs, what should this look like? How can this process be embarked upon? Chauvet’s guidelines for adapting ritual can help us answer these questions.

VI. Guidelines to Formulating and Adapting Rituals for the Installation of LEMs

First, a caution from Chauvet: we must be careful about the changes that we make in the sacraments (and remember here Chauvet’s expanded notion of sacraments from the previous chapter). The Church can regulate the sacraments but, paradoxically, it cannot since their essence is from Christ. Christ instituted the sacraments generally, but not particularly.\textsuperscript{662} For example, the Church, the body of Christ, could adapt the sacrament of Holy Orders to the changing times and make sure that it met contemporary needs, but the Church must acknowledge that some things about the sacrament cannot be changed.\textsuperscript{663} Chauvet uses the concept of “arch-writing” to express the unchangeable part of sacraments and liturgy.

Arch-writing preexists us—as the rules of the language game we play, we cannot change it.\textsuperscript{664} Jesus is the origin of our language game: God, who trains our minds through

\textsuperscript{661} Ibid., 3.
\textsuperscript{662} Chauvet, \textit{Symbol and Sacrament}, 379.
\textsuperscript{663} Ibid., 348.
\textsuperscript{664} Ibid., 382.
our bodies, became human and wrote the sacramental system for us. Sacraments provide grace—they express and create a relationship between God and humans and among humans. It is through these sacraments and the whole of the Church that our identity is formed. This is Chauvet’s idea of arch-writing: Christianity’s language game is both instituted and instituting of Christian identity, so we cannot change it. If we attempt to control the Church or deny our dependence on Christ, then we will only be reduced to idolatry. Christ also institutes us as we are brought into the language game of the Church—this language creates us, as language is the most powerful mediation in bringing about selves.

Questions that Chauvet’s thought stimulate are: Does the sacrament of Holy Orders prevent the transformation of lay members of the Church through the sacrament of Holy Orders? That is, can, or should, LEMs be “ordained” in the same sense of the word as priests? My answer to that thus far is no. The Church needs to keep a distinction between those ordained through Holy Orders and those LEMs who also minister in the Church. If I use the word “ordination” in the sense that Hahnenberg and O’Meara did, to simply convey that it is sacramental, then I could—but “ordination” as currently used conveys with it so much more: a state in life. And it does not make sense to me to use ordination (which currently carries with it that connotation of permanency) when we could use other words. The Catholic Church does, of course, need to do more work on

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665 Ibid., 379.
666 Ibid., 425.
667 Ibid., 380.
668 Ibid., 381.
669 Ibid., 380.
making a place for LEMs in the Church, but this does not necessarily mean that they should be ordained.

a. Evangelizing Rituality

Power speaks of liturgies as “new cultural creations”: “revising liturgies is no simple matter of incorporating some ritual actions or images into the Roman liturgy; in the long run the question is whether the Roman tradition or the new local rites or liturgical families are in the process of emerging as new cultural creations.”\(^{670}\) This relevancy is important for liturgy to be efficacious—both in its worship aspect and in its teaching aspect. In our particular case of formulating/adapting rituals for LEMs, a very important focus to keep in mind is the critical purposes of identity formation and congregational education.

b. Resymbolizing Rites

Chauvet’s thought helps us to know how to adapt rites while ensuring that they remain grounded in Scripture and ethics—and balanced between the sacred and the ordinary. He emphasizes the need for evangelizing rituality so that rites will be “sacraments of the Word.”\(^{671}\) Two of the formal rules for evangelizing rites could be applied to the role of a priest in our society; and by analogy, to that of LEM.\(^{672}\) First, we

\(^{670}\) Power, “Foreword,” ix.
\(^{671}\) Chauvet, Symbol and Sacrament, 355.
\(^{672}\) I look at the role of a priest and then analogize that to the role of a lay ecclesial minister because the priesthood is an established ministry with a defined role (although that has been called into question repeatedly since Vatican II) and with entrenched ordination rituals—it is a ministry about which we have already developed many
must resymbolize rites so that their meaning is conveyed within our cultural context. Secondly, we must be sure that the process of resymbolizing involves looking at the rites critically to ensure that they remain grounded in Scripture and ethics. The Catholic Church needs to resymbolize the role of the priest in contemporary society and allow it to return to a holistic concept of ministry (in touch with the Church’s New Testament roots). At the same time, the Church must establish a symbol for the ever-expanding roles of LEMs (still following Chauvet’s guidelines for “resymbolizing”). The process of evangelizing the priesthood will fix two common misperceptions in our society (identified and discussed in earlier chapters): that priests have a magical power and are completely separate from reality, and that priests are not necessary because they perform functions of which we are capable. The symbolizing, in liturgy, of the roles of LEMs, too, will bring about a realization in the community that those who hold a ministry position in the Church have been specially selected, educated, and called to perform that ministry—and thus that they, by virtue of their vocation, have a special authority to minister within the Church. This authority is like that of priests, but different as well.

Chauvet explains that our goal in the evangelization of the symbolism of the priesthood is to make the rites effect a rupture, but not one which is hieratic: we want God to remain the Other, but not so transcendent that he is not involved in our lives and the body of the Church. If our rituals achieve this balance between the sacred and the ordinary, we will see that the ordinary can be transformed according to the message of the Gospel. To allow the rites to be rituals, sacraments that effect and improve on our teachings and rituals, unlike that of LEM. And also because they have similar ministerial roles that lead naturally to analogy between the two.

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674 Ibid., 354.
relationship with God, we must carefully monitor them.\textsuperscript{675} The same would apply to rituals supporting the mission of LEMs.

So, in Holy Orders we must strike a balance between the sacred and profane poles: we want priests to be viewed as both ordinary and sacred, but if we allow them to drift too far toward the sacred pole, priests will be seen as magical—almost to the point of being gods in themselves.\textsuperscript{676} Also, if we allow the sacrament of Holy Orders to bestow power, then we make the priesthood all about administering the sacraments; we forget about the ministry aspect of ordination (Brown and Osborne both demonstrated this above, in their respective discussions of the Levitical and Catholic priesthood). Following Chauvet’s guidelines, we will not turn our priests into idols; nor will we turn them into ordinary people with ordinary roles. In this same way, we want to strike a balance in the ritualizing of the mission of LEMs: we want to respect that Christianity is God’s invention and cannot be manipulated by us, while at the same time allowing the Church to remain dignified in its possibility for holiness and reform, always guided by the Gospel.

c. The Actual Establishment of the LEM Rituals: Indexical Symbolism

As we have seen, evangelization of LEM rituals will help us to see the roles of LEMs more clearly and remain open to the efficacy of rituals. Chauvet’s notion of indexical symbolism suggests some of the functions for which we should aim. Rites are behavioral, not intellectual, and so we need to think in terms of “digitality” rather than

\textsuperscript{675} Ibid., 355.
\textsuperscript{676} Ibid., 263–64.
“analogy.” Analogity is something that is always in flux and can be located along a continuum. Digitality is indexical: there is a fixed place for everything in ritual, and it does not continuously change (e.g., people cannot shift roles during the Mass).

Indexical symbolism (i.e., the symbolism of preassigned roles) is a fundamental law of ritual that serves three functions: first, it gives the group symbolic reference points from which to form its identity. Next, it integrates the individuals within the group, as everyone has a specific name and “place.” Third, it provides each individual with a distinctive role to play and grants them status according to their place; this keeps everyone from manipulating the assembly/rite in an attempt to control the power.

Lay ecclesial ministers must be seen as called and selected by the Church: the validity of a leader relies on the “social consensus” of the group, as the leader represents the group—and must do so recognizably. If the leaders and the rite are socially acceptable, the group will not feel as if it is being manipulated and it can relax and allow liturgy to happen.

VII. Conclusion

In conclusion, liturgy can have a triune function: creating and passing on theology, bringing the Church into being, and forming ministerial relationships. We have seen that our theology of the sacrament of Holy Orders has evolved in the past and needs

677 Ibid., 347.
678 Ibid., 347.
679 Ibid., 347.
680 Ibid., 348.
681 Ibid., 348.
682 Ibid., 349.
to continue to do so, and the same is true of LEM and its ritualization. In the same way that our understanding of the function of priests develops, so does our understanding of the function and need for LEMs—even more so for LEMs, in fact, since this field is relatively new and quickly developing. Chauvet’s idea of arch-writing helps us to know what can be resymbolized in the liturgical installations of LEMs and what must remain consistent.

Clearly the biblical theological themes of call and vocation must be honored so as not to jeopardize our identity as instituted (if we are going to accept that we are instituted). Symbolic rupture can help us see priests as balanced between the transcendent and the immanent, and this will need to be fleshed out for LEMs as well. To what degree are LEMs part of “the world” or “in the world”? Their domain is obviously more than just the secular, since they are engaging in leading parishes or parish activities, but John Paul II, as we saw in chapter 1, cautions against the “two temptations”: “the temptation of being so strongly interested in Church services and tasks that some fail to become actively engaged in their responsibilities in the professional, social, cultural and political world; and the temptation of...a separation of the Gospel’s acceptance from the actual living of the Gospel in various situations in the world” (CL §2). So a balance needs to be struck between the transcendent and immanent aspects of these LEM roles. The last concept, indexical symbolism, outlines some of the necessary elements of a minister in our society: a recognizable representative who is an acknowledged and acceptable leader.

Knowing how to adapt rituals while preserving (and adding) essential meanings is very important. Ideally, the liturgical installation of LEMs (especially lay parish administrators who, as the Catholic Church sometimes phrases it, “function in the
The metaphorical communication of traditional teachings through the sacred juxtaposition of things, people, and places in liturgy allows us to fully encounter God’s love for, and connectedness to, humankind. This encounter is not limited to the symbolism/metaphor that is conveyed through liturgy. It is also an action. The ritual action of installing ministers through a liturgical celebration is dynamic and is itself a communication with God—and it can be a special opening to receive the necessary gifts for ministry.

Having laid the foundation for an understanding of the transformative effect of liturgy and having examined Chauvet’s theories about how to adapt liturgy to particular situations while preserving its integrity, we can now put these ideas into effect. In the next, and last, chapter I will apply these understandings to the situation of LEM, including particular elements that should be present in the liturgical installations of U.S. Catholic LEMs.
Chapter 5. Contours for Liturgical Recognition and Authorization of LEMs

I. Introduction

Thus far in the work I have highlighted the current theological understandings of ministry, especially through an examination of the theological foundations from which our understandings of LEM flow. From this base I launched into an exploration of the likely ramifications of ritual and liturgical practices on the authorization/recognition of LEMs, acknowledging the benefits that could be present for LEMs, congregations, and the Church by having such practices in place. In the last chapter I applied the ritual and liturgical theory from the previous section to examine some guidelines for formulating and adapting liturgy (and its specific rituals) to keep it relevant and applied this specifically to the case of LEM installation. Now I will explore how we can preserve, develop, and transmit through liturgy these foundations for a theology of ministry, including our enriched understandings of vocation, gifts of the Holy Spirit, and call. In other words, I will answer the question of “what rituals should be present to uphold the integrity of our theological notions of the mission and vocation of LEMs?” The result will be some conclusions and recommendations for next steps in the liturgical and ritual recognition of the roles and authority of various LEMs.

In this last section of the work, the liturgical theory that demonstrated that liturgical installations could help contribute to, and transmit, the theological understandings outlined and developed in the first section of this work is applied. To that end, specific elements that should be present to meet the goals of these liturgical installations are outlined, particularly the celebration of the Eucharist, the reading of Scripture, bishops and priests as presiders, and the formal use of language. The liturgical
installations suggested should, of course, be adapted to the culture in which it is occurring so that, as discussed in the previous chapter, it provides a sense that the installation that is occurring is out of the ordinary—and thus significant, even momentous—but still familiar and with clear roles for the participants. Additionally, each installation ritual should be formulated in such a way as to reflect the relationship change (according to Hahnenberg’s circles, since that is what I have to base it on thus far) that occurs when the new minister is installed. These particular liturgical elements within the larger installations can contribute to the empowering and competency of LEMs, a field that is growing quickly in the Church.

The need for contributing to, and transmitting, the theology of LEM is clear—especially given that such theological development can contribute to LEMs. It can help form their self-identity as called and gifted ministers as well as increase the congregation’s perception of them as competent and authoritative in their particular role. For these purposes to be achieved as is hoped, particular liturgical elements should, ideally, be present. Before I examine what these elements are, however, I need to establish the differences between the various lay ecclesial ministries.

II. Variations in Ministry

Not all lay ministries in parishes are the same or require the same amount of formation and commitment. Hahnenberg examines the various lay ecclesial ministries and determines what type of installation would be appropriate to each. I will utilize the
“concentric circles of ministers” model proposed by Hahnenberg (with input from O’Meara) to develop differences in liturgical celebration between the various ministries.

Hahnenberg develops a relational approach to ministry and tells us that within this context “the question of liturgical entrances is central.” He would agree with my fundamental point that there must be some form of ritual installation for LEMs. Hahnenberg asserts that “Ordinations and other commissionings in their exercise and experience reflect a theology and they shape people’s views and expectations of the church.”

Ministers, through their relationships of ministry, “take on a new position in the community,” and this new position—this “repositioning,” to use Kenan Osborne’s expressive word, which Hahnenberg also uses—should be expressed liturgically.

“Ordinations, installations, and other commissionings” are important to both enable and recognize the transformed relationship. If we allow full-time ministers to “enter or exit ministries silently and without ceremony,” we risk not appreciating their contributions, which, in my opinion, can be an injustice to the minister (especially those ministers “who move from one ministry to another” during their lifetime) and to the particular church as well as to the Church as a whole. Hahnenberg points out the need to “think about sacramental entrances to ministry in a new way, to envision commissionings more broadly, and to expand installations and ordinations so that the church’s sacramental actions more closely match the pastoral reality of ministry.”

683 Hahnenberg, Ministries, 176.
684 Ibid., 176. For more on Osborne’s notions of “repositioning” and “depositioning” of members of the Church throughout history—and his tracing of these shifts—see his work entitled Ministry.
685 Ibid., 176.
686 Ibid, 177.
The particular types of liturgical and sacramental commissionings for ministers that Hahnenberg highlights are three: “blessings, installation, and ordination.” After reminding us that all ministry is rooted in the “sacramental source” of Baptism, which brings “a person into a new complex of relationships with others and with God,” he begins sketching his proposal for ordering ministry in the Church. First, he reminds his readers of the long history of this notion of ordo in the Church:

St. Jerome spoke of “order” including not only bishops, presbyters, and deacons but also the faithful and catechumens. Order in early Christianity was a reality that characterized the entire church; everyone who belonged to the church belonged to an ordo. Yet the influence of imperial notions of power, status, and office reduced ordo to a social state. The ordo of the laity became passive, while the ordo of the episcopate or the presbyterate became prestige. Appropriating an earlier view of ordo raises cautions. Baptism does not place one in a static state; it introduces one into an active community, a network of relationships, a church that is fundamentally ministerial.

III. Ordered Ministry and Ecclesial Repositioning

The concept of ordered ministry, then, includes the ministry of all of the baptized, those with Holy Orders, LEMs (“such as the director of religious education, youth minister, or liturgy coordinator”), and “occasional ministries such as eucharistic minister, catechist, and hospital visitation volunteer.” All of these positions have the sacramental source of Baptism for their ministry, but there is still a need for a liturgical or sacramental designation of an individual to a “particular ministerial role.” After all, Hahnenberg reminds us, “significant ministry on behalf of the community is not the same as the

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687 Ibid., 177.
688 Ibid., 178.
689 Ibid., 178. Thus, ordered ministry includes circles 1, 2, and 3 of Hahnenberg’s “diagram of ministries” (see my chapter 3 above).
690 Ibid., 179.
discipleship and mission incumbent on all believers. Appeal to the baptismal call of all the faithful to ministry does not excuse the church and its leadership from its responsibility for the dynamic ordering of these ministries.\textsuperscript{691} Hahnenberg considers the following when determining if a particular Christian activity should be considered an “ordered ministry”: “(1) the decision and intentionality—the commitment—on the part of the minister, (2) the significance of the ministry undertaken, and (3) designation to that ministry, in some fashion, by the church and its leadership. When all three appear in some degree, ordered ministry is present.”\textsuperscript{692}

According to Hahnenberg, the ecclesial repositioning that occurs when entering an ordered ministry is a transformation of one’s relationships in and on behalf of the Church.

This repositioning varies depending on the degree to which one’s ecclesial relationships have been affected—revealed in the level of the minister’s commitment, the nature of the ministry, and the degree of church recognition. Thus, just as there are different degrees of ecclesial repositioning, there are different degrees of ordered ministry. For example, the woman who completes an M.Div. degree and accepts a full-time position as liturgy coordinator experiences a greater repositioning than the man who volunteers to sing in the choir. Both engage in ordered ministry, but the level of ministry differs. Thus, there should be a variety of entrances into ordered ministry in order to reflect this variety of repositionings; there should be a variety of ways in which the church liturgically orders its ministries.

Hahnenberg continues on to discuss three broad types of liturgical entrances to ordered ministry: “blessings in the context of commissioning services, installation to official lay ministry, and ordination.”\textsuperscript{693}

\textsuperscript{691} Ibid., 179.
\textsuperscript{692} Ibid., 180.
\textsuperscript{693} Ibid., 181.
a. Blessings in the Context of Commissionings

Looking at what is happening at a practical level in most parishes and theological schools, commissionings of different types have been developed—and are still evolving. Many ministers or directors of religious education are introduced to their congregations through a liturgical blessing during Sunday Mass. Diocesan formation programs and “ministry degree programs” are also culminating in “some form of sending ceremony.” Some parishes have annual recommitment ceremonies for the volunteers—a form of celebration, blessing, and recognition. Blessings in the context of commissionings are, according to Hahnenberg, best for the “many occasional ordered ministries that are open to all baptized believers.” There are many types of these formal liturgical blessings and commissionings detailed in liturgical books, such as that for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion in the Book of Blessings by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy.

Hahnenberg says that this rite, while “simply an examination of and a prayer for an individual who takes on a new responsibility within the community,” is appropriate because it reflects the “new set of ecclesial relationships” that minister is situated in by “accepting the task of distributing the Eucharist within the liturgy or taking it to those absent because of illness or age,” and this situating is what is needed for this type of occasional ministry.

In this same book there is an order of blessing “for missionaries, for catechists, for teachers, for readers, for altar servers, sacristans, musicians, and ushers. There are prayers

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694 Ibid., 181.
695 Ibid., 181.
696 Ibid., 182.
for the blessing of a parish council, for officers of parish societies, and for the generic

category of ‘those who exercise pastoral service.’” These blessings follow a regular

structure: “introductory rites, a scripture reading, intercessions, prayer of blessing, and a

concluding rite. The prayer of blessing is spoken by the celebrant with hands extended

over the new ministers and usually includes a prayer to the Holy Spirit, such as the prayer

of blessing for ‘those who exercise pastoral service.’”697

There are many options available to parishes and dioceses implementing

commissionings, of which these blessings are just a sample. The commissionings are

generally appropriate for occasional lay ecclesial ministries. The real need in the Church

is ritualization for those LEMs that involve more commitment. Options should be

developed that adequately recognize and transmit the theological notions that were

outlined in the beginning sections of this book, and this is especially true when

considering the responsibility and relative permanency (or at least increased stability) of

those LEMs in roles that require leadership in parishes.

b. The Need for Installation to Official Lay Ministry

Hahnenberg, too, points to the need for the more permanent LEMs to have an

installation or ordination ritual that reflects the increased dedication, responsibility, and

commitment of these positions:698

Lay ecclesial ministers take up roles in and on behalf of the church that require

significant stability and vocational commitment. Their work as leaders of

important areas of ministry within the community requires more extensive

697 Hahnenberg, Ministries, 182.

698 Ibid., 183. Described by Hahnenberg on this same page as those “employed in

parishes to direct and develop an important area of ministry...those lay ecclesial

ministers who reorient their lives to professional ministry in the church.”
preparation than that demanded of lectors or ushers. While all ordered ministry (from cantor to bishop) involves some ecclesial repositioning, lay ecclesial ministers find their ecclesial relationships transformed to a greater degree than persons engaged in volunteer or occasional ministries. They have left other jobs or taken degrees in theology; they coordinate other ministers and form a team with the pastor and others on the parish staff. In some parishes today, newly developed blessings or well-planned commissionings celebrate and enable the new ecclesial relationships begun by lay ecclesial ministers, having a profound effect on both community and minister. But are there other options possible, other liturgical commissionings that better reflect the ecclesial position of these ministers?  

For the answer to Hahnenberg’s question of what type of liturgical commissioning would reflect the ecclesial position of these LEMs in roles of leadership, he looks at Ministeria Quaedam. After acknowledging the limitations of the document (especially the fact that its focus on acolyte and lector as the installed ministries outlined in the document is out of step with the true developments in ministry in the United States), he concludes that the document does offer a helpful “vision of official ministries for the baptized (1) that are not simply preparations for, or imperfect realizations of, the ordained ministry, (2) that are relatively stable, requiring extended preparation and personal commitment, and (3) that involve some liturgical designation in the form of an installation rite.” Ministeria Quaedam helps pave the way for the expansion of officially installed lay ministries. Hahnenberg cautions that “such an expansion on the part of the universal church should not limit the diversity of the local churches”—i.e., different countries, regions of the United States, etc., should retain a variety of installed

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699 Ibid., 183.
700 Ibid., 189.
ministries. Still, he attempts to answer the following question: “what basic shape should the liturgy of installation take?”

The current rites for the installation of lector and acolyte, which flow out of *Ministeria Quaedam*, include the bishop or religious superior presenting the installation candidates, saying a homily, calling the community to prayer, pronouncing a blessing, and then handing over a symbol of the candidate’s ministry (a Bible for the lector and the Eucharistic vessels for the acolyte). Hahnenberg objects to this structure because the culminating moment in the rite seems to be passing on of the symbols for ministry. He recalls that there was a shift in the central point of the ordination rite during the early medieval times from the epiclesis to the handing over of the sacred vessels—this shift “coincided with a shift in the understanding of the rite from the recognition of charisms and prayer for the Spirit to the transferal of power.” This shift was reversed when the focal point again became the prayer to the Holy Spirit and laying-on of hands, but Hahnenberg asserts that “the rites flowing out of *Ministeria Quaedam* simply repeat the medieval view [as] the emphasis on the symbols indicates a kind of transference of power, or a delegation of a particular task by the bishop.” Instead, having the laying-on of the hands as a central gesture emphasizes the blessings of the Holy Spirit and the

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701 Ibid., 189.
702 Ibid., 189.
703 Ibid., 189.
704 Ibid., 190.
705 Ibid., 190. NB: Hahnenberg here also quotes David Power (*Gifts that Differ*, 154) to substantiate his position that this focus on the symbols of ministry eclipses the centrality of the Spirit’s blessing: “David Power observes of *Ministeria Quaedam* and its accompanying rites: ‘These texts say that it is not the blessing which constitutes a person in office, but the commissioning of functions and the establishment in a special class.’”
power of God, which is in line with the early Christian usage of the gesture of the laying-on of hands.  

Another objection Hahnenberg has to the current rites for the installation of lector/acolyte is that the prayer of blessing (which precedes the handing over of the symbols)

contains no petition to the Holy Spirit (epiclesis), and the bishop is instructed to recite the prayer with hands joined. Both the rite of ordination (which involves an epiclesis and imposition of hands on the candidate) and many ordinary blessings (which involve an epiclesis and hands extended in blessing) better convey the act of calling on the Spirit’s presence in an individual—signifying the work of both God and the church in recognizing and empowering persons for important tasks.

Hahnenberg’s well-supported conclusion from all of this, especially the fact that an epiclesis and hand gestures (i.e., either a laying-on of the hands or an extended hand) are avoided, is that the current rites of installation demonstrate a focus on distinguishing installation from ordination. This emphasis on distinction stems from, Hahnenberg posits, fears of confusion between the ordained and nonordained—and thus between installations and ordinations.

Making an epiclesis within a prayer of blessing the central moment within the installation rite of lay ecclesial ministers would symbolize that the installation is a recognition of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and an invocation of the Spirit “that both

706 Ibid., 190.
707 Ibid., 190.
708 Ibid., 190–91. In support of this position Hahnenberg cites the 1997 Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Nonordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests: “‘Any ceremony associated with the deputation of the nonordained as collaborators in the ministry of clerics must not have any semblance to the ceremony of sacred ordination nor may such ceremony have a form analogous to that of the conferral of lector or acolyte’” (n. 57). Hahnenberg uses the version of the document published in Origins, but this version of the translation of note 57 does not seem to vary significantly among the English versions.
affirms and empowers a new minister.” Also, since U.S. Catholics often join the presider in extending their hands in blessing (“for married persons, catechumens, and other persons singled out for special prayer”), doing this in the context of commissioning full-time LEMs would likely seem natural—and, as Hahnenberg emphasizes, such a gesture “returns the focus to blessing—which affirms both the activity of God and people—and symbolizes the entire community’s responsibility in calling forth ministers.”  

It is important that we continue restructuring the Church’s ministries, given the fact that the ministries, and roles of ministers, continue to change—as do the needs of parishes and parishioners. Hahnenberg points out the need for further development cleverly: “The church in the United States today faces an odd imbalance in which professionally prepared, committed, long-term, and full-time parish ministers receive no formal incorporation into the ministerium of the local church (beyond an employment contract), celebrating no liturgical entrance into their ministry, while thousands of permanent deacons receive sacramental ordination for occasional or sporadic ministry (often solely liturgical, though this is changing) in parishes.”

c. Installation and Ordination

Hahnenberg, in fact, thinks that sacramental ordinations should be used for LEM that involves leadership of ministries because these new ecclesial relationships involve serious responsibility, commitment, and training. He thinks that the reason LEMs are not currently ordained is due to a misplaced emphasis on preserving presbyteral distinctions

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709 Ibid., 191.
710 Ibid., 194.
(“on the special identity and ontology of the ordained minister that lies behind many arguments restricting the presbyterate to celibate males”) that are beginning to reduce the presbyterate to a function since parishes and churches increasingly only see the priest as the person who comes to the parish just to perform sacramental tasks like consecrating the Eucharist, forgiving sins at reconciliation, or baptizing.711 In the meantime, he objects to the fact that the LEMs, who are actually the leaders in the community, are unable to “exercise those sacramental ministries that have always flowed from this leadership.” Hahnenberg insists that situating our understanding of ordination within “a relational theology of ministry” can help to unite significant ministries to the Church’s “sacramental recognition of ministry.”712

Hahnenberg’s explicit concern regarding ordaining LEMs is to sacramentally recognize LEMs in their ministries. However, given that he spends the first half of the book examining the nature of the priesthood and emphasizing points such as priests should be seen primarily in the person of the Church rather than in the person of Christ, his model addresses more than simply LEMs. While his emphasis on where theology has taken a wrong turn in our understanding of the priesthood is important in Hahnenberg’s goal of pointing out the weaknesses of the ontological approach so that he can then propose the relational approach as an alternative, it is also, it seems to me, done so because he has some of the same issues with the “priestly power” notion that I highlighted in the early chapters of this work.713 Given his assertion that priests have to

711 Ibid., 194.
712 Ibid., 194.
713 Hahnenberg specifically refers to this phrase of “priestly power” on page 48 of Ministries. The surrounding discussion is to show the limitations of the emphasis on the priest as Christ and to instead contextualize the ministry of the priest—to demonstrate the
be understood in their ecclesial context—the Church community within which they minister and the source of all ministry which is Baptism—and his explicit but very careful mention that lay leaders of communities should be able to perform the functions that have traditionally been a part of that leadership, it seems clear to me that he is not only proposing that LEMs who are leaders of communities (what he calls “pastoral coordinators”) and in the same innermost circle as priests and bishops should be sacramentally recognized, but also that they should also be able to lead sacramentally. That is, according to Hahnenberg, LEMs should not just be sacramentally ordained, but should also be able to perform sacramental functions (I regret the need to use “function” language here, but we are, after all, discussing duties).  

I have some questions regarding this. If the Church says to get rid of the traditional “the priest becomes Christ for a moment and represents Christ to us” notion (and if we make it secondary to other ecclesial considerations for long enough it will fade away, especially since it has a rocky history already), and the Church then sacramentally ordains LEMs, and then hands over the sacramental functions, what is left to make the ordination of priests different from those of LEMs? They will likely have the same kind, or a very similar kind, of ordination (I think they would in Hahnenberg’s notion, at least, especially since he almost equates the laying-on of hands with ordination and then says LEMs should have the laying-on of hands too); have the same type of formation; and have the same roles and functions in the parish.

importance of the priest’s ecclesial context. Pages 58 and 59 specifically address his conclusions from this discussion, including the ways that this emphasis on the direct and individualistic relationship of Christ to the priest has isolated the priest and that “the church community is the necessary context for understanding the identity and ministry of the ordained priest.”

714 Hahnenberg, Ministries, 194.
Hahnenberg does acknowledge a difference between priests and those LEMs who are leaders of communities: LEMs are not as permanent. Although if you dismiss the notion of ontological change (which, admittedly, is a weakly developed notion in tradition anyway) and define a priest by his ecclesial relationship of service and then say LEMs have the exact same kind of relationship of service, then is that really a difference? And how long will we think of the priesthood as a totally separate state of life if we begin to identify priests strictly with their relationship of service and then make this the same relationship of service of LEMs? What difference would be left? And would that relationship of service still exist for those priests who cannot minister for various reasons (e.g., those who are in a coma or those who have been removed from ministry due to past abuse allegations)? Perhaps as this theology develops there will be greater understandings of the ways that the relationships of service of priests and LEMs to the Church are different. Or perhaps some other differences will surface. Or perhaps the priesthood will lose its distinctiveness.

However this turns out, at this moment I worry that with Hahnenberg’s insistence on community leaders performing sacramental tasks currently thought of as part of ordained ministry, he is putting the cart before the horse and thus slowing the development of a theology of LEM. There is a pressing need in the Church for us to develop and transmit a theology of ministry that allows for the changes that have happened—and are happening—in LEM. Hahnenberg’s answer of looking at ministerial structure as relational is incredibly helpful in this endeavor, especially since, as he points

715 I am not here addressing the question of whether we should call it a separate state of life. That is its own discussion. But for those who think that we need to preserve the priesthood as a separate state of life as opposed to the married life and single life, this question could be relevant.

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out, it allows for a thorough understanding of the degrees of ministries rather than just a distinction between bishops/priests/deacons on the one side and LEMs on the other. However, when Hahnenberg carries it a bit further to imply (if not explicitly insist) that LEMs should be able to perform what we currently think of as sacramental functions, I think that he is proceeding too fast. He clearly considers this growth in who can preside over these events one of the natural consequences of his relational theology of ministry, but I remain unconvinced that it will necessarily flow from the restructuring that must happen now.

Who knows what the sacramental ministerial structure will look like in five hundred years? I certainly do not, but I do know that at the moment we must necessarily reach a deeper understanding of LEM by answering certain questions (e.g., What does it mean to be a lay ecclesial minister? Who are these ministers? What do we owe them for their service? What ways can they build up the Church?). It concerns me that by saying LEMs should assume what are, for the moment, sacramental functions of those ordained through Holy Orders, the development of the theology—and its practical implications—of LEM gets bogged down (both in diversions from the immediate needs of developing a theology for those LEMs at the frontlines of service right now and in controversy as traditionalists and the priests who serve us so well feel threatened and insecure). Let us develop these understandings as we go along, in openness to the Holy Spirit and in fairness to all involved—but let us be careful not to rush forward and say that developing a theology of LEM must necessarily allow LEMs to perform the sacramental functions that canon law currently limits to presbyters. Let us make these two separate, albeit connected (since they both spring from an understanding of ministry) concerns. They can
develop in their own time and according to our discernment of the movements of the Holy Spirit and our sense of the faith. As a Church that is sustained in truth by the Holy Spirit, appropriate conclusions will eventually be reached as we remain open to inspiration and discern together.

Hahnenberg’s use of the notion of ordination, when sacramental tasks are set aside, is so wide open as to include what I am advocating for our LEMs, especially those in positions of leadership.\textsuperscript{716} Let us consider what he says about ordination. First, he emphasizes that there have been various ways of commissioning ministers throughout history, and that the meaning of the specific term “ordination” “has ranged from the broad sense of designation, or regulation, or ‘ordering’ of various realities within the church (from monasteries and queens to priests and porters) to the narrow sense of a formal rite marking the entrance into one of the three sacramental orders of bishop, presbyter, or deacon.”\textsuperscript{717}

In his relational understanding of ordination to ministry, Hahnenberg takes ordinations to the orders of bishop, presbyter, and deacon as examples of the paradigm of ordination and claims that other commissionings “can be included within this sacramental reality.”\textsuperscript{718} Ordination is a form of commissioning, in Hahnenberg’s mind. He defines ordination as: “\textit{the sacramental recognition of significant public ministry within the church and the repositioning of a baptized person to a new relationship of service within the community}.”\textsuperscript{719} So, according to Hahnenberg’s definition, \textit{any} sacramental installation

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\item\textsuperscript{716} Hahnenberg does acknowledge, as we will see, that “we may choose different words for different commissionings, for different levels of ministry” (ibid., 195).
\item\textsuperscript{717} Ibid., 194–95.
\item\textsuperscript{718} Ibid., 195.
\item\textsuperscript{719} Ibid., 195; emphasis in original.
\end{itemize}
(as we have been using the term) of a minister in a “significant public ministry” (read here: in a public position that involves responsibility/leadership—therefore, two of the four circles) in the Church is an ordination. This sacramental installation or ordination repositions the person in a new relationship within the community. The sacramental act of ordination recognizes and brings about the “grace that is God’s presence.”\textsuperscript{720}

According to this definition, my usage of installation is the same as his usage of ordination—we both are talking about a sacramental grace that brings about what it represents: a transformation of relationship. While I find the use of the term “ordination” for sacramental installation needlessly controversial, inflammatory, and misleading, I am convinced that Hahnenberg uses it very reflectively and intentionally. If you intend to speak about a sacramental installation, and you make ordination identical with any kind of sacramental installation, then it is perfectly coherent to use the term “ordination” every time you wish to speak of sacramental installations. In my opinion “ordination” is a very loaded term in Catholicism, and its connotations in most Church members’ minds include much more than a form of sacramental installation. To most Catholics, ordination is inextricably tied up with Holy Orders and priestly duties. This is, I suspect, why Hahnenberg uses it the way he does: he is perhaps preparing the way for an expansion of Holy Orders as we know it and is likely hoping to get people used to thinking of the term in a wider setting—and of sacramental duties as more than just “priestly” duties. He is, I suspect, paving the way for LEMs to perform the duties that are, at the moment, reserved to priests.

\textsuperscript{720} Ibid., 195.
Hahnenberg’s emphasis on ordination as a form of recognition brings him to reflect more on the “central rite of sacramental ordination,” which is “the laying on of hands and prayer of ordination.” Drawing on Susan K. Wood he says that the laying-on of hands in the ordination of a bishop can be an invocation of the Holy Spirit, the giver of the gifts that allow the bishop to be a leader in the Church and can imply “‘conferral of powers, confirmation of the selection of the ordinand, and reception into the episcopal college.’” Hahnenberg looks at the understandings of what the laying-on of hands means throughout history to reach “different understandings of ordination as a whole.”

He draws on J. Kevin Coyle’s “‘conferral’ model,” which views the laying-on of hands as the moment of the conferral of the Holy Spirit on the ordinand. A conferral model, according to Hahnenberg, views the laying-on of hands and epiclesis as the moment “at which the Holy Spirit, previously absent, becomes present in the person of the minister, thanks to the instrumentality of the ordaining bishop.” This perspective is common in the Church, as many people see ordination as the event at which bishops pass on a sacred power first received from Christ and passed on through Apostolic succession to the new bishops. This model focuses on ministry as an expression of a single form in the Church—that is, sees ministry as the result of an unbroken succession of ministers transferring the power to do ministry and the gifts of the Spirit to each other.

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721 Ibid., 195. It must be noted here that this line of reasoning on which Hahnenberg embarks—that looking at the interpretations of the significance of the laying-on of hands that have arisen over time can tell us about the concurrent/implied understandings of ordination as a whole—is only true if, in fact, the laying-on of hands has been representative of ordinations as a whole, and only ordinations as a whole, throughout.

722 Ibid., 195–96.
Lumen Gentium seems to support this conferral model. In the very beginning of its “On the Hierarchical Structure of the Church and in Particular on the Episcopate,”

Lumen Gentium states that

for the nurturing and constant growth of the People of God, Christ the Lord instituted in His Church a variety of ministries, which work for the good of the whole body. For those ministers, who are endowed with sacred power, serve their brethren, so that all who are of the People of God, and therefore enjoy a true Christian dignity, working toward a common goal freely and in an orderly way, may arrive at salvation. This Sacred Council, following closely in the footsteps of the First Vatican Council, with that Council teaches and declares that Jesus Christ, the eternal Shepherd, established His holy Church, having sent forth the apostles as He Himself had been sent by the Father; and He willed that their successors, namely the bishops, should be shepherds in His Church even to the consummation of the world. And in order that the episcopate itself might be one and undivided, He placed Blessed Peter over the other apostles, and instituted in him a permanent and visible source and foundation of unity of faith and communion. (LG §18)

Furthermore, the Council seems to see the need and theological basis to strongly compel the faithful to support the notion of apostolic succession and ordination conferring this “power”: “And all this teaching about the institution, the perpetuity, the meaning and reason for the sacred primacy of the Roman Pontiff and of his infallible magisterium, this Sacred Council again proposes to be firmly believed by all the faithful. Continuing in that same undertaking, this Council is resolved to declare and proclaim before all men the doctrine concerning bishops, the successors of the apostles, who together with the successor of Peter, the Vicar of Christ, the visible Head of the whole Church, govern the house of the living God” (LG §18).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church could also be seen to affirm the conferral model, since it insists that

723 Notice the explicit mention of “power” in this document (and the CCC when citing this one). I wonder if that word would be used in the same context and with the same meaning today. I suspect it would.
The one sent by the Lord does not speak and act on his own authority, but by virtue of Christ's authority; not as a member of the community, but speaking to it in the name of Christ. No one can bestow grace on himself; it must be given and offered. This fact presupposes ministers of grace, authorized and empowered by Christ. From him, bishops and priests receive the mission and faculty (“the sacred power”) to act in persona Christi Capitis; deacons receive the strength to serve the people of God in the diaconia of liturgy, word and charity, in communion with the bishop and his presbyterate. The ministry in which Christ’s emissaries do and give by God’s grace what they cannot do and give by their own powers, is called a “sacrament” by the Church’s tradition. Indeed, the ministry of the Church is conferred by a special sacrament. (CCC §875)

This “conferral” is explained further in §1536 of that same work: “Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time: thus it is the sacrament of apostolic ministry. It includes three degrees: episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate” (CCC §1536).

Not only is the conferral model weak historically, since the early Church seems not to have thought of itself as directly handing on ministry in this way (despite the fact that the conferral model claims a direct line of succession from Christ), but, O’Meara points out, it can be destructive to our understanding of the larger notion of ministry. He notes: “An argument against a wider diversity of ministries is that three orders—bishop, priest, and deacon—are of divine institution.” In fact, he notes, the historical action of Jesus is not the sole essence of divine institution. There is also “the subsequent constitution of the Spirit that brings divine institution.” He says that the Church must ask the following: “Is there an ongoing revelation of the Spirit and a penetration into the unique message of Christ that encourage both discovery and rediscovery of different

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724 O’Meara, Theology of Ministry, 169.
forms of ministry? Can a later church alter, improve, diminish the forms of the past given by the Spirit?"  

His answers, of course, are in the affirmative. It is clear that the continued inspiration of the Holy Spirit is necessary to keep the Church healthy, dynamic, and able to mediate truth within changing cultures—and this includes in the area of ministry. In fact, this is especially the case since the need for various LEMs is growing so quickly (as is the correlative response of these ministers to the call). This, in my opinion, is indicative of ways that our theology and practical understandings need to stretch and be developed further.

Hahnenberg and Susan K. Wood point out another problem with the conferral view: it overlooks the fact that a bishop does not ordain alone—the bishop always acts on “behalf of the college of bishops, as well as on behalf of the larger church community, welcoming the newly ordained into the church’s body of ministers.”  

Wood writes that the conferral model, because it focuses so much on the “power” of the ordaining bishops (among other reasons), does not take into account the larger “ecclesial role and context” of the bishops. It should prompt us to ask several theological questions: “Is it the bishops who ordain, or is it the Church that ordains through the ministry of the bishops? Is the spirit of governance given in the act of ordination, or does the presence of the Spirit precede the ordination? Is the act of laying on of hands a recognition of the preexistent

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725 Ibid., 171.
727 Wood, Sacramental Orders, 41.
Spirit of governance in the bishop-elect instead of or as well as the conferral of that Spirit?”

Examining these issues is crucial because the Church might need to consider the belief that the laying-on of hands is both a recognition of the already-existent Spirit and the conferral of that Spirit. Wood points to Confirmation as an example of this—in Confirmation, a person who already has the Spirit present in him or her is still considered to receive the Spirit in that sacrament. Wood puts it thus: “Just because the Spirit is present, we do not cease asking for the Spirit to be present or ritualize that request and presence through liturgical actions.” And not only do we ask, but something happens—as Wood says, “However this is interpreted, something new does occur, namely, the official designation of this individual within a context of prayer and invocation of the Spirit to govern this particular church and represent Christ to it.” Coyle points to what he calls the “recognition model” of the laying-on of hands to express this altered relationship—through the laying-on of hands, he says, the community affirms that the Holy Spirit has chosen this particular person for the particular ministry. Wood likes that Coyle’s model helps bring us closer to the factors that Wood considers important in the ritual: that the interpretation of the laying-on of hands be “both a designation for ministry by the community and an epicletic invocation of the Spirit.”

Hahnenberg sees the same problems in the conferral model, which, he says, emphasizes the possession of “personal power,” instead of “engagement in active

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728 Ibid., 41–42.
729 Ibid., 42.
730 Ibid., 43.
service.”  This conferral model, he adds, is presumed in the concept of the Church as institution, “in which the call to mission and ministry was seen to reside first in the hierarchy and only subsequently shared with the laity.” The emphasis on conferral of authority makes it seem as if ministry is only possible through participation in the bishop’s fullness of ministry.732

O’Meara’s section on authority emphasizes something that we want to continually keep in mind: that the ministers in the Church are various, but all-important. He writes, “It belongs to authority to structure a particular ministry and to coordinate other ministries but not to absorb ministry itself. Leadership does not compete with other ministers by excluding them from graced roles ... it is not church office that is a new and prominent presence, but the variety of ministers.”733

Hahnenberg cautions about going too far in reacting against the conferral model. The Church should not allow the pendulum to swing so far to the other side that the laying-on of hands is understood as “the simple ratification of a community’s choice for a minister.” The concern here is that the community may begin to overlook the crucial role of the Holy Spirit in all of this. As Hahnenberg puts it, “The danger of a ratification model is that the election of the minister seems to be more the act of the community than of God; it forgets the ultimate source of ministry’s empowerment.”734 Hahnenberg says that to prevent this, the Church must open out ordination beyond the laying-on of hands—this “does not diminish divine agency but recognizes the greater role God plays

731 Hahnenberg, Ministries, 197.
732 Ibid., 197.
733 O’Meara, Theology of Ministry, 167.
734 Hahnenberg, Ministries, 197.
in the calling of ministers.” It is my opinion that there are other conclusions that could be drawn here, however.

It is not clear to me that ordination is, in fact, limited to the laying-on of hands—unless you conflate the two to the point that they are almost synonymous, which Hahnenberg seems to do at times so that he can then say why they must be separated. Ordination, Hahnenberg insists, must be “a larger process involving discernment on the part of the community of the Spirit’s gifts in an individual, ecclesial recognition, sacramental actions, and the acceptance of ministerial responsibility.” It does seem to me that the Church’s view of ordination already includes these things. But, of course, it does not do this for all ministry that involves leadership, which is, I suspect, Hahnenberg’s actual objection. We will return to the laying-on of hands discussion, but first, let us look at Hahnenberg’s excellent and helpful solution to some of the struggles in which the Church finds itself regarding the theology of ministry.

d. **Hahnenberg’s Model of Ministry: Concentric Circles**

Hahnenberg’s model of concentric circles of ministries around the leader of the community can help resolve the issues that come from limiting ministry in the ways that

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735 Ibid., 199.
736 At one point Hahnenberg says that “ordination cannot be reduced to a liturgical rite” (ibid., 199)—here he seems to be oversimplifying the case. He is, of course, concerned that the laying-on of hands, as it is used now in the ordination of bishops, priests, and deacons, perpetuates the conferral model. But is it accurate to say, as Hahnenberg does, that ordination is reduced to a liturgical rite in the Church’s contemporary understanding of it? Later in his work it becomes clear that he is convinced that the laying-on of hands should be used for other significant ecclesial ministers besides just those being ordained (200).

737 Ibid., 199.
we have discussed (especially the dividing-line notions of ministry and the notion of the laying-on of hands and ordination as the conferral of “power”). The concentric circles model acknowledges that there are degrees of ministry, a perspective that can allow the contemporary developments in ministry and is also more theologically open—it goes beyond the aforementioned “dividing line” model that saw only the two groups of ordained and lay ministers. The circles of ministry allow for the view that ministry, including, of course, ordained ministry, is fundamentally relational. “Ordination [into ordained ministry] cannot be understood apart from the complex of relationships in which the minister exists.”

This idea of ministry as situated within—and inextricably intertwined with—relationship allows Hahnenberg to look at ontology and function in a new light. The conferral model of ordination focused on ontology, “that is, it presents the laying on of hands [here I would specifically say ordination, since this is an example of the conflation of ordination and the laying-on of hands to which I object] as the conferral of a grace that transforms the very being of the minister.” The ratification model spoken of above emphasizes function, as Hahnenberg points out, because the community chooses a minister to perform duties or accomplish tasks for the community—he or she is chosen for what he or she can do. The model of recognition, including repositioning within ecclesial relationships, “offers a way beyond ontology versus function, beyond being versus doing. [In this relational model,] ordination celebrates and enables a new set of ecclesial relationships…thus the individual is empowered to serve. This empowerment is

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738 Ibid., 201.
739 Ibid., 204.
what is required for the minister to fulfill the ministry. It is because the minister is resituated in new relatedness as minister that this empowerment happens.”\textsuperscript{740}

Sacramental character takes on new meaning within the context of ministry as relation. Instead of sacramental character being viewed as an indelible mark on an individual soul—and thus isolating the minister from the rest of the community—Hahnenberg situates our understanding of sacramental character ecclesiologically, preserving the relational aspect of ministry. Relationships of service are lasting ecclesial relationships, and this is the enduring change that occurs in ordination. This view supports “ordination as the church’s primary way of ‘ordering’ its ministers by recognizing and repositioning persons in relationships of service.”\textsuperscript{741}

Hahnenberg is not advocating ordinations for all ministries. On the contrary, he works out which of the diversity of rites might best suit particular ministries. He says he begins not from the distinctions in ministries but from Baptism, the root of all ministry. He then outlines types of ministries and corresponding recognitions, with the disclaimer that “the kinds of recognition are listed as ideal: for official installations have been stalled and restrictions on who can be ordained have in many cases warped the relationship between reality and recognition.”\textsuperscript{742}

In Hahnenberg’s model below, the first column (on the left) is entitled “Reality of Ministry” and the second is the corresponding “Ideal Liturgical Recognition”.\textsuperscript{743}

\textsuperscript{740} Ibid., 204.
\textsuperscript{741} Ibid., 203.
\textsuperscript{742} Ibid., 204.
\textsuperscript{743} Ibid., 204.
In considering expanding ordinations, Hahnenberg points out that “access to the presbyterate” is an important issue for those lay ministers who are “pastoral coordinators and those in other roles who feel called to the presbyteral ministry of pastoral leadership.” However, he reminds us, what is under discussion here is so much more than simply allowing more and various types of people (women, married, etc.) to become deacons, priests, bishops, etc. Hahnenberg says that if we limit this issue of sacramental recognition just to whether or not LEMs can be priests, then we limit our perspective—it is not really about whether or not we should make them priests, but about expanding our notion of ministry. What Hahnenberg is advocating for when he talks about expanding commissionings and ordinations is “meant to invite reflection on the meaning of the church’s acts of ordering its ministries.” He insists, as I do, that “The question is not how to fit new ministries into the clerical system as it currently exists, but whether the current
system is the only way in which the church can structure its ministries. The ultimate goal is to affirm the diversity and distinction among ministerial roles.”

O’Meara agrees with Hahnenberg here. He points out that sacramental liturgies are part of the necessary preparation for ministry (indeed, the need for these are part of our very nature as social beings): “People and actions prepare a Christian to enter ministry in the church. For public, full-time ministry especially, but also for other part-time or assisting ministries, symbols, words, people, and movement come together in the constellation of public commissioning, a moment that is both climax and beginning, both charism and the source of further charism. A new theology of ministry cannot (as some Reformation traditions intended) turn ministry into laity nor eliminate ordination liturgies as excessively cultic. Just the opposite is needed.”

In fact, O’Meara says that our social structures and human nature demand a form of sacramental liturgy. He advocates for important ministries to begin with ritual: “Ordination is a visible invocation and affirmation of charism, a celebration of the church’s diverse life and mission, a symbol of the Spirit present in the church. Ordination is sacrament with celebratory liturgy and communal structure. Ordinations should be enhanced, not diminished; expanded, not reduced.”

We have seen that Hahnenberg’s definition of ordination is basically a relational repositioning of significant LEMs through sacramental liturgy. O’Meara, one of Hahnenberg’s sources, emphasizes the fact that ordination only really happens through

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744 Ibid., 204–5.
746 Ibid., 216. “The social and animal facets of our human nature call for sacramental liturgy.”
747 Ibid., 216.
the whole community. Interestingly enough, O’Meara, too, seems to equate the laying-on of hands with ordination.

He traces the origin of the laying-on of hands, which was initially drawn from Jewish custom. It “expressed public commissioning in the church.” In Judaism and the New Testament it was used to signify “the advent of charism.” Texts in the New Testament show that “the leaders of communities through the imposition of hands accept worthy candidates into ministry; indeed charism is said to have been given through the hands of the church leaders, given through prophecy (here [1 Tim. 4:14] meaning perhaps the gift of leadership).” The Catechism informs us that

From [Pentecost] on the apostles, in fulfillment of Christ’s will, imparted to the newly baptized by the laying on of hands the gift of the Spirit that completes the grace of Baptism. For this reason in the Letter to the Hebrews the doctrine concerning Baptism and the laying on of hands is listed among the first elements of Christian instruction. The imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church (CCC §1288).

In Acts 8:14–17: “Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for

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748 Hahnenberg draws from O’Meara, who points out that: “Ordination is an ecclesial act involving the entire community....The liturgical act of ordination is a community event among Christians whose baptized lives are for a moment focused by the bishop. Just as leaders of the local church, bishop or pastor, are not monopolizers of ministry but catalysts and coordinators, so all those in ministry, whether limited or full-time, take part in the public life of the community. Part of that life is the discernment of charisms of service in other Christians, the education and approval of new ministers, and the ordination of ministers. The present laying on of hands by the presbyters attending stands for the welcome of the full-time ministers; the voiced approval of the congregation resounds ... as the climax of a long discernment process within the local church with the new minister. Today these elements of a richer community life are weakly present in the venerable ordination ceremony” (O’Meara, ibid., 216).

749 Ibid., 216.
750 Ibid., 217.
them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”

While it seems that both Hahnenberg and O’Meara identify ordination with the laying-on of hands, O’Meara defines ordination as “a sacramental liturgy performed by a Christian community and its leaders during which a baptized, charismatically called, and professionally prepared Christian is commissioned into a public ministry within and on behalf of the local church.” O’Meara covers the history of the laying-on of hands, writing this about our present situation: “the Latin ordo grounding the theology of ordination and orders contains linguistic, theological alterations: an activity has become a social state; a term of group relations has replaced a network of activities; one word has replaced many powers.” Some of these alterations may be very valid—that is, they “represent legitimate arrangement and variety,” but, O’Meara concludes that

at present, within this word lies a static sociology that has largely faded. ... An ordination cannot only be characterized by a priestly or a ministerial class welcoming someone into a brotherhood. It must signify a diverse community placing its hopes upon someone designated for a specific work. The community does not just witness a ritual of initiation but creates a sacramental event of mission. The community’s active presence in selecting and educating its ministers comes to a climax in the liturgy of ordination.

Hahnenberg emphasizes the fact that the changing shape of ministry in the contemporary Church must bring us to ask questions about ordination. He concludes that “In a church with so many new ministries and so few new ordinations, the problems lie not with selfish people but with rigid forms.” He calls for future development of a

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751 O’Meara, *Theology of Ministry*, 218; emphasis in original.
752 Ibid., 217.
753 Ibid., 217–18.
theology of ministry that can address the “sacramental entrance to significant ministry” while looking at the questions surrounding orders and ordination.\textsuperscript{754} A holistic ecclesiology must be developed that allows for ordered ministry that is more than simply a limited clergy-laity distinction. He writes that “The important question is: How are the many ministries alive today to be ordered within the baptismal community?” Having diverse liturgies (“ranging from commissioning blessings to official installations to ordinations”) can express and build up the diverse services to the Church and world of LEMs—all of which flow out of baptism, the “primary sacrament of ministry.”\textsuperscript{755}

IV. The Need for Diverse Liturgical Celebrations for Diverse Ministries

My task is to help move this conversation about diverse liturgical celebrations for diverse ministries forward. Hahnenberg’s model of circles of ministries is a helpful starting point for this endeavor. His first, inner circle includes those ministries that are involved in “leadership of communities,” such as parish life coordinators. His next circle is “leadership of areas of ministry,” which would apply to a position like that of a director of religious education. For both of these he suggests a form of ordination (to bishop or presbyter and to deacon or some other form of official installation, respectively). Earlier in this work I stated why I thought it best to avoid ordination language at this point in our theological development of installation rituals for LEMs. I agree, however, that these two ministries, both of which involve significant leadership, should have two things: a special

\textsuperscript{754} Hahnenberg, \textit{Ministries}, 209.  
\textsuperscript{755} Ibid., 209–10.
acknowledgment of the authority of the minister and an invocation of the Holy Spirit for a strengthening in the gifts required to meet the needs of the ministry.

The special acknowledgment of the authority of the minister is essential when placing people in positions of leadership—if we expect people to follow a leader, then the community must perceive that leader to be authoritative. In most parishes right now, that perceived authority comes from two things: an understanding of the formation and education that the minister has received, and the understanding of the parish that the minister has been deemed authoritative enough to have been given the position of responsibility (most often, when it happens at all, by a bishop or priest representing the parish as a whole, but perhaps in the future discernment of this kind will happen through election by parish committees). The perception of the LEM’s authority by the parish is growing quickly—many of us remember the time when parish life coordinators and other leaders of a local church were defined by the negative, by the fact that they were leading the parish only because there was not a priest available to do so. It is hard to believe now that they were most often referred to as “those who function in the absence of a priest.”

Increasingly, parishioners are seeing that these lay ecclesial leaders are specially called and have been given special gifts from the Holy Spirit to meet the needs of the Church. Liturgical installations of church leaders should express an understanding of the giftedness and authoritativeness of the minister and also function sacramentally to increase this giftedness. The installations should celebrate the preparation and dedication of the minister, acknowledge the process of discernment that the parish and the minister have both undergone, and petition the Holy Spirit to increase the gifts of the LEM. These three elements, underscoring the preparation of the minister, acknowledging that the
minister is in the position as a result of a multifaceted discernment process, and invoking
the Spirit to bestow the necessary gifts on the minister, can all combine to increase the
actual and perceived authority of the minister. In addition, it can increase the minister’s
empowerment and self-perception as minister. Lastly, it can bring about an actual effect
of increasing a LEM’s gifts.

The last two ministries in Hahnenberg’s circles of ministries are “occasional
public ministries” and “general Christian ministry.” An example of an occasional public
ministry could be a Eucharistic minister. For this “occasional” ministry Hahnenberg
suggests a commissioning blessing. For the general Christian ministry that all are called
to engage in, the last circle, he suggests Baptism.

Our task here is to formulate some concrete elements that should be included in
liturgical installations for LEMs. The type of ministry that needs liturgical installations
the most is the one that is the innermost/smallest circle of those in the model of
concentric circles proposed by Hahnenberg—that of leadership of communities. The
LEM that involves “leadership of areas of ministry” (Hahnenberg’s second circle) also
requires an acknowledgment of the preparation and discernment of the minister as well as
a petition to the Holy Spirit.

V. Structural Elements of Liturgical Installations of LEMs in Leadership Roles

Those LEMs who are installed ritually into a position of leadership should have
this happen in the context of a Mass. This emphasizes the solemnity of the occasion and
guarantees that there will be bodily involvement and a gathering of people, elements that
we discussed in the previous chapter when we examined the ways that liturgy creates and expresses both culture and ministry. I will remind the reader here, also, of the discussion in the previous chapter that the effects of liturgy included forming and communicating theology and creating new relationships, especially ecclesial ones. In fact, as we saw in our examination of liturgical and phenomenological thought, liturgy can help to form our “selves”—both and communally and individually; and so liturgy can form the identity of the minister as “minister,” along with shaping the community’s perception of the minister and acceptance of the minister’s authority through empowerment by the body, the corporate Church.

Some specific elements that help contribute to accomplishing these purposes are a Eucharistic celebration and the reading of Scripture. These elements are important sacramentally and help us meet the goals of transmitting and forming the theology of the preparation of the minister, acknowledging that the minister is in the position as a result of a multifaceted discernment process, and invoking the Spirit to bestow the necessary gifts on the minister.

a.  

_Eucharist_

The Eucharistic celebration must be part of a liturgical installation of LEMs, especially of those who are in leadership positions. This is because it is a commissioning to ministry. We will look at the Eucharist in the light of the notions of sacrifice, which can actually be seen in the light of giftedness and ministry because of its focus on outpouring of self, and gift, which requires a return gift. Saint Paul, theologians, and _Lumen Gentium_ helps us understand the Eucharist as the sacrifice of Christ, expressing
and creating redemption, and the body of Christ, expressing and creating community which is then lived out in ethics.

The sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist has been explored in many ways, but Timothy Brunk examines this notion in the context of community and ministry. He points out that in the remembrance of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ brought forth in the Eucharistic celebration, “the Church quite deliberately finds itself caught up in the self-giving of God in and through the offering and reception of bread and wine.”756

In fact, Brunk points out, what is symbolized in Eucharistic celebrations is ourselves, and these celebrations are constitutive of community. He points out that “the grains that come together to form the one loaf of the Eucharistic celebration were once ‘scattered.’” They were then gathered together during harvesting, and “likewise, the one cup of wine is the juice produced by the crushing of discrete grapes. The bread is one, the cup is one. So, too, is the Eucharistic community one.”757

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11:16–17, points to the bread and cup as representing the communion (koinonia) of believers “with Christ and with one another.” The communion is formed through the self-giving of the members, which follows and is lifted up by the self-offering of Jesus Christ.758 Also, in Romans 12:1–2 Paul describes the sacrifice of the Eucharist thus: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing

757 Ibid., 62. Brunk cites the Didache here, which makes the same observation (Didache, 9:4).
758 Ibid., 62.
of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”  

Brunk tells us that Paul’s holy and living sacrifice is “the entire believing community, insofar as it strives to be precisely a community whose members are marked by mutual compassion and concern—a compassion and concern that is to be lived out and not merely felt.” Saint Augustine, as cited by Brunk, helps us understand the nature of the sacrifice Paul mentions: “Since, therefore, true sacrifices are works of mercy to ourselves or others, done with a reference to God, and since works of mercy have no other object than the relief of distress or the conferring of happiness, and since there is no happiness apart from that good of which it is said, ‘It is good for me to be very near to God,’ it follows that the whole…community of the saints, is offered to God as our sacrifice through the great High Priest, who offered Himself to God in His passion for us, that we might be members of this glorious head, according to the form of a servant.”

The sacrifice offered up by the faithful in the Mass (as we participate in Christ’s sacrifice) is not to help God, of course, but for the benefit of the sacrificers—us. It fulfills us as humans, since we are created in God’s image; we are meant to be self-giving as God is self-giving. In the Trinitarian relationship of total gift of self of one person to another, we see the goal of total self-giving to which we are called. This should inform our notion of ministry, since ministry can be a giving of self that can bring us closer to holiness. That is, ministry can help us become more of what we are created to be: so

760 Ibid., 62.
loving that we are willing to give of ourselves as completely as possible—willing to invest ourselves, and to make sacrifices for, each other.

Reception of the Eucharist allows us to receive Christ but is also a way that Christ (and thus the Father) receives us. Brunk elaborates on this idea: “Reception of the Eucharist is thus the seal believers place upon the self-offering expressed in the Eucharistic Prayer.” 762 As a kiss seals the love between two lovers but also commits the lovers to further actions of care and compassion toward one another, so, too, the seal enacted in reception of the Eucharist commits believers to an ethics of mutual care and responsibility. Neither the kiss nor the reception of the Eucharist is properly understood as an end in itself.” 763 The Eucharistic sacrifice in the Mass represents and, in a sense, brings about the sacrifice of Christ through participating in it.

Clearly the Eucharist should be part of the liturgical installation of LEMs. In fact, Eucharist is suited to this for another reason other than the sacramental and sacrificial aspects: the Eucharist itself is a commissioning to ministry. When we talk about the Eucharist as the holy and living sacrifice, Chauvet argues that the sacrifice present is actually “our own lives given to others through the exercise of mercy.” 764 Whether or not one agrees with Chauvet’s take on the Eucharist-as-sacrifice, documents from Vatican II support this understanding that the Eucharist is to be lived out.

762 Brunk points to Eucharistic Prayer III, which asks that the Holy Spirit “make us an everlasting gift to you;” and Eucharistic Prayer IV, which asks that the Holy Spirit “gather all who share this one bread and one cup into the one body of Christ, a living sacrifice of praise.”


764 Chauvet, Symbol and Sacrament, 313. Chauvet is commenting on City of God, X, 5–6.
Lumen Gentium makes clear that this sacrifice should be expressed in the daily lives of all believers:

The baptized, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, in order that through all those works which are those of the Christian man they may offer spiritual sacrifices and proclaim the power of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. Therefore all the disciples of Christ, persevering in prayer and praising God, should present themselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. Everywhere on earth they must bear witness to Christ and give an answer to those who seek an account of that hope of eternal life which is in them.\textsuperscript{765}

This same document, in section 34, describes the way that we are drawn into Christ and then continue the service of Christ through ministry: “The supreme and eternal Priest, Christ Jesus, since he wills to continue his witness and service also through the laity, vivifies them in this Spirit and increasingly urges them on to every good and perfect work.”

Furthermore, this section in Lumen Gentium, beyond connecting ministry and the Eucharist, actually lists representative settings in the life of the laity through which ministry—and the fulfillment of the work, and sacrifice, of Christ—can be carried out:

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. For all their works, prayers and apostolic endeavors, their ordinary married and family life, their daily occupations, their physical and mental relaxation, if carried out in the Spirit, and even the hardships of life, if patiently borne—all these become “spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” Together with the offering of the Lord’s body, they are most fittingly offered in the celebration of the Eucharist (LG §10).

So, the Eucharist must be present as an element of a liturgical installation of those in ministerial leadership positions because it is the embodiment of the sacrifice of Christ

\textsuperscript{765} LG §10. Interestingly, just this small section cites, for further reference, 1 Pet. 2:4–10, Acts 2:42–47, Rom. 12:1, and 1 Pet. 3:15.
(expressing and creating redemption) and the embodiment of the body of Christ
(expressing and creating community which is then lived out in ethics). Another rich
understanding of the Eucharist is that of Eucharist as gift, and it is fruitful for our
purposes because it leads into the notion of return gift, which will bring us to some
important questions about LEMs.

Power’s understanding of gift, as you will recall from chapter 4, was the fruit of
his attempt to find imagery that is more appropriate to the Eucharist than sacrifice. He
emphasized the divinely offered gift as the ongoing development of sacramental
identity—a gift of life that requires an appropriate return gift: respect for and a living out
of responsibility that flows from receiving the gift. So Power is saying that the gift then
becomes our ethical responsibility to spread.

In Madathummuriyil’s analysis of the gift and the sacramentality of the Church
from chapter 4 we saw that Marion has developed a metaphor of the gift in which God’s
self-communication is the gift, and it becomes concrete for us in the sacraments, like the
Eucharist, of the Church. Coupling the notion of givenness and sacramentality—God’s
kenosis—with return gift brought us to the giving-back: a freely given gift, even if it is
only of gratitude. There are, of course, limits to our ability to understand the gift, but we
can still speculate on it.

Some people talk more about the gift as being a freely given return by the recipient
of the gift; others refer to it as a response that carries with it obligation and responsibility.
Part of this responsibility and/or return-gift (however we decide to phrase it) is to help
others experience the gift of God’s self in and through each other. Do all LEMs have a
right to be able to give a return-gift and if so, what obligation does the Church have to
facilitate this? Or, more exactly, does the Church have the obligation to let those who are trained and gifted with the ability (as discerned together by the minister and community) to lead parishes exercise a certain kind of leadership? If individuals have a freely given return-gift and/or ethical obligation that flows from the gift, do congregations? I discussed in chapter 4 how the bread that is broken is the body of Christ, which can only happen within the body of Christ that is the Church, in which case the individual believers actually cease to be isolated selves and become one body. What are the implications of this? Is there something significant about this notion of ethical responsibility in the context of the liturgical installation of LEMs when the many become one? What might some of the ethical implications of this notion of return-gift be for LEMs, both in terms of what LEMs might “give” through their congregational ministry and what the Church—and the local congregations—need to do to support the LEMs?

This theology certainly needs more development, but one can see how the Eucharist could be meaningful and transformative in the liturgical installation of LEMs. Another element that should be present in an installation ritual for LEMs in leadership positions is the reading of Scripture.

b. Scripture

There are three very important reasons to ensure that Scripture is read during the liturgical installation of LEMs in leadership of areas of ministry. To determine these, we must first imagine the installation of a lay ecclesial minister in the context of a mass. We can visualize the sense of space around us, the prayerful hush, the intentional focus on what the gathering is for—prayer, petition, invocation, and celebration. Picture the forms
of Mass and the rituals of quietly gathering, genuflecting toward the tabernacle, kneeling at pews, the processional, etc. All of these elements help to bring us to the fruit of revelation, which is our first reason to include Scripture. The books of the Old and New Testament are revelation and the New Testament is the fruit of worshipping communities in the first and second centuries. Thus, when our gathered communities are collectively installing a lay ecclesial minister, Scripture, when read aloud in the living assembly, is itself brought to life—and also brings the community to life.

There is a second reason to include Scripture: to connect the theology of ministry to its roots in Scripture and tradition. Because the Bible is still read aloud so many years after the codification of the canon and has been the source of so many Church teachings, theological reflections, and joyful connections with the Trinity, the Catholic Church is steeped in, and based on, Scripture. To exclude this element would be to take ministry—and indeed, the whole body of Christ at the installation gathering—out of context. This is true on so many levels, but especially because Christ is such a model for ministerial leadership roles.

A third reason Scripture should be a part of liturgical installations is because of its connection to the Holy Spirit. While installing the ministers, the Church is acknowledging and invoking the movement of the Holy Spirit within the Church, acknowledging and invoking the gifts of the Holy Spirit that have prepared and will sustain the minister in his or her ministry, acknowledging and invoking the inspiration of the Holy Spirit within the minister, and bringing to fruition the community’s and the minister’s discernment of this person’s role in the Church. With all of this action of the Holy Spirit in sustaining and guiding the Church as a whole, the minister, and the local
parish, Scripture, as a source of revelation to the Church through the Holy Spirit, is clearly indicated.

All of this is in addition to the fact that a Mass requires the proclamation of Scripture, of course. There are many other reasons why it is important that this liturgical installation happen within the context of a Mass, including the ritualized environment/climate, the points that Chauvet made for translating rituals so that they create a break with the everyday but still sustain the worshippers in a sense of the known and the “knowing” of their role in the performance of the ritual, and much more.

In fact, there could be several dissertations written on why this should happen within the context of a Mass, but simply by insisting on the installation happening within a church and involving the proclamation of Scripture and the event of the Eucharist, as I have done, already makes the case for a Mass, so I will not delve too deeply into this. Suffice it to say that the liturgical installation—because it is sacramental and needs to reflect and enact (bring about) the transformation of relationships that occurs when the minister is repositioned into a new ecclesial relationship and a different relationship with the community as a whole—should happen as an intentional body of Christ (Church) through the body of Christ (Eucharist). Particular attention should be paid to the multilayered action of the Holy Spirit in the minister, the Church as a whole, and the local congregations.

In advocating for the reading of Scripture at an installation of LEMs, one of the questions that arises is about what readings should be used. To answer this, let me tell you a cautionary tale about something I encountered at one of the diocesan-wide installations that I attended, a celebration that was at the cathedral, in the context of a
Mass, and was exceptionally well structured by the organizer. The problem was that the celebration simply used the readings that came from the scheduled lectionary reading for that day (Sunday).

This was problematic for two reasons. First, it did not shed more light on ministry or transmit knowledge about any of the themes that we hope to convey about the theology of LEMs (which, you will remember, was one of the purposes we established for having the liturgical celebration in the first place) and second, it did not focus the assembly on the purpose of the liturgical celebration. After the Scripture reading, the bishop, who had probably already presided over regular masses that weekend using the same Scripture reading, got up to give a homily and, where I expected to hear a mention of the installees and/or, at the very least, lay ministry in general, in the homily, the topic came up only once—at the very end after he had given a long reflection on the readings that could have been used (and likely was used) at any of the regular Sunday masses that weekend. It would have been so much more meaningful to the LEMs themselves, along with their family, friends, and other church members, to have had readings that addressed roots of ministry or aspects of ministry or even aspects of discipleship. And special readings would have provided a break from the everyday (as Chauvet says) so that the bishop would have been more focused on the unique occasion of the gathering.

c. Presiders

We have looked at some of the reasons for a liturgical installation of a lay ecclesial minister in the context of a Mass (with the reading of Scripture and a celebration of the Eucharist)—and that this is important sacramentally. Let us begin to examine who
should preside over the Mass. I will advocate for, and point to the benefits of, having the bishop and parish priests concelebrate if there is only one installation. This is accurate theologically because of the transformations in relationship that happen. Here I am discussing a diocesan-wide installation, but based on Fox’s studies (outlined in chapter 3 of this work), I actually think that there should be a diocesan-wide Mass and then a local church “installation” of some form as well.\footnote{Fox’s studies from chapter 3 were the compilation of data from LEMs who had undergone installations. The results found that the parish-level installations were sometimes even more meaningful to the LEMs than the ones at the diocesan level. There could be many reasons for this (Fox speculates that a possible explanation could be a lack of theological development and understanding about ritual and the larger picture of ministry), including the fact that the diocesan installations often involve installing many ministers at once while the parish ones are generally limited to one or several (since parishes do not usually have that many new ministers beginning at once).}

The former would convey both the larger context of ministry, especially the new relational situation that the minister is entering vis-à-vis the Church as a whole, and the required “authorization” from the bishop (diocesan celebration). The latter, the church celebration—and by this I mean the actual parish in which the minister will be serving—would be a commissioning, recognition, and invocation by the congregation for the minister and by the minister for the congregation. Relationships are transformed at both of these levels when a lay ecclesial minister is installed. In this case, that of having two installations, one that is diocesan-wide and one that is parish-wide, it would be best to have the bishop and pastor at the diocesan one and then the parish priest at the local church one. Or, at the very least, there should be some combination of installations that involves both the bishop and the parish priest presiding over an installation Mass for the minister.
One of the best installations I attended was a diocesan-wide celebration presided over by the bishop but including parish priests from each of the parishes that were receiving a new LEM. There were ten ordained priests and a bishop. I cannot describe the emotional and ritual impact that came from having so many priests involved, from the opening solemn procession to the ring of concelebrating priests around the altar. It was an incredible show of support and an expression of appreciation of the LEMs present and LEMs in general. Afterward I was chatting with one of the installees and she fought back tears and told me that she was so happy her family got to see how important her position in the church was, given that it was the fruit of ten years of study for her—years during which her family, especially her grandchildren, had not been able to spend as much time with her as she would have liked.

d. The Laying-on of Hands

Hahnenberg, as we saw, brought this issue of the laying-on of the hands to the fore. To be accurate, it would have arisen anyway since it is such a part of the ordination ritual. Hahnenberg’s conflation of the laying-on of the hands and the sacramentality of an installation of LEMs required an extra examination of the laying-on of the hands. Hahnenberg, you will remember, pointed out that the laying-on of hands in the ordination of a bishop can be an invocation of the Holy Spirit and can imply a passing on of powers, confirmation of their selection, and their incorporation into the episcopal college. Hahnenberg (drawing on Susan K. Wood) looked for a different way of understanding
ordination and said that the Catholic Church should consider that the laying-on of hands is both a recognition of the already-existent Spirit and the conferral of that Spirit.

Even though the Holy Spirit is already present, in his particular interpretation of what the laying-on of hands could mean, we express what is already there but still ask for the presence and something new occurs. This newness is the situating of the individual through the Holy Spirit to their leadership role in a particular church. This is based on Coyle’s recognition model, where the laying-on of hands expresses a changed relationship. This worked well for Hahnenberg’s perspective that ministry is relational: “Ordination cannot be understood apart from the complex of relationships in which the minister exists.”\textsuperscript{767} In this way the laying-on of hands is an expression of a public ritual and new relationship and can signify the minister’s new relational position and the hopes of the congregation.\textsuperscript{768}

Is the laying-on of hands essential to the installation rite of LEM in leadership roles? Michael Patrick Whitehouse points out that Tertullian, who is “the first witness of this gesture among post-Apostolic Churches,” calls it “an act of ‘benediction’ inviting and welcoming the Holy Spirit.”\textsuperscript{769} Whitehouse reviews some reasons for the apostles’ adoption of the gesture of hand-laying, including its use in Old and New Testaments, their familiarity with the Jewish use of it (which was a conferring of the Holy Spirit in an “ordination rite” and a “blessing” rite), the “belief the apostles had in the prophecy of the great messianic blessing, the blessing of the apostles by Christ promising the Spirit (Luke

\textsuperscript{767} Hahnenberg, Ministries, 201.
\textsuperscript{768} The “hopes of the congregation” piece came from O’Meara, as was detailed earlier in this chapter.
\textsuperscript{769} Michael Patrick Whitehouse, Manus Impositio: The Initiatory Rite of Handlaying in the Churches of Early Western Christianity: A Dissertation (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2008), 97n150.
24:49–51 [which some scholars think was simply Jesus raising his hands]), and the fact that the Lord commanded Ananias to use this gesture.\textsuperscript{770} But Whitehouse proposes beyond this that perhaps the laying-on of hands is just a gesture natural to prayer. This seems possible, given its frequency when people gather around and pray for someone. Just think of the traditions of laying hands on someone while praying for them or the raising of hands during exaltative or petitionary prayer in the Catholic charismatic tradition—or even your natural response to touch the person (lay your hands on them) when you visit a sick or dying friend in the hospital.

The late and well-known liturgist Father Godfrey Diekmann, O.S.B., said that “Hands have their own way of knowing and speaking.” Godfrey Diekmann asserts that the laying-on of hands is the most foundational gesture of all sacramental rites, all of which symbolize the gift of the Holy Spirit. For Diekmann, “hands act as liturgical metaphors, not only in the core sacramental actions, but in other moments as well—hands raised in the ancient orans gesture of praise and thanksgiving, extended hands that channel peace, hands folded to hold sacred an inner silence, hands cupped to cradle the infant lowered into the waters of rebirth.”\textsuperscript{771} Nathan Mitchell would agree that the laying-on of hands is a natural (and yet meaningful) gesture, since he declares that “liturgy unfolds in the language of the hands. Skin is unique, for it is the only human organ that can make direct contact with others—and so with the Otherness revealed in them.”\textsuperscript{772}

\textsuperscript{770} Ibid., 97–98.
\textsuperscript{772} Nathan Mitchell quoted in ibid., 125.
I leave the exploration of the laying-on of hands to further discernment by others. It does not seem to me that it is essential to installation rituals, but it does seem to be a natural element to include, and I cannot see that it would be wrong to do so. The laying-on of hands seems, to me, like a purely natural gesture when blessing, praying for, or simply loving someone and should not simply be reserved for ordination in ritual. However, rituals and Church teaching develop slowly, and if it would be confusing or scandalous to many of the lay Catholics to add a laying-on of the hands to an installation ritual, I do not see where this is necessary, either.\footnote{Although I must add, I doubt that adding the laying-on of hands would even be of note to most Catholics who are not priests or theologians—I suspect that it would seem natural, probably as natural as when the priest raises his hands and blesses the congregation during certain rituals. I am not saying that these two are the same gesture, but that the congregations are used to gestures and movements of hands during rituals—and in every aspect of their daily lives.}

I have not witnessed or heard of an installation of LEMs that included a laying-on of hands, but I have never particularly noticed its absence either. Others have clearly felt its exclusion. We saw Hahnenberg’s insistence that it be included, and a fellow theologian described to me an installation she witnessed where the bishop remained ten to fifteen feet away from the installee the whole time. This witness described the experience as expressing a sense of “distance” between the installee and the bishop.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{The Words of the Installation}
\end{itemize}

What should be said in the installation? Are there certain commissioning formulas that should be used? Hahnenberg, as we saw above, observes that in the current rites for the installation of lector and acolyte the prayer of blessing (which precedes the handing over of the symbols) is lacking an epiclesis and a laying-on of hands. The laying-on of
hands we have already covered, but Hahnenberg makes a good case for the liturgical installation of LEMs with a leadership role to include an epiclesis. This is important because the act of calling on the Spirit’s presence in an individual can signify “the work of both God and the church in recognizing and empowering persons for important tasks.” Hahnenberg concludes that the “shape of the current rites of installation reveals a concern to distinguish installation from ordination: a prayer to the Holy Spirit and a gesture of the hand (whether a laying on of hands or an extended hand) are avoided,” even though, as Hahnenberg says earlier in the book, many ordinary blessings have the priest extending his hands.\footnote{Hahnenberg, Ministries, 190.} I agree that the lack of an epiclesis and action of the hands is likely a result of an intention to carefully guard the distinction between the ordained and “nonordained”—and thus between installations and ordinations.\footnote{Ibid., 190–91.} An epiclesis does seem theologically significant in an installation of a LEM, who is, as we saw in chapter 1 of this work, called and gifted by the Holy Spirit for the ministry to which he or she is being installed.

Other than the epiclesis, I do not have particular formulas for the words of an installation for a lay ecclesial minister that is in a leadership role. However, following Chauvet’s guidelines for adapting rituals (described in the previous chapter of this work), the words should be able to be changed and balanced between the strange and the regular. They should be understandable but not the same as what we encounter in our everyday life. Ostdiek describes how the words of the installation should sound in the following beautifully phrased excerpt (which seems to me to be an example in its own right of what we hope for in liturgical language): “not only to theological precision and literal fidelity
to a Latin original, but also to the poet’s way of weaving words. Words that both reveal and hide, words that are open to a rich layering of meaning, words that resonate with the world of the hearer, words that subvert their own ordinary and often impoverished meanings, words that bring one to the giddy precipice of both knowing and not knowing, where no alternatives remain but song, silence, and gazing on the light.”

VI. Conclusion

In this chapter I focused on particular elements that should be present in liturgical sacramental installations. I examined the celebration of the Eucharist, the proclamation of Scripture, the use of formal liturgical language, and the importance of all of this happening in the context of a Mass. The laying-on of hands was also examined, with the need for further discernment about this element underscored. I also argued for diocesan-wide celebrations in addition to parish celebrations and bishop presiders based on theology in previous chapters. These elements were outlined as an example of what I have been discussing throughout, and they are not intended to be comprehensive or a viewed as a prescription of universal rituals, but rather to highlight some elements in installation rituals that emphasize sacramentality and reinforce the theology of LEMs as called, gifted, formed, invested, and stable.

General Conclusion

In this dissertation I have examined a practical solution for the changing realities of the Church—there have been more and more active LEMs in the Church and less priests in ministry (especially in some industrialized countries like the United States). These ministers are not just here as “placeholders” until we get more priests. If that were the case, then why would they be multiplying so quickly? As we saw, the number of lay ministers employed in U.S. Catholic parishes at least twenty hours per week continues to climb, from 54 percent in 1990 to 66 percent in 2005. But what exactly are they doing here?

Lay ministry is a vocation in its own right, and one that is very necessary to the Church, but we must answer some questions that continue to resurface along the way. How can we formalize the transitions that are happening? What can we do to adapt to the increasingly educated laity, the growth in the number and professionalism of LEMs, and the decline of the numbers and authority of ordained leaders? How can we be sure that these ministers are perceived as authoritative in the ways that must happen for them to be able to engage in leadership functions? This is especially important for those in leadership roles, of course. How can the Catholic Church teach the congregations about the significance of these changes? How can the congregations be educated about the new theology that has developed regarding LEMs and the ways that they are called and gifted? To address the challenges of these changing leadership dynamics, we must find both new possibilities for ecclesial structures and new ways of expressing these changing realities.

National Pastoral Life Center, “Lay Parish Ministers.”
The examination began with looking at the scriptural roots and theological developments of LEM, establishing some important facts about LEMs, especially that they are here for a purpose, not simply because we do not have enough priests—which is often the perception of the congregations. Sometimes, sadly, the ministers themselves even begin to believe that about their ministry in the Church. Public ritual in the form of liturgical celebrations can aid in forming the identity of ministers and situate ministers in new relationships with ecclesial structures and parishes. Liturgical installations can help the LEMs feel empowered and fill them with the Holy Spirit. The installation rituals can also function as a form of liturgical catechesis, helping develop and communicate theological understandings of the new ecclesial developments.

New ecclesial relationships will develop precisely because of the shifts in ecclesial ministry, but formalizing these new ecclesial relationships will help the transitions happen much more smoothly. The liturgical celebrations can help situate ministers in these new relationships with ecclesial structures and parishes. Through ritual we can convey our understandings of LEMs as called, having a particular vocation, and able to provide us with unique contributions.

In addition to developing a general theology of the laity, the Church must formulate a contemporary ecclesiology of the lay ecclesial minister. This includes not only defining the roles of the various ministers, but also (and especially) drawing together theological understandings of these roles and devising liturgical reflections of the deepened understandings—which will, in turn, further increase our understanding. As the Church develops this theology and answers more of these questions, it also needs to ask how it can transmit and perpetuate the Church’s developing understandings.
Liturgy, and the sacramentals involved in it, can be uniquely suited to express changes in a social order or other adaptations that occur as part of meeting the challenges of our time. This is because symbols speak to human beings even before people begin to use language. By bringing people from the visible to the invisible and from the sign to the signified, liturgy can be a point at which our lives intersect with God’s mystery and can play a pivotal role both in identity formation and in catechesis.

Hahnenberg highlights the need for this when he says that “Lay ecclesial ministry represents a call to a new way of doing ministry, but it also represents a new way of being a minister. For here we have a significant, long-term, and full-time commitment to a position of ministerial leadership outside of the clerical state and distinct from religious life.” We cannot just call it a new state in life like the married life, clerical priesthood, single life, or religious life. It does not need to have that life-long commitment—and besides, lay ministers already necessarily belong to the other states in life—they are all either married, single, or members of the religious life. Hahnenberg tells us that “Lay ecclesial ministry is not a state of life, but a living commitment. As a way of embodying a life of Christian service, lay ecclesial ministry has shown a remarkable freedom and fluidity. This reality calls for a theology of vocation to match, a theology articulated in more dynamic, developmental, and relational terms.”

Part of articulating and communicating a relational theology such as that for which Hahnenberg calls is to develop ritual installations of these ministers, transforming their relationship to the congregations they serve and vesting the lay church leaders with authority. Liturgical installations can highlight the relational aspects of this ministry, but

779 Ibid., 37.
also teach new theological understandings. It is through ritual that we can understand that which sometimes cannot even be expressed in words, and liturgy teaches both at the rational/expressible level and at the inexpressible level.

It has long been acknowledged that liturgy, by bringing people from the sign to the signified and from the visible to the invisible, can initiate people into the mystery of Christ. Liturgy, as a time when our lives intersect with God’s mystery and when we encounter God’s self-communication through Christ, has a pivotal role both in identity formation and in catechesis.

Liturgy is of a sacramental nature. All liturgical actions are signs and symbols that enable the participants to participate in the redemption effected by Christ. Thus, liturgy is public worship, a way to bring to effect the nature of the Church as the body of Christ, a way to bring to fruition the salvific mission of the Church, and a sacramental action of the Church.\footnote{SC §7 emphasizes the importance of liturgy: “every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.”} In chapter 4 I drew on Lacoste to demonstrate the communion and transcendence that confronts us when we are a worshipping liturgical community and that in liturgy we experience mystery by \textit{doing} it rather than simply contemplating it. It is through liturgy that the new relatedness suggested by Hahnenberg can take shape—and do so in a dynamic way, since, as we saw in chapter 4, the moment of the liturgy brings with it the present and also the future. That is, since, according to Lacoste, the present of the liturgy can bring the moment of “co-being-there” and the “goal of perfect communion (of being as being-toward, of existence lived integrally as ‘relation”),’ we can experience
at one and the same time our current relatedness and our yet-to-come relatedness, that
dynamic relatedness toward which we are heading.\textsuperscript{781}

Liturgy is sacramental in that it brings about what it represents, but I contend that
these liturgical installations can still be different than the ordination that happens at Holy
Orders, at the priesthood. In fact, they \textit{should} be different. While it is true that all
ministry is rooted in Baptism, this does not mean that we need to conflate all ministries
and the liturgical installations of each. I propose that we leave ordination to the priests.
Allow LEMs their own theology and sources of value in the Church without having to
borrow from the priesthood. I think that those who have insisted on ordination for LEMs
— if they do so in a way that is expanding Holy Orders beyond the priesthood — have
(unintentionally, of course) done a disservice to LEMs. The implication of insisting that
LEMs be ordained with Holy Orders is that they cannot be authoritative and gifted
without adapting the role and tradition of the priest.\textsuperscript{782}

However, a theology supporting these roles must be methodically worked out,
continually updated, and expressed in liturgy. The many different forms of LEM in the
Church may require a plurality of forms of authorization, as we saw with Hahnenberg’s
circles of ministries. But a simple letter of appointment stating the minister’s new job is
insufficient. It must be ritualized in liturgy because liturgy can be uniquely
transformative and it is social, which is important when it reflects (and enriches)

\textsuperscript{781} Lacoste, “Liturgy and Coaffection,” 101.
\textsuperscript{782} When I speak of those who argue for Holy Orders for LEMs, I am not
necessarily referring to Hahnenberg and O’Meara, who may not be trying to equate this
with priestly ordination, given their emphasis on relational ministry. Hahnenberg has
informed me that even if LEMs were ordained in the way that he proposes, there would
still remain some distinction. I will be interested to see how his theology develops in this
area.
something as dynamic and relational as vocation. And, since the Church expects lay ecclesial ministers to participate in the mission of the Church as public representatives of it, it makes sense to recognize them publicly. They are called to a particular set of relationships within the Church, and so their ecclesial situation or position within the structure of the Church deserves attention.

I reviewed Fox’s research into ritual installations of LEMs, where she chronicled the benefits that current LEMs found in authorization liturgies, both for them personally and for their ministries, such as an affirmation of having a place, being blessed by the congregation, and a sense of belonging.783 Fox found that those who had been authorized in their parish articulated more benefits from the liturgy. The interviewees did not, however, express an increase in their perception of their own authority. Perhaps, Fox speculates, this is due to a need for a greater understanding of liturgy. I await studies about how these liturgical installations impact the perceptions of the LEM’s authority by the congregation. Does it increase the congregation’s support of the minister since they have invested part of themselves in the person’s ministry by being confronted with the Holy Spirit, celebrating the liturgy, and standing before Christ with the minister? Fox’s hypothesis is that meaningful and well-planned rituals can affect these things, and ritual theory seems to support it.

Liturgy has a privileged place in the history and life of the Church. Liturgy and sacraments are important ways for Christians to grow in the spiritual life and to discover themselves as people of God—individually and as the one body of Christ. It can also help form and express personal and communal identity. It speaks to us at a deeper level than

that of words and allows us to both adopt and express beliefs. It is a main way that we
pass on values and priorities to succeeding generations and opens up to the mystery that
is grace. Liturgy, and its attendant rituals, can impact the role of LEMs in the Church and
parish by repositioning them in relationships that reflect their transformed social status
and self-identity. Also, as a vehicle for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in a way that is
deeper than concepts and language, it can aid in the development of the theology of LEM
and its expression/perpetuation in a special way. Liturgy is, in fact, one of the best ways
of transforming ecclesial structures in response to developing needs while simultaneously
expressing these changing realities.

The liturgical elements that should be included in installation rituals to meet the
need presented by increasing LEMs (with ever-higher levels of responsibility) are the
Eucharist, the proclamation of Scripture, and the use of formal liturgical language in a
Mass. The laying-on of hands would seem a natural addition as well. Diocesan-wide
celebrations in addition to parish celebrations and bishop presiders can also help to
express the developing theology of LEMs as called, formed, and gifted. Hopefully these
first steps toward developing models for liturgical installations of LEMs will prompt
more reflection on ways that the Church forms and resituates LEMs as well as transmits
the Church’s deepened understandings of the vocational roles of LEMs.


Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC).


Christifideles Laici (“Apostolic Exhortation: The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful”),
Dec. 30, 1988,


*Sacrosanctum Concilium.*


