

C21 Resources

FALL 2010

GRACE AND COMMITMENT: THE VOCATIONS OF LAITY, RELIGIOUS, AND ORDAINED

THE VOCATIONS *of the* LAITY

[The laity] live in the world, in each and every one of the world's occupations and callings and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, form the context of their existence. There they are **CALLED BY GOD** to contribute to the sanctification of the world from within, like leaven, in the spirit of the Gospel, by fulfilling their own particular duties.

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, n. 31
Vatican Council II

“We are convinced that if this reconnection be made, if the Church, secure on her foundations, boldly throws herself open to lay activity, she will experience such a springtime as we cannot imagine. The general body of faithful people has been a great reservoir of decisive energies in every age.”

YVES CONGAR, O.P., *LAY PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH*, 1957, P. XIX

The Church in the 21st Century Center serves as a catalyst and a resource for the renewal of the Catholic Church in the United States.

To learn more, please contact:

**THE CHURCH IN THE
21ST CENTURY CENTER**
Boston College
110 College Road
Heffernan House
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467
617-552-0470
bc.edu/church21

FROM THE C21 CENTER DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

This issue of *C21 Resources* opens the center's 2010-2011 series, *Grace and Commitment: The Vocations of Laity, Religious, and Ordained*.

Roles in the Church are changing. Since the second Vatican Council there has been discussion about what is essential to the role of ordained ministers. The self-understanding of the laity has been developing energetically. The roles, self-understanding, and assessment of religious communities have been a focus of continued interest.

Applauded or engendering concern, this period of development in the roles of clergy, laity, and religious, and in their mutual relationships, is of profound importance for the present and future of the Church. We invite you to examine these vital questions throughout this academic year.

In this issue, editor Edward P. Hahnenberg brings together voices reflecting on the call of the laity to life in Christ. Beginning at the baptismal font and taking root in every possible human endeavor, Christian disciples do, as Vatican II reminded us, “contribute to the sanctification of the world from within.” That contribution is rich, varied, and ongoing. In it, the individual, the community, and the world are quite literally re-created.

May these pages renew your own sense of being called powerfully and personally by God.



John P. McGinty
Acting Director

C21 Resources

FALL 2010

GRACE AND COMMITMENT: THE VOCATIONS OF LAITY, RELIGIOUS, AND ORDAINED

GRACE AND COMMITMENT: THE VOCATIONS OF THE LAITY 2

Edward P. Hahnenberg, Editor

The Decree on the Lay Apostolate <i>by The Second Vatican Council</i>	5
The Rise of the Theology of the Laity <i>by Edward P. Hahnenberg</i>	6
What Vocation Shortage? <i>by Russell Shaw</i>	8
Doubting Thomas, the Crisis, and the Laity <i>by Robert L. Beloin</i>	10
The Public Vocation of Christian Parents <i>by Julie Hanlon Rubio</i>	12
Beyond the Distinction of Clergy <i>by Thomas F. O'Meara</i>	13
The Community of Sant'Egidio <i>by Mario Marazziti and Austen Ivereigh</i>	14
Student Apostles <i>by Kevin Ahern</i>	18
The Laity's Participation in Public Life <i>by Richard R. Gaillardetz</i>	20
The Future of Ministry <i>by John L. Allen, Jr.</i>	23
Co-Workers in the Vineyard <i>by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops</i>	25
Pastoral Co-Responsibility <i>by Pope Benedict XVI</i>	25
Baptism as the Basis of Ministry <i>by Paul Lakeland</i>	26
Lay Leadership in Catholic Institutions <i>by Susan K. Wood, SCL</i>	28
Exceptional Pastoring <i>by Mary M. Foley</i>	31
Ten Steps Toward a More Adult Church <i>by Paul Lakeland</i>	33

UPDATE CALENDAR

16-17

ABOUT THE EDITOR

EDWARD P. HAHNENBERG is an associate professor of theology at Xavier University, Cincinnati. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame in 2002. His most recent book is *Awakening Vocation: A Theology of Christian Call* (Liturgical Press, 2010); previous books include *Ministry: A Relational Approach* (Crossroad, 2003) and *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II* (St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2007). Hahnenberg also served as a consultant to the U.S. Bishops' Subcommittee on Lay Ministry in its preparation of the document *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*.

ADVISORY BOARD

Jonas Barciauskas
Ben Birnbaum
Thomas H. Groome
Thomas J. Massaro, S.J.
John McGinty
Robert Newton
Barbara Radtke
Jacqueline Regan
Jane E. Regan

DESIGN

Progressive Print Solutions
Erinkate O'Donnell
Monica | DeSalvo Design

C21 Resources, a compilation of the best analyses and essays on key challenges facing the Church today, is published by the Church in the 21st Century Center at Boston College, in partnership with the publications from which the featured articles have been selected.



The Vocations of the Laity

BY EDWARD P. HAHNENBERG

When I was a graduate student at the University of Notre Dame, I had a small office on the 12th floor of the Theodore M. Hesburgh Memorial Library—better known as “Touchdown Jesus” for its huge mural of Christ looking out over the football stadium.

The office was small, just big enough for a desk. But it had a spectacular view of campus. It was the same view—I bragged to my friends—that Fr. Hesburgh had, whose much larger office was directly above my own.

Fr. Hesburgh had stepped down as university president several years earlier. During his 35-year tenure he had become a national leader in civil rights, public policy, and education. He had advised presidents and popes, served on countless commissions and boards, and even made it into *The Guinness Book of World Records* for “Most Honorary Degrees.” Thus retirement was something of a relative term for Fr. Hesburgh. Well into his eighties, he still went into the office every day. And one of the best things about my time on the 12th floor was that I often got to share an elevator ride with Fr. Ted.

Fr. Hesburgh loved to talk to students. He’d ask whomever got on the elevator what they were studying. When they said physics or history, he would share some anecdote about his work on the Atomic Energy Commission or the time he marched with Martin Luther King, Jr.

Over the months we rode the elevator together, I had the same conversation with Fr. Hesburgh three times.

Every time, the conversation began with his question, “What are you studying today?”

And every time, I responded, “I’m working on my dissertation in theology.”

“Really?” he said, clearly not remembering our previous elevator chats. “You know my doctorate was in theology. What’s the topic?”

“I’m writing on lay ministry in the Catholic Church,” I answered, knowing what would come next.

“Really?” Fr. Hesburgh said, as he looked up at me with new interest. “You know my dissertation was about the laity in the Church.”

“I know, Father,” I honestly answered, “I’ve read it. It’s very good.”

And then Fr. Hesburgh launched into one of his favorite stories.

“Well, in those days, a dissertation on the laity was very controversial. This was the early 1940s, remember. My committee told me not to do it. They wanted me to pick another topic. But I knew it was too important. And so I pushed ahead.”

“That doesn’t surprise me, Father,” I said, smiling.

“I finished the dissertation and got it published. Soon after, I received a letter from the Holy Office in Rome. They wanted me to send them a copy of the dissertation for review. I thought for sure I was going to be censured. It used to be called the *Holy Office of the Inquisition*, you know. I sent the dissertation, but I never heard back.”

He continued, “Eventually the pope died, and the cardinals elected John XXIII, who surprised everybody by calling a Second Vatican Council. And what do you think was on the agenda? The laity! The council dedicated a whole document to the laity!”

Then came the punch line.

“I’ll never forget reading that document when it first came out,” Fr. Hesburgh deadpanned, “they stole all my ideas.”

The Vision of Vatican II

This was a story Fr. Hesburgh obviously loved to tell. Since those elevator rides, I’ve heard a number of his friends share some version of it. The story illustrates something of the remarkable journey the Catholic laity have traveled



Photo by Fransisk Swadon; Tapestry image Copyright 2010 by John Nava and the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels. All Rights Reserved.

over the past century—reminding us as a Church how far we have come, and how far we still have to go.

It may be too much to say that Fr. Hesburgh was the unknowing ghostwriter of Vatican II's Decree on the Lay Apostolate. But his dissertation was still significant. Decades before American Catholics turned their attention to the role of the laity, Fr. Hesburgh was tuned in to an emerging theological movement in Europe. This movement was centered on "Catholic Action," which referred to organized groups of lay people working under the direction of the hierarchy to promote the mission of the Church. These groups spread like wildfire in the aftermath of the Second World War, raising theological questions that were only fully addressed at Vatican II.

By the time the council opened in the fall of 1962, it was clear that it had to say something significant about the laity. The bishops assembled in St. Peter's wanted to affirm Catholic Action. They wanted to acknowledge the many contributions the laity make to the life and mission of the Church. They wanted to make up for centuries of official Church teaching that had ignored, minimized, or even denigrated the life of the lay person.

In a famous speech during the council debates, Bishop Stephen Laszlo of Austria illustrated the Church's long indifference to the laity with a concrete example. He described going to look up the word "laity" in the *Kirchenlexikon*—a multivolume theological encyclopedia from the 19th century. The entry on "Laity" read simply: "See clergy." There was no positive treatment. The laity were literally defined in terms of their subordination to the hierarchy.

(I got a feel for this unflattering attitude toward the laity while I was working on my own dissertation, which I wrote on an old computer whose spell-checker kept trying to change the word "laity" to *leper!*)

Thanks to those theologians whose work Fr. Hesburgh admired—luminaries like Karl Rahner, Edward Schillebeeckx, Gerard Philips, and, above all, the French Dominican Yves Congar, Vatican II was able to offer a more positive theological description of the lay person. The council did so in two ways.

First, the council affirmed unambiguously that the mission of the laity is rooted in our shared baptism. Baptism (followed by confirmation and Eucharist) initiates us into a community. As members of this community, we all have an active role to play. We all share in this community's mission to serve and celebrate the reign of God in our midst. Over the centuries, baptism had been reduced to an almost magical rite, hastily administered after birth, whose sole purpose was to wipe away original sin. Vatican II recovered a more ancient vision: Baptism draws us into a community and sends us out—in a variety of ways, over the course of our lives—on a mission to share the Gospel with others.

Baptism brands everyone an apostle. (Fr. Hesburgh's dissertation, which was published as *Theology of Catholic Action*, was originally titled "The Relation of the Sacramental Characters of Baptism and Confirmation to the Lay Apostolate.") Baptism calls all of us to spread the Good News. Thus the mission of the Church does not trickle down from Christ to the hierarchy to the laity (who are to "See clergy"). Our Catholic leaders do not "own" Christ's mission and then beneficently bestow it on the people in the pews. The laity do not "help out" with work that belongs to someone else. According to Vatican II, baptism brings us all into the Body of Christ and the People of God—a powerful image of Church emphasized in the council texts. Through baptism, Christ himself calls each of us to serve.

As the Decree on the Lay Apostolate put it: "Lay people's right and duty to be apostles derives from their union with Christ their head. Inserted as they are in the mystical body of Christ by baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit in confirmation, it is by the Lord himself that they are assigned to the apostolate" (n. 3).

Second, the council offered a more positive theology by describing the secular world as the graced context that gives distinctive shape to the lay apostolate. The laity are *secular*—and that is not a slur. For the secular is understood here not as some Godforsaken wasteland separate from the Church. Instead, the bishops at Vatican II used that word to talk about ordinary life. In the world of family and friends, work and recreation, politics and culture, God must be present.

[The laity] live in the world, in each and every one of the world's occupations and callings and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, form the context of their existence. There they are called by God to contribute to the sanctification of the world from within, like leaven, in the spirit of the Gospel, by fulfilling their own particular duties (Constitution on the Church, n. 31).

Overcoming centuries of Christian spirituality that had reduced "the world" to a site of sin and temptation, Vatican II saw it as the positive context that both informs the life of the laity and is itself transformed by their Christian witness. But even as the council described the "secular characteristic" of the laity, it did not insist on a rigid dichotomy between clergy in the Church and laity in the world. The documents easily admit that priests sometimes hold secular jobs. And the council affirms the many contributions that the laity were just beginning to make to important ministries within the Church.

The Vocations of the Laity Today

Following Vatican II, theological interest in the laity reached a kind of plateau, even as the activity of

Continued on page 4

The Vocations of the Laity

Continued from page 3

the laity skyrocketed—exploding across the Catholic world, and transforming the experience of church in the United States.

Some of the theological stasis came from the recognition that, despite all the positive things Vatican II had to say about the laity, the category itself was still basically a negative one. It is essentially a remainder concept, understood as one segment of the Church defined over and against the clergy. (If you don't believe me, try to define the word laity without using the word "not." It's not as easy as it sounds.) Thomas O'Meara reminds us that, in ordinary English, "lay person" refers to somebody outside their area of expertise, an amateur. ("Put it in lay man's terms.") The word carries negative connotations.

And yet, even given the constraints of this category, there is a way in which the word "laity" has gathered a more positive aura in the post-conciliar Church—thanks to the phenomenal contributions of active lay women and lay men both in the Church and in the world. They have made what is a negative English word into a positive Catholic one.

When I think about my own local context—teaching theology at a Catholic university—it is hard to overstate the transformations brought about by the rise of the laity. Fifty years ago, most Catholic colleges and universities were led by a small group of priests or women religious. Today, this leadership has been totally transformed, as boards of trustees are now regularly comprised of mostly lay men and women, professionals who bring their "secular" expertise to serve the Catholic educational enterprise. (Fr. Hesburgh always said that his own decision to transfer control of Notre Dame to a lay board of trustees in 1967 stood alongside the admission of women to the university as his greatest achievements as president. Might we see these decisions flowing from a vision that can be traced back to his early doctoral work on the laity?) As the number of priests and religious decline, a variety of programs have been built up to help draw lay administrators, faculty, and staff into the charism of these Catholic institutions. The goal is to encourage lay people to take ownership of the Catholic mission of these schools.

In my own discipline, theology, I see another level of this lay transformation. The largest professional association of Catholic theologians in this country, the Catholic Theological Society of America, was once an exclusively male clerical club. Now its membership is largely lay. In my own parish, another level. Once, a priest pastor would have reigned supreme in my parish, helped out by one or two assistant pastors, with sisters in the school and a few lay people employed to answer the phone or clean the church.

Today, our pastor is surrounded by (and held accountable to) a large team of lay ecclesial ministers, full-time professionals who plan liturgies, direct religious education programs, lead youth groups, head social outreach, and coordinate thousands of lay volunteers serving in dozens of parish ministries.

These examples can be multiplied. And this issue of *C21 Resources* offers just a glimpse of the diversity of ways lay Catholics are living out their faith in the Church and in the world today. Look around. Who is running our Catholic schools and diocesan offices? Who is leading our hospitals and social service agencies? Who are our canon lawyers, our social commentators, our chaplains, our youth ministers, our models of the committed Christian? Bishops and priests may still be the public face of the Church. But Catholics inspired by the Second Vatican Council know that, together, *we are all* the Church.

In light of the multiple crises facing the Catholic Church today, in light of scandal and disillusionment, apathy and anger, in light of the institutional reforms that are so desperately needed but that seem to be going nowhere, it is good to keep this broader ecclesiological vision in mind: *We are all the Church*.

Yves Congar, whose early research on the laity was so influential at Vatican II, recognized that thinking about the laity forces us to think about the Church itself, the whole people of God, a pilgrim people on the way to the reign of God. It is not just a matter of adding a paragraph or a chapter on the laity to a narrative about the Church that revolves around the hierarchy. "At bottom," Congar concluded, "there can be only one sound and sufficient theology of the laity, and that is a 'total ecclesiology.'"

Almost 50 years after the council, we still face the challenge of living out that total vision of the Church, that total ecclesiology. We are still working to embody that vision concretely in the structures of our Church and in the rhythms of our lives. The following essays are a small sample of attempts to do this—to live out the grace and commitment that mark the vocation of the laity.

—

Endnotes

EDWARD P. HAHNENBERG is the editor of this issue of *C21 Resources*.

For more information from current or prior issues of *C21 Resources*, or to review our most recent discussion questions, please visit:

www.bc.edu/c21resources

The Decree on the Lay Apostolate

BY THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

Vatican II's Decree on the Lay Apostolate draws on the council's Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), which describes the laity as full members of the people of God, baptized disciples who share in Christ's mission both in the Church and in the world.

Participation of Laity in the Church's Mission

The Church was founded so that by spreading Christ's kingdom throughout the world to the glory of God the Father, every man and woman may share in the saving work of redemption, and so that through them the entire world may be truly directed toward Christ. Every activity of the mystical body, with this in view, goes by the name of apostolate, which the Church exercises through all its members, though in various ways. In fact, the Christian vocation is, of its nature, a vocation to the apostolate as well. In the organism of a living body no member is purely passive: sharing in the life of the body each member also shares in its activity. The same is true in the body of Christ which is the Church, the whole body, "when each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth" (Eph 4:16). Between the members of this body there exists, further, such a unity and solidarity (see Eph 4:16) that members who fail to do their best to promote the growth of the body must be considered unhelpful both to the Church and to themselves.

In the Church, there is diversity of ministry but unity of mission. To the apostles and their successors, Christ has entrusted the office of teaching, sanctifying, and governing in his name and by his power. Lay people too, sharing in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ, play their part in the mission of the whole people of God

in the Church and in the world. In the concrete, their apostolate is exercised when they work to evangelize people and make them holy; it is exercised, too, when they endeavor to have the Gospel spirit permeate and improve the temporal order, going about it in a way that bears clear witness to Christ and helps forward the salvation of humanity. The characteristic of the lay state being a life led in the midst of the world and of secular affairs, lay people are called by God to make of their apostolate, through the vigor of their Christian spirit, a leaven in the world.

Foundations of the Lay Apostolate

Lay people's right and duty to be apostles derives from their union with Christ their head. Inserted as they are in the mystical body of Christ by baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit in confirmation, it is by the Lord himself that they are assigned to the apostolate. If they are consecrated a royal priesthood and a holy nation (see 1 Pet 2:4-10), this is so that in all their actions they may offer spiritual sacrifices and bear witness to Christ all the world over. Charity, which is, as it were, the soul of the whole apostolate, is given to them and nourished in them by the sacraments, and especially by the Eucharist.

The apostolate is lived in faith, hope, and charity poured out by the Holy Spirit into the hearts of all the members of the Church. And the precept of charity, which is the Lord's greatest

commandment, urges all Christians to work for the glory of God through the coming of his kingdom and for the communication of eternal life to all, that they may know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent (see Jn 17:3).

On all Christians, accordingly, rests the noble obligation of working to bring all people the whole world over to hear and accept the divine message of salvation.

The Holy Spirit sanctifies the people of God through the ministry and the sacraments and, for the exercise of the apostolate, gives the faithful special gifts besides (see 1, Cor 12:7), "allotting them to each just as the Spirit chooses" (1 Cor 12:11), so that, putting at the service of others the grace received, all may be "good stewards of God's varied gifts" (1 Pet 4:10), for the building up of the whole body in charity (see Eph 4:16). From the reception of these charisms, even the most ordinary ones, there follow for all Christian believers the right and duty to use them in the Church and in the world for the good of humanity and the development of the Church, to use them in the freedom of the Holy Spirit who "chooses where to blow" (Jn 3:8), and at the same time in communion with the sisters and brothers in Christ, and with the pastors especially. It is for the pastors to pass judgment on the authenticity and good use of these gifts, not certainly with a view to quenching the Spirit but to testing everything and keeping what is good (see 1 Th 5:12, 19, 21).

—

Endnotes

"Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People/Apostolicam actuositatem," nn. 2-3, in *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents*, ed. Austin Flanery (Northport, New York: Costello Publishing, 1996), 403-442, extract from 405-407.

The Rise of the Theology of the Laity

BY EDWARD P. HAHNENBERG

*Vatican II's prophetic call for a more active laity in the Church and in the world did not fall out of thin air. Instead, the council was building on a theology of lay activity that grew out of the ashes of World War II, found strength within a renewed understanding of the nature-grace relationship, and took concrete shape in a host of initiatives launched by lay Catholics in the years leading up to the council. The following history is adapted from the author's forthcoming book, **Awakening Vocation: A Theology of Christian Call.***

The 20th century saw the greatest resurgence of lay activity in the history of the Catholic Church. It was a movement long in the making. In fact, to really appreciate the significance of the rise of the laity, we have to see it in the context of the Church's centuries-long attempt to come to terms with the modern world.

Vatican II's theology of the laity was not created whole cloth at the council. It can be traced back at least to the intellectual Enlightenment and political revolutions of the 18th century and, beyond that, to the Reformation, the Renaissance, and the general disintegration of late medieval society. It owes as much to the Industrial Revolution and the rapid urbanization of the 19th century as it does to the upheavals of the 20th. All of these cultural, political, and economic transformations gave birth to what we have come to call "the modern world." And it was the Church's confrontation with the modern world that set the stage for Vatican II's teaching on the laity.

From one perspective, the emergence of the modern world meant a growing separation between the institution of the Church and the lives of Christians. New philosophies freed individuals from previous

assumptions and past authorities. New cities separated people from traditional patterns of family and village life. New factories cut off workers from the fruits of their labor. In the face of all this newness, the Church seemed increasingly distant. The deep links between Church and society that had marked an earlier era could no longer be taken for granted. And the Church was forced to ask a new question—or to ask an old question in a new way—How was it to relate to "the world"?

Two world wars would bring home, in a particularly horrific way, these broader social upheavals. What was the role of the Christian within such a world? Yves Congar, a Dominican priest and theologian who spent much of World War II in a German internment camp, reflected on the war and its impact on theology:

Then came the war with its train of fateful events, captivity, the exodus on the roads, the fraternity of distress, the comradeship of the Resistance, all contriving to lead us into the rich but demanding experience of a laity aware of its obligation to active existence in the Church, and to the sense of the

immense extent of ignorance of the Gospel as well. The real world of men was much more remote and foreign to the faith than we had thought even after so many searchings. But on the other hand priests and faithful alike had undergone experiences and uncovered tracks which the years of peace had not hitherto revealed.¹

One might expect, given this sad history of separation and violence, that a spirituality of withdrawal would develop. One might expect that the Church would respond to all of these threats with anxiety and defensiveness. And surely there was a fair share of this reaction, seen early on in the campaign of Pope Pius IX against "modernism." But what is remarkable is that the experiences of secularization, industrialization, and global war led not only to resignation and withdrawal. These experiences also sparked a spirituality of engagement—an attempt to speak the Gospel anew in this newly independent world. For Catholics during the middle decades of the 20th century, this spirituality and theology of engagement came to center on what was then called "the lay man."

"The upshot," Congar continued, "was that in the euphoric postwar years of liberty regained, 1946–1947, the question of the status of the laity in the Church forced itself upon us in a new way." Following the Second World War there was an explosion of interest within the Catholic Church in all things lay. Major conferences were held at the Vatican in 1951 and 1957. An avalanche of publications on the topic followed.

Much of the early scholarly work on the laity came as a response to the many lay initiatives that sprung up across Europe after the war. These

movements—some of which were already active in the 1920s and 1930s—were grouped together under the title “Catholic Action.” Church leaders wanted to promote these movements at the pastoral level. Popes Pius XI and Pius XII both endorsed Catholic Action and repeatedly called lay Catholics to take their faith and live it out in the world. But theologians involved with these groups—from the Young Christian Workers to the various Marion sodalities—sought out a deeper theological foundation. They were not content to describe these activities simply as the extension of the hierarchy’s work out into the world—a way of asserting the Church in a place where the clergy could no longer reach. This was the vision of Pius XI, who defined Catholic Action as “the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Church’s hierarchy.” Instead, theologians asked how the world itself impacted the life and activity of the laity. In other words, they asked: Is “the world” an obstacle to the apostolate of the laity? Is it simply the arena within which they work? Or, rather, does the world contribute in a helpful way to the distinctive character of the lay apostolate? Is there something positive that needs to be affirmed in the ordinary, daily life of the lay faithful?

Key to the rise of a theology of the laity was overcoming the negative

assessment of “the world” that marked so much of Christian spirituality over the centuries. In the years before the council, new developments in theology fed into a more positive affirmation in a number of ways. Scripture scholars argued that Jesus’ phrase “the kingdom of God” did not refer simply to a future and far-off heaven. Rather, it also evoked the unfolding of the reign of God in history now. Theologians like Karl Rahner used their critical study of early Church councils to explore what it meant for God to become incarnate and truly enter into human life. Gustave Thils developed a theology of “earthly realities” in the mid-1940s, anticipating “creation theology” by decades. But most important of all was a basic rethinking—fueled by Henri de Lubac’s historical studies and Rahner’s transcendental philosophy—of the separation between nature and grace that had plagued so much of Catholic theology since the Reformation. Fed by these various currents, the theologies of the laity that took shape on the eve of Vatican II shared a fundamental recognition that the lay person’s place “in the world” offered the positive content for articulating the lay person’s distinctive Christian identity and mission. Largely abandoned was the basically negative assessment of the world that shaped centuries of Christian spirituality, theology, and Church policy

on the laity. Instead, earthly realities were now seen to have a value and goodness that is their own.

Vatican II stands apart from all previous general councils in the amount of attention it gave to the life and activity of lay people in the Church. After centuries of neglect, the laity were brought to the center of the Church’s consciousness and placed at the heart of its most official pronouncements. Given this historic shift within an institution so shy of change, what is remarkable is how uncontroversial the whole question of the laity was at the council itself. The initial draft of Vatican II’s document on the Church, which in all other respects was roundly criticized, already contained within it a quite positive chapter on the laity. Though the whole document was rejected and sent back to committee, the original core of the chapter on the laity survived. Throughout the various revisions of this chapter, reactions came mostly in the form of speeches that praised the laity’s contributions to the Church and the world. Bishops wanted more said about the laity, not less. The final version of the chapter on the laity passed almost unanimously, with only eight negatives out of 2,236 votes cast.

Perhaps this relatively smooth progression came from the fact that Vatican II did not set out to articulate an original theology of the lay state; rather, its goal was to promote the activities of lay people. And yet, despite that focus, the council could not avoid addressing the theological foundations of this activity. Thus a theology of the laity emerged deliberately and clearly, even if in the end it remained somewhat general. What seems to have unified the council’s approach was a widely shared desire to craft a theology of the laity in *positive* terms.

This positive approach was stressed by Yves Congar in the years leading up to the council. Congar—who became a theological advisor at Vatican II, and thus helped to shape its statements on the laity—argued that over the course of the

FOR FURTHER READING

Awakening Vocation: A Theology of Christian Call, by Edward P. Hahnenberg (Liturgical Press, 2010)

Called and Chosen: Toward a Spirituality for Lay Leaders, edited by Zeni Fox and Regina Bechtle (Rowman & Littlefield, 2005)

Catholicism at the Crossroads: How the Laity Can Save the Church, by Paul Lakeland (Continuum, 2007)

Family Ethics: Practices for Christians, by Julie Hanlon Rubio (Georgetown University Press, 2010)

The Laity and Christian Education: Apostolicam Actuositatem, Gravissimum Educationis, by Dolores R. Leckey, from the Rediscovering Vatican II Series (Paulist Press, 2006)

Theology of Ministry, by Thomas F. O’Meara (Paulist Press, 1999)

Continued on page 11

What Vocation Shortage?

BY RUSSELL SHAW

Russell Shaw challenges our Catholic tendency to limit the idea of “vocation” to priesthood and religious life. God’s call reaches out to all of us and touches each of us.

Despite all the talk about a vocation shortage, there is in fact no such thing in the Catholic Church. The real shortage is that of vocational discernment, and that is a very different problem. The shortfall in the number of candidates for the priesthood, the consecrated life, and other forms of Christian witness and service would quickly disappear if many more Catholics, and ideally all, made it a practice to discern, accept, and live out their unique, irreplaceable callings from God—their personal vocations.

The idea of personal vocation and the practice of discernment are also the key to removing clericalism from Catholic life once and for all and replacing it with a healthy understanding of clergy-lay relationships. Personal vocation and vocational discernment also are crucial to helping the laity, along with everyone else, understand and embrace their proper roles in carrying out the Church’s mission.

These are large claims, of course. In weighing them, it is useful to begin with the three distinct but related senses that the word “vocation” has in religious talk.

The first of these is the common Christian vocation received in baptism and strengthened by confirmation. In very general terms, the common vocation consists in what follows from the commitment of faith: loving and serving God above all else and loving and serving one’s neighbor as oneself, and so collaborating in the redemptive work of Christ that is the mission of the Church. In 1964 the Second Vatican Council offered a succinct but clear statement of the idea when it said the baptized are “appointed by their baptismal character

to Christian religious worship” and have an obligation to “profess before people the faith they have received” (“Dogmatic Constitution on the Church,” No. 11).

The second meaning of the word refers to what traditionally is called “state in life.” The clerical state, the consecrated life, Christian marriage, the life of the single lay person in the world—these are states in life. They are specifications of the common Christian vocation, chosen by over-arching commitments that set us on long-term paths that shape our lives by the countless specific choices and actions needed to see them through to the end. Christian states in life are meant to complement and reinforce one another, not to compete.

The third sense in which “vocation” is used is that of personal vocation. It is the unique combination of commitments, relationships, obligations, opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses through which the common Christian vocation and a state in life are concretely expressed in the case of someone trying to discern, accept, and live out God’s will; it is the particular role intended by God for each of us in his redemptive plan. “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10). Or, as Pope John Paul II said in a message for World Vocations Day in 2001, “Every life is a vocation.”

When Catholics speak of vocation, they usually mean state in life. In fact, they usually mean priesthood or religious life. A “vocations director” is someone in a diocese or religious institute responsible for recruiting and screening those who think they may be called to be priests

or religious; a “vocations program” is a program with this purpose. From one point of view, there is nothing wrong with speaking of vocation in this way. Priesthood and religious life really are states of life and, for some people, central parts of their callings from God. From another point of view, however, exclusive emphasis on vocation as state of life—and, practically speaking, as a call to be a priest or religious—can do much harm.

The most obvious harm is in communicating to those not called to be priests or religious the message, “You don’t have a vocation.” That may be disappointing for some and welcome news for others; but in either case it is a disincentive to continuing discernment, acceptance, and living out of God’s will for oneself. Here is one of the root causes of the clericalist mentality still so widespread among Catholics.

The idea of personal vocation is the antidote. Everybody has one—God calls every member of the Church by name. Seen in this light, the challenge is not to find out whether you have a vocation but to identify the vocation you unquestionably have.

The idea of personal vocation is unfamiliar to most Catholics today, but it is hardly new. It is rooted in the Pauline doctrine of charisms and of the Church as the body of Christ. Other classic sources of Christian wisdom have developed the insight further. St. Francis de Sales, for instance, spoke of personal vocation in his *Treatise on the Love of God*, though he did not use the term. It is not God’s will that everyone live the evangelical counsels, he points out, “but only such counsels as are suitable according to differences in persons, times, occasions, and abilities.” Writers like St. Ignatius Loyola and Jean Pierre de Caussade, S.J., suggest the same.

Cardinal John Henry Newman offered a particularly insightful ex-

position of personal vocation in one of the sermons he gave while still an Anglican, “Divine Calls.” Newman emphasized the here-and-now, ongoing character of this uniquely personal call: “For in truth we are not called once only, but many times; all through our life Christ is calling us. He called us first in baptism; but afterwards also.... He works through our natural faculties and circumstances of life. Still what happens to us in providence is in all essential respects what His voice was to those whom He addressed when on earth.”

Given the existence of this powerful and persuasive testimony, why have Catholics been slow to grasp the idea of personal vocation? One probable reason is that Martin Luther was an enthusiastic exponent of this truth. “Everyone must tend his own vocation and work,” he wrote. But Luther also rejected the idea of mediation in the spiritual realm and, with it, priesthood and religious life. The reaction this provoked among Catholics helped make the idea of personal vocation suspect in Catholic circles for centuries.

In modern times, nevertheless, the concept can be found in the documents of the Second Vatican Council and in many postconciliar documents of the magisterium. No one has analyzed the idea more carefully or promoted it more vigorously than Pope John Paul II, who wrote about personal vocation long before becoming pope (in *Love and Responsibility*, which appeared in Poland in 1960) and returned to it time and again during his pontificate. In his first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*, published in 1979, he said:

For the whole of the community of the People of God and for each member of it what is in question is not just a specific social membership; rather, for each and every one what is essential is a particular “vocation.” Indeed, the Church as the People of God is also “Christ’s Mystical Body.” Membership in that body has for its source a particular call, united with the

saving action of grace. Therefore, if we wish to keep in mind this community of the People of God...we must see first and foremost Christ saying in a way to each member of the community: “Follow me.” (No. 21)

The idea of personal vocation is an important complement to Vatican II’s teaching about the universal call to holiness. All members of the faithful, not just a select few, are called “to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love,” the council declares (“Dogmatic Constitution on the Church,” No. 39). But there is not much guidance for living this out, and even less incentive to do so, in telling people that if God has not called them to be clerics or religious, they do not have a vocation in any meaningful sense.

Personal vocation puts this matter in a radically different light. Everyone has a personal vocation, an unrepeatable call from God to play a particular role in his redemptive plan and the mission of the Church. The task of each is to discern God’s will, accept it, and live it out. That is responding to the universal call to be holy.

Contrary to an elitist view of vocational discernment, which tends to treat it as an exercise for a select few, discernment is for everybody. “The fundamental objective of the formation of the lay faithful is an ever-clearer discovery of one’s vocation and the ever-greater willingness to live it out,” Pope John Paul II says in his post-synod document on the laity, *Christifideles Laici* (1989).

To carry out this mandate, parishes need to become schools of vocational discernment—places where liturgy, catechesis, and spiritual direction encourage parishioners to engage in continuing, prayerful reflection on what God is asking of them. The effort should start with children (in an age-appropriate manner) and continue with adolescents, young adults, and adults at every stage of their life journey. Special opportunities—retreats, days of recollection—

should be provided for those who have major vocational choices to make. The aim is discernment, not recruitment.

But, someone might object, won’t emphasizing personal vocation distract people from heeding calls to the priesthood and consecrated life? Won’t it make the real-life vocation shortage worse?

The answer is no. If many more Catholics practiced ongoing discernment regarding their personal vocations, many more would discover that they are called to the priesthood or consecrated life. The best solution to the dearth of new candidates—and to many other problems in contemporary Catholic life as well—is personal vocation. Indeed, it may be the only one.

—

Endnotes

RUSSELL SHAW is a writer and journalist in Washington, D.C. He is former secretary for public affairs of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops/United States Catholic Conference.

Russell Shaw, “What Vocation Shortage?” *America* 190 (March 29, 2004): 10–12.

Reprinted with permission of America Press Inc. (2004). All rights reserved.

PRAYER

GOD of love and mercy, you call us to be your people,
you gift us with your abundant grace.

Make us a holy people, radiating the fullness of your love.

Form us into a community, a people who care,
expressing your compassion.

Remind us day after day of our baptismal call to serve,
with joy and courage.

Teach us how to grow in wisdom and grace and joy
in your presence.

Through Jesus and in your Spirit,
we make this prayer.

USCCB, *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium* (Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 1995)

Doubting Thomas, the Crisis, and the Laity

BY ROBERT L. BELOIN

The ongoing sexual abuse crisis demands more accountability for the hierarchy and less passivity for the laity. Preaching on the gospel story of doubting Thomas, Fr. Robert Beloin calls the laity to be skeptical, without becoming cynical—but above all to be courageous in helping the Church to change.

I.

Thomas is often described as “doubting Thomas” and so first a word about doubt. On one level, Thomas represents the reality of doubt in the life of a believer. Doubt has gotten a bad rap in religious discourse. Faith is good; doubt is often seen as the enemy of faith.

We live in a university environment where we are taught to question everything. We live in a context that teaches us to be skeptical. But being skeptical, in an exaggerated sense turned in on itself and devoid of hope, can lead one to become cynical. We can inadvertently move from a healthy, skeptical questioning to a cynical, dismissive attitude that manifests itself as a scornful or jaded negativity—especially a general distrust of the integrity or professed motives of others. We have to be careful of that temptation in today’s Church. I encourage you to be skeptical, of course, but be careful not to become cynical. Be attentive to the critical difference!

Without the capacity to doubt, there is no progress or improvement and one’s faith can remain very immature. So bring your doubts to prayer and study. Think of doubt as a threshold experience: You were in one room and doubt makes you cross a threshold into another room. Ask for the gift of grace that your honest doubts can lead you to a deeper, more mature Catholic faith.

II.

But beyond doubt, Thomas teaches us something else. And beholding the beauty of the something else can also make us feel more alive.

Note that the disciples were behind locked doors fearing some of the Jewish leaders who were opposed to Jesus. (“The Jews” in John’s gospel is not a reference to all the Jewish people.) Thomas was not there. He was not afraid; he was out and about. Was he unaware of the danger? With everyone else hiding in fear, he probably knew their fears but refused to live in fear himself. What a model of courage he is for us as we try to live lives of discipleship!

We need Thomas’s courage to live in the Church today. With so much disheartening publicity about

the Church, with so much confusion about how things could have possibly gotten so bad, it would be easy to go behind locked doors and keep our religion private, away from the messiness of community, imperfect by definition. We need to be like Thomas: courageous, not afraid, out there, and not hiding behind locked doors.

Our Church is in a mess because of what might be called the conditions for a “perfect storm.” Perhaps you remember the summer movie of that title in 2000 that described the actual events surrounding the sinking of the sword-fishing vessel, the *Andrea Gail*, on October 28, 1991.

To have a perfect storm, three meteorological events have to occur simultaneously in the same location: a large high-pressure system, a low-pressure system traveling along a slow-moving cold front, and the tropical moisture from a hurricane, in that case Hurricane Grace.

Our Church is experiencing a perfect storm: Three dynamics have gotten us into a heap of trouble: first, the lack of a robust accountability for priests—they are only accountable to the bishop; second, the lack of a robust accountability for bishops—they are only accountable to the pope; and third, a passive laity that does not demand a voice in the important organizational affairs of the Church where their expertise could make such a difference. Given those three factors, a perfect storm would inevitably hit—it was only a matter of time.

When I taught at the American College in Louvain, I used to say that healthy accountability is one level up and one level down. Yes, a pastor is accountable to his bishop but he is also really accountable to the parish council and finance council. We are blessed here at the chapel with a structure where I am accountable to Archbishop Mansell and in a very real way I am also accountable to the board of trustees. The bishop is, of course, accountable to the pope. But in a very real way, a wise bishop also sees himself as accountable to the diocese’s pastoral council and presbyterial council and does not simply relegate them to an advisory status as is the customary structure.

The factor of a passive laity does not get much attention but it too is a factor in our crisis. There is a parish in this archdiocese where a new pastor arrived and announced that since the parish never had a finance council he was not going to start one and he was disbanding the parish council because he said, “I don’t do meetings.” The response of the laity was “OK, Father.” There is another parish in this archdiocese where a new pastor disbanded all the small church communities that had been meeting in the parish for more than four years. The response of the laity, with some objections, was ultimately “OK, Father.” Some priests see a parish as “their parish” and too many parishioners passively accept it.

As we heard in our three-day conference in 2003 on Governance, Accountability and the Future of the Catholic Church, our Church is the last feudal system in the western world. In a feudal system accountability only goes up: The fief is accountable to the vassal, the vassal to the lord, and the lord to the king. That mentality is coming to a quick and necessary end. (CEOs, who worked with no robust accountability structure and who drove their companies into the ground, can also take note.)

III.

We are in for some painful days. After it all, the Church will emerge the better, the holier. Several new movements in the Church, such as the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management, can help to get us there.

There is a clear awareness that changes need to be made; the Church that we love cannot go back to business as usual. Living in this period, we will know what it was like to live

during the Reformation that began with Martin Luther in 1517 and the Counter-Reformation that began with the Council of Trent in 1545 and ended in 1648 after the 30 Years’ War. Read your Church history and see those 131 years of turmoil. As I said in my Easter homily, the Second Vatican Council taught that the Church is *semper reformanda*—always reforming. The Church did not collapse over turmoil in the past and the Church will not collapse now. But it will have to change and because of your baptismal calling, you need to step up to the plate and be an important part of this dynamic, changing, improving Church.

So, it’s a privileged time to be Catholic: helping the Church to make changes for the sake of future generations. Come to the Eucharist this morning and pray for the grace to see how you can bring your gifts and talents to promote the improvement of the Church. It will not be easy. For the journey, like Thomas, be skeptical but don’t become cynical and more than all, take courage and with courage work and pray that our Church may become something of beauty once again. For in the presence of beauty—we feel more alive.

Endnotes

FR. ROBERT BELOIN is chaplain at St. Thomas More, the Catholic Chapel and Center at Yale University.

Fr. Bob Beloin, “Homily for the Second Sunday of Easter,” St. Thomas More Chapel at Yale University, 2010. Extracts published online on *America Magazine’s* “Good Word” blog, by Tim Reidy, April 14, 2010.

Reprinted with permission of Fr. Bob Beloin.

The Rise of the Theology of the Laity

Continued from page 7

Church’s history the laity were defined in a basically negative way. They were either contrasted with the monk in terms of holiness or contrasted with the clergy in terms of authority. This contrast gave rise to what Congar called the “absurdly over-simplified formula, ‘Spiritual things appertain to the priest, temporal things to the lay man.’”² For Congar, the laity cannot be excluded from the realm of the spiritual and the sacred. As baptized believers, they too are ordered to heavenly things. But it comes by virtue of their own distinctive state of life and orbit of activity. Lay people are called to the same end as clergy and monks—

union with God, a life of holiness, and participation in the mission of Christ. However, their way of achieving this end differs. This led Congar to his own affirmation: lay people “*do God’s work in so far as it must be done in and through the work of the world.*”³

In the years following the council, Congar would come to nuance this earlier treatment. He did not want Vatican II’s recognition of the laity’s secular orientation to feed a return to the old dichotomy of clergy-in-the-church versus laity-in-the-world. Thus he argued that Vatican II’s teaching on the secular character of the laity must always be read in the context of the council’s full affirmation of the laity’s place and participation in the Church. Before discussing the respective roles of different individuals and groups, we must affirm that all of the baptized—clergy

and laity—together constitute the one People of God and Body of Christ. In this context, as the council’s Decree on the Lay Apostolate states, “Lay people too, sharing in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, play their part in the mission of the whole people of God in the church and in the world” (n. 2).

Endnotes

EDWARD P. HAHNENBERG is the editor of this issue of *C21 Resources*.

Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Awakening Vocation: A Theology of Christian Call* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2010), 34–38.

1 Yves M.-J. Congar, “My Path—Findings in the Theology of Laity and Ministries,” *The Jurist* 32 (1972): 169–88, at 172.

2 Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, trans. Donald Attwater (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1965), 24.

3 Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, 19 (emphasis in original).

The Public Vocation of Christian Parents

BY JULIE HANLON RUBIO

For most lay people, marriage and family life profoundly shape the way they respond to Christ's call. Julie Hanlon Rubio reminds us that Christian families do not only look inward, caring for their own; they also look outward, seeking ways to serve others and transform the world in the light of Christ. Amidst contemporary debates over society's responsibility for the family, Rubio challenges us to consider the family's responsibility for society.

Four Tasks of Family

It is important to think of family not simply as a private haven, but as a community with a mission that goes beyond itself. In *On the Family (Familiaris consortia)*, John Paul II does just this. He defines the family as “a community of life and love” that has four major tasks. Each of these tasks has public dimensions. The first is the most obvious: The family must “guard, reveal and communicate love!” The pope distinguishes himself from earlier popes by the inspired way in which he describes married love and demands that it rise to the heights for which it is destined. His personalist language represents an attempt to take seriously the importance that modern men and women give to spousal relationships. The love among family members is primary not because it is most important, but because it is the foundation for the rest of what the family does. This is the beginning, not the end.

Second to love comes the task of “serving life.” According to the pope, this means that parents have a responsibility to serve life by nurturing children and by bringing life to the world (no. 28). Having children is only the first step. Education is an important responsibility, and it includes the task of instilling in children “the essential values of human life”—especially the idea that

possessions do not make human beings what they are—and the responsibility to adopt a simple lifestyle (no. 37). He also affirms that when mothers and fathers teach their children about the Gospel, “they become fully parents, in that they are begetters not only of bodily life but also of the life that through the Spirit’s renewal flows from the cross and resurrection of Christ” (no. 39). This seems to indicate that passing on the Christian faith is more important than the awesome process of passing on life. Here, as in the Gospel itself,

the spiritual and, I would argue, public duty is placed above (but in relation to) the private duty. This emphasis on the spiritual is made dear when John Paul II writes that families have a “spiritual fecundity” by which they share with others the self-giving love they nurture within (no. 41). Families are called to respond to all of God’s children with compassion. Serving life is much more than having babies.

The third task to which Pope John Paul II calls families further indicates that families are not simply oriented toward their own good. Families are called to participate in the development of society, for “far from being closed in on itself, the family is by its nature and vocation open to other families and to society and undertakes its social role” (no. 42). This means that families “cannot stop short at procreation and education” (no. 44); they have distinct and fundamental social and political duties (nos. 44, 47). Specifically, the pope asks families first to practice hospitality, opening their table and their home to those who are



Photo courtesy of BC Office of Marketing Communications.

not as fortunate as they are, second, to become politically involved, assisting in the transformation of society; and third, to practice a preferential option for the poor, manifesting a “special concern for the hungry, the poor, the old, the sick, drug victims, and those with no family” (no. 47). All of these practices are part of the social mission of the family. This mission is not optional, nor is it an “add-on” that families are to do after the really important tasks are done. It is, according to Pope John Paul II, a fundamental part of who families are and what they are called to do. I would describe this activity as a crucial part of the family’s public vocation. It is what they do as a community of love in the world.

Finally, the pope uses the “domestic church” imagery—which received renewed attention at Vatican II—to suggest that families must serve the Church as well as one another (no. 21). As a “Church in miniature,” the family evangelizes its members, witnesses to the world, uses its home as a sanctuary (for rituals of prayer, sacrament, and sacramentals), and serves the broader community—for, like the Church, the family is a servant of humanity (nos. 49-

64). Here again, the emphasis is on the public role of the family.

At each point in his description of the ideal family, he implies that families are about more than themselves. They are communities of love, but they are not inwardly focused. They serve life by giving birth, physically and spiritually. They serve society, especially the

It is important to think of family not simply as a private haven, but as a community with a mission that goes beyond itself.

poorest members. They are the Church in their homes and, as such, contribute to its ecclesial mission. His emphasis on the social responsibilities of the family indicates that Christian parenting requires something different of parents than focusing only on the family. The genius of Catholic teaching on the family is that it refuses to limit families by telling them to just take care of their own. It questions the ethic of parenting in a U.S. culture that centers on

the duty of parents to sacrifice for their children. The pervasiveness of this ethic is apparent in, among other things, the continuing guilt experienced by mothers who work outside the home and rely on daycare, the general sense that one must put one’s family’s safety before anything else in choosing a home, and the widespread assumption that a father’s primary duty is to provide for his children. The pope’s definition of family seems to require instead that parents serve their children and the world.

—

Endnotes

JULIE HANLON RUBIO is an associate professor of Christian ethics at Saint Louis University. She is the author of *A Christian Theology of Marriage and Family* (Paulist, 2003) and *Family Ethics: Practices for Christians* (Georgetown University Press, 2010).

Julie Hanlon Rubio, “The Public Vocation of Christian Parents,” *The Living Light* 39 (Spring 2003): 67–78, extract from 74–76.

Reprinted with permission of *The Living Light*.

BEYOND THE DISTINCTION OF CLERGY AND LAITY

For a long time, the terms clergy and laity, based on the presence or absence of the rites of ordination (or tonsure), have divided the Church in two. The origin of the distinction in the second or third century had as its intention to enhance the ministry, to give church service to people who would work with dedication, basic commitment. The setting forth of the clergy was not first aimed at a caste nor at producing a passive people watching a priesthood, but at giving reverence to the sacramental presence of the Spirit and at taking seriously the forms of liturgy and church life. But if the clergy meant those chosen for God’s service, the corresponding laity were handed a religious existence that was secular, passive, removed. Yves Congar has written: “To look for a ‘spirituality of lay people’ in the Scriptures makes no sense. There is no mention of laity. Certainly the word exists, but it exists outside the Christian vocabulary.” In American usage, lay person means someone who is

ignorant of the area under discussion, who is out of the field of action. Most meanings of the word are not positive, and ecclesial usage cannot escape their overtones. As large numbers of baptized Christians undertake ministry in religious education, health care, or leadership, preaching in communities where no ordained ministers are available, neither biblical theology nor contemporary English meaning supports that word’s “aura,” which can denominate the baptized as laity in an extrinsic, passive sense. The fullness of baptism, the universal access to God, the avoidance of dualism, the basic equality of men and women in the kingdom of God—these biblical themes supersede subsequent divisions. One cannot make sense of today’s parish in light of the clergy/laity distinction interpreted in a strict dualism.

— Thomas F. O’Meara, *Theology of Ministry* (Paulist Press, 1999), 28.

The Community of Sant'Egidio

BY MARIO MARAZZITI AND AUSTEN IVEREIGH

One phenomenon of lay activity that is not often noticed in the United States is the growth of new “lay movements” around the world. These are associations of lay Catholics, usually existing outside of the parish structure, dedicated to prayer, ongoing formation, and various works of service. Introduced below is the Community of Sant'Egidio, a particularly prophetic movement that began in Rome and has become known worldwide for its presence to the poor and its commitment to peace, work that earned the group a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize.

“A Church that Is and Works to be a Church for Everyone, but Particularly the Poor” (Pope John XXIII). Like many of the remarks of Pope John XXIII, the vision of the Church he set out on the eve of the Second Vatican Council was not entirely grammatical, but it was profound. The early Christian community would have recognized that vision: a Church where everyone is welcome, but where a primary place is given to the unfortunate of society: a community gathered, in other words, to embrace the widow, the orphan, and the stranger.

There is no movement of lay people in the Church that better understands this vision than the community of Sant'Egidio. It goes back to the early 1970s, when a group of students used to gather in Rome's bohemian Trastevere district. Ten of them had been at school together at the Virgilio Lyceum in 1968, when social revolution was in the air. They, too, wanted to change the world, but through a radical living-out of the Gospel. At the edge of their vision was Pasolini's Rome of shanties filling with southern migrants. After school they headed there on their Vespas,

became friends with families, ran “popular schools” for children, built houses and fed people. At night they roomed in basements in Trastevere to establish solidarity with the immigrants, the unemployed, the elderly, and the lonely. Every day they prayed together, meeting in churches

The community's starting place is always personal: It does not work with the poor; nor does it have an outreach to the poor. The community is a friend to the poor.

to read the Gospel—an act that, despite the Second Vatican Council, was still regarded by many priests as Protestant. Piazza Sant'Egidio became a meeting place, a place for discussion of what it meant to be a church present among—and hearing the Good News from—the poor. They asked: “How can we spend our lives for others? How can we overcome the loneliness of the modern city? How can we change the world?”

Between 1968 and 1973 the group was known simply as *la comunità*. Then they leased from the government what had before 1870 been a Carmelite convent in the piazza Sant'Egidio, and took their name from the church attached to it. Sant'Egidio is an awkward name to pronounce in English—*sant edge-idyo*—and the saint himself (“Saint Gilles” in French, “St. Giles” in English) is not especially famous. But his portrait in the church expresses much of the essence of the community. It shows a monk protecting a doe with his hand, which has been pierced by an arrow; at a distance is a prince holding the bow from which the arrow has come. The community takes its name, in other words, from a man who protects the weak from the strong: a man of the Word of God, and a man whose life is dedicated to prayer, community, and hospitality. St. Giles was also, in the universe of the time, a global figure, who came from Thessalonika in the East but died in France. And he even manages to be ecumenical, a monk of the undivided Church that is both Western and Eastern. All these are characteristics of the community of Sant'Egidio.

It is easy to forget how, between the third and seventh centuries, ordinary men and women took to monastic life in order to be like the apostles and change the world. In the West, it was an experience intimately bound up with exposure to the Word of God through the continuous absorption of Scripture, especially the psalms. The monks lived by the work of their own hands, offered hospitality to strangers, and were assigned places in the choir, not according to their social rank or their clerical status, but according to their seniority in the community. They were, like St Benedict himself, lay people.

Members of Sant'Egidio—which

now number several thousand in Rome and several thousand more in cities across the world—are, like the monks of that time, unpretentious, preferring to be small with the small. The community is prophetic, yet ordinary; humble, yet ambitious for peace; firmly anchored in the Gospel, but open to all. Almost all of its 40,000 members in 60 countries are lay people with jobs and families who put prayer and friendship with the poor at the center of their lives. If they are people of education and privilege, they choose less demanding jobs in order to be more available for prayer and friendship.

No one can say how, exactly, a person becomes a part of the community; there are no vows or formal hierarchies as such. Whoever wants to come takes a step toward the community, which accepts him or her, notes the founder Andrea Riccardi. Joining, he says, is the result of two wills coming together. Riccardi acts as an abbatial figure and each of the local communities has a *responsible*, but the institutional structures are slight. The community now has a bishop—and a few priests. But they were all lay members of the community first.

Historically, therefore, the community identifies with that strand in the Church which ties St. Benedict of Nursia to St. Francis of Assisi—lay men and women whose intense relationship with the crucified and risen Jesus was shown in their relationship with the poor and their reading of Scriptures *sine glossa*. The community's work in reconciliation has its echo in St. Francis's taming of the wolf of Gubbio and in his crossing the Mediterranean at the height of the Crusades to seek dialogue with the Sultan Melk-el-Kamal.

Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, the former archbishop of Milan and an old friend of the community, recalls wandering the streets of Trastevere in the early 1970s. A Jesuit priest at the time, he was troubled by the division immediately after the Second Vatican Council between, on the one hand, those who favored commitment to the poor and the transformation of society, and those who,

on the other hand, put their emphasis on spiritual growth and prayer. There must be some way, he thought, that these two could be brought together. Later he met some members of the community who invited him to come and see them.

Then I began to understand [he would later write], to appreciate the living synthesis of the primacy of God, of prayer, and of listening to the Word; of taking God's Word seriously and, at the same time, of dedicating oneself in a concrete, effective way to the poor; of studying society and its problems attentively and with discernment. What happened to me has surely happened to many others in much the same way, whether they later joined the community of Sant'Egidio, or became friends of it in many different ways, as occurred with Paul, Aquilla, and Priscilla.

The community was unmistakably a child of the Second Vatican Council, with its talk of the priesthood of the laity and its call for Christians to return to the Scriptures. The year the students first met—1968—was also the time of student activism, of optimism, of revolution. Young people wanted to change the world.

So too did the community. But while it shared something of the spirit of 1968, the Sant'Egidio young people made a deliberate choice in favor of the Scriptures rather than ideology, rejecting both the Marxism of the time and the neoliberal capitalism that came later. Since 1989, some people might call this a "postmodern" refutation of the metanarratives—liberalism, Marxism, fascism, secularism—that have characterized the modern project. But Riccardi, an historian by profession, prefers to describe it as an option for history over ideology. He was struck, he said, by a line in a Godard film—"You have to move from existence to history."

History, the theologian Yves Congar told Riccardi, creates a profound sense of reality: It teaches complexity; it creates memory. The Bible is, in this sense, history.

Sant'Egidio rejected, in other words, the dichotomy of student radicalism between pure thought and pure action. Sant'Egidio's path was the classic Christian radical one of contemplation in action. The divisions in the Church of the 1970s that bothered Martini—the false choice between, on the one hand, struggling for the Kingdom (which implied an option for left-wing politics) or, on the other, a refuge in spirituality, a concentration on interiority, which downplayed engagement with human structures—were not, therefore, the community's reconciliation. The community's starting place is always personal: It does not *work with* the poor; nor does it have an *outreach to* the poor. The community is a *friend to* the poor. It delights in meeting people who live on the other side of one of the city's numberless boundaries—and forging a friendship. What springs from that friendship in terms of practical assistance depends, like all friendships, on what people need, and what can be given.

—

Endnotes

MARIO MARAZZITI serves as spokesman of the Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome.

AUSTEN IVEREIGH is a commentator and a journalist.

Mario Marazziti and Austen Ivereigh, "A Church that Is and Works to be a Church for Everyone, but Particularly the Poor," in *New Religious Movements in the Catholic Church*, edited by Michael A. Hayes (London: Burns & Oates, 2005), 30–36.

C21 UPDATE

FALL 2010

GRACE & COMMITMENT: THE VOCATIONS OF LAITY, RELIGIOUS, AND ORDAINED

SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2010

LECTURE

Title: *Dead Man Walking: The Journey Continues* **Presenter:** Sister Helen Prejean, C.S.J., Author, *Dead Man Walking* **Location/Time:** Robsham Theater, 7:00pm **Sponsors:** STM and C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-0470 or www.bc.edu/church21 **Webcast Available:** October 1, 2010

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2010

BOOK LAUNCH

Title: *Love One Another: Catholic Reflections on How to Sustain Marriages Today* **Presenters:** Editors Tim Muldoon, Assistant to the VP for University Mission & Ministry and Cynthia S. Dobrzynski, Director of Mission and Values at D'Youville Senior Care **Location/Time:** O'Neill Library Reserve Room, 12:00pm **Sponsor:** C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-0470 or www.bc.edu/church21 **Webcast Available:** October 12, 2010

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2010

LECTURE

Title: *The Heart's Calling: Personal Vocation and Social Conscience* **Presenter:** John Neafsey, Author and Senior Lecturer, Loyola University Chicago **Location/Time:** Fulton Hall, Room 511, 5:30pm **Sponsor:** C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-0470 or www.bc.edu/church21 **Webcast Available:** October 14, 2010

OCTOBER

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2010

CONFERENCE

Title: *Faithful and Free: Yves Congar on the Vocation and Mission of the Laity* **Presenters:** Aurelie Hagstrom, Chair, Theology Department, Providence College; Laurie Johnston, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Emmanuel College **Location/Time:** Murray Function Room, Yawkey Center, 9:00am-12:00pm **Sponsors:** Theology Department and C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-0470 or www.bc.edu/church21 **Webcast Available:** October 15, 2010

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2010

LECTURE

Title: *Profits and Prophets: Economic Development and Interreligious Dialogue* **Presenter:** Paul Knitter, Paul Tillich Professor of Theology, World Religions and Culture, Union Theological Seminary **Location/Time:** Heights Room, Corcoran Commons, 5:00pm. **Sponsors:** Theology Department, STM, and C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-0470 or www.bc.edu/church21 **Webcast Available:** October 21, 2010

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2010

LECTURE

Title: *Does Vatican II's Theology of the Laity Have a Future?* **Presenter:** Richard Gaillardetz, Thomas and Margaret Murray and James J. Bacik Professor of Catholic Studies, University of Toledo **Location/Time:** Room 100, 9 Lake Street, Brighton Campus, 4:30pm **Sponsors:** STM, Theology Department, and C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-0470 or www.bc.edu/church21 **Webcast Available:** October 26, 2010

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2010

CARMELITE LECTURE SERIES

Title: *Carmelite Authors 101: Saint John of the Cross* **Presenter:** Kevin Culligan, O.C.D. **Location/Time:** BC Law School, Stuart House, Room 120, 885 Centre Street, Newton Campus, 10:00am **Sponsors:** STM, The Institute for Carmelite Studies, and C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-6501 or www.bc.edu/stmce **Webcast Available:** October 30, 2010

MONDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2010

LECTURE

Title: *Beyond Seeing and Not-Seeing: The Icon in Eastern Christian Theology and Prayer* **Presenter:** Khaled Anatolios, Associate Professor, STM **Location/Time:** Room 100, 9 Lake Street, Brighton Campus, 5:30pm **Sponsors:** Theology Department and C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-0470 or www.bc.edu/church21 **Webcast Available:** November 1, 2010

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2010

LECTURE

Title: *Ignatian Exercises for Seekers* **Presenter:** Roger Haight, S.J., Scholar in Residence, Union Theological Seminary **Location/Time:** Room 100, 9 Lake Street, Brighton Campus, 7:00pm **Sponsors:** STM and C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-6501 or www.bc.edu/stmce **Webcast Available:** November 3, 2010

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2010

CONFERENCE

Title: *Renewal Day for Hispanic Women Religious* **Presenter:** Hosffman Ospino, Assistant Professor of Hispanic Ministry and Religious Education, and Director of Graduate Programs in Hispanic Ministry, STM **Location/Time:** Room 100, 9 Lake Street, Brighton Campus, 9:00am-4:00pm **Sponsors:** STM and C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-6501 or www.bc.edu/stmce. Conference conducted entirely in Spanish. Free of charge, includes lunch. Early registration recommended. **Webcast Available:** November 5, 2010

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2010

C21 WOMEN'S SERIES

Title: *Women, Virtue, and Sexuality* **Presenter:** Lisa Fullam, Associate Professor of Moral Theology, Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University; Respondent, James Keenan, S.J., Professor, Theology Department **Location/Time:** Heights Room, Corcoran Commons, 4:30pm-6:00pm **Sponsors:** The BC Women's Resource Center and C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-0470 or www.bc.edu/church21 **Webcast Available:** November 10, 2010

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2010

LECTURE

Title: *The Vocation of the Church: One Calling, Many Roles* **Presenter:** Paul Lakeland, Aloysius P. Kelley, S.J. Chair in Catholic Studies, Fairfield University **Location/Time:** Heights Room, Corcoran Commons, 5:30pm **Sponsors:** Theology Department and C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-0470 or www.bc.edu/church21 **Webcast Available:** November 11, 2010

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2010

CONFERENCE

Title: *"You Visited Me": The Urgent Challenge of Prison Ministry* **Presenters:** Suzanne Jabro, C.S.J., Founder and Executive Director of The Center for Restorative Justice Works; George Williams, S.J., Jesuit Prison Ministries, and Others. **Location/Time:** Heights Room, Corcoran Commons 9:00am-3:00pm **Sponsors:** STM, Theology Department, and C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-6501 or www.bc.edu/stmnce **Webcast Available:** November 12, 2010

NOVEMBER

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2010

PANEL

Title: *The Way We Were: The Laity in Catholic History* **Presenters:** Mary Ellen Konieczny, Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of Notre Dame; James P. McCartin, Assistant Professor and Associate Director, The Center for Catholic Studies, Seton Hall University; James O'Toole, Professor, Charles I. Clough Chair in History, History Department **Location/Time:** Heights Room, Corcoran Commons, 7:00pm **Sponsors:** Theology Department and C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-0470 or www.bc.edu/church21 **Webcast Available:** November 18, 2010

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2010

CARMELITE LECTURE SERIES

Title: *Carmelite Authors 101: Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity* **Presenter:** Daniel Chowning, O.C.D. **Location/Time:** BC Law School, Stuart House, Room 120, 885 Centre Street, Newton Campus, 10:00am **Sponsors:** STM, The Institute for Carmelite Studies, and C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-6501 or www.bc.edu/stmnce **Webcast Available:** November 20, 2010

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2010

PANEL

Title: *Shared Responsibility for the Church: The Growth of Lay Ministry in the Archdiocese of Boston* **Presenters:** Barbara Shine and Dorothea Masuret, C.S.J., Former Directors, Lay Ecclesial Ministry, The Archdiocese of Boston **Location/Time:** Heights Room, Corcoran Commons, 5:30pm **Sponsor:** C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-0470 or www.bc.edu/church21 **Webcast Available:** November 23, 2010

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2010

ALUMNI ADVENT EVENT

Title: *What Do You (Really) Want for Christmas?* **Presenter:** Jack Butler, S.J., Vice President, University Mission and Ministry **Location/Time:** O'Neill Plaza and O'Neill Library Reserve Room, 5:30pm **Sponsors:** Alumni Association and C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-1607 or www.bc.edu/alumni/association/spirituality **Webcast Available:** December 13, 2010

DECEMBER

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2010

CARMELITE LECTURE SERIES

Title: *Carmelite Authors 101: Edith Stein—Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross* **Presenter:** John Sullivan, O.C.D. **Location/Time:** BC Law School, Stuart House, Room 120, 885 Centre Street, Newton Campus, 10:00am **Sponsors:** STM, The Institute for Carmelite Studies, and C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-6501 or www.bc.edu/stmnce **Webcast Available:** December 18, 2010

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2010

EPISCOPAL VISITOR

Title: *Boston College Welcomes Cardinal George* **Presenter:** Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I., Archbishop of Chicago **Location/Time:** Heights Room, Corcoran Commons, 4:30pm **Sponsors:** STM and C21 Center **Information:** 617-552-0470 or www.bc.edu/church21 **Webcast Available:** December 21, 2010

ABBREVIATIONS

* STM: BC School of Theology and Ministry

**C21 Center: The Church in the 21st Century Center

ENROLLING NOW
THE NEXT C21 RESOURCES
WORKSHOP

GRACE AND COMMITMENT:
THE LAITY
OCTOBER 4 –15, 2010

BOSTON COLLEGE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY

C21 Online

ONLINE LEARNING FOR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT AND FAITH RENEWAL

jessica.salefski@bc.edu
800-487-1187
www.bc.edu/c21online

Student Apostles

BY KEVIN AHERN

One segment of the lay population that is too often overlooked by Church leaders and official documents is Catholic college students. Kevin Ahern reflects on the apostolic vocation of the student.

For over a century, Catholic college students have played an important, yet all too often underappreciated, role in the life of the Church. Inspired by their faith and moved by their youthful idealism, young Catholics have sought to live the Gospel in a wide variety of ways—from establishing small faith communities on college campuses to launching national and international campaigns promoting social justice.

Every day around the world, millions of undergraduate and graduate students are living out a truly *apostolic* vocation, one that is rooted in the call of Christ and that takes shape in four key relationships.

First and foremost, their vocation calls students to explore and develop their *relationship with God*. Young adulthood forces students to make the faith their own—either to affirm or rethink childhood beliefs. Campus faith sharing groups, RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adult) programs, liturgies, retreats, lectures, spiritual direction, and other programs play an important role in helping young adults deepen their relationship with God.

A second dimension of the student vocation is to deepen one's knowledge of and *relationship with oneself*. Here is a unique opportunity to grow in self-understanding and acceptance. The guidance offered by student communities and supportive campus ministers can be extremely helpful in ensuring that this period of self-exploration does not fall into patterns of unhealthy behavior.

Third, in calling students to witness to Christ among their peers, the student vocation calls students to deepen their *relationships with others* at an interpersonal level, including friendships and healthy romantic relationships.

Finally, a vital part of the student vocation is to deepen their relationship with the broader world through social action and engagement. In the *Decree on the Lay Apostolate*, the Second Vatican Council speaks to the important apostolic obligation that lay people, especially young adults, have in engaging in social action. With their energy, idealism, and free time, students are in a unique position to take on different forms of social action, locally, nationally, and globally.

Every year in the United States two major actions bring together thousands of Catholic college students in order to draw attention to two very different issues. In January, pro-life activists gather in Washington, D.C., for the annual March for Life. Catholic students from campus ministries and pro-life clubs always form an active and visible part of the march. Similarly, every November, thousands of Catholic students, many from Jesuit colleges and universities, join the annual vigil and protest of the U.S Army School of Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia.

In addition to these highly visible events, Catholic students around the world are energetically addressing issues of social concern through their participation in the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS-Pax Romana). As the officially recognized lay movement for university students, IMCS and its national affiliates, such as the National Catholic Student Coalition, have been helping



Photo courtesy of BC Office of Marketing Communications

to empower students since students founded IMCS in 1921. Today, this international network brings together over 75 national associations from around the world, addressing everything from the empowerment of young women in India to the development of HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns across Africa. Additionally, IMCS student leaders represent and advocate on behalf of students at various global meetings, including at the United Nations, World Bank, and Council of Europe.

Still, the majority of student social action takes place more locally, as students live out their faith through various volunteer and service learning opportunities. For example, at Boston College, hundreds of students sign up for one or more of the many social action and service programs sponsored by the Office of Campus Ministry—including Appalachia Volunteers, Boston, the Arrupe International Program, the Urban Immersion Program, and Loyola Volunteers. Even at colleges with far fewer resources than Boston College, Catholic students find ways to get involved and serve their communities.

Given the complexity of life today, Catholic students, now more than ever, need to discover this sense of the student vocation. They need to discover what it means to be a follower of Christ. Experience shows that it is not enough to bring together a few students for “youth days” or to organize occasional liturgies and retreats *for* them. A proper and effective engagement of students and young adults in the life of the Church calls us to find ways to *empower* the young people themselves to create, participate, and lead faith communities themselves, on and off campus. Such a task is challenging in several ways.

The primary challenge is to empower students to see themselves as active and responsible members of the Christian community. This awareness is difficult in the United States, where so many aspects of our

culture discourage responsible student citizenship. Thus it is essential to find and train student chaplains and campus ministers with the skills necessary to support this kind of student ownership. Empowering students means giving them responsibility, even if that means risking that they will make mistakes.

An additional challenge comes in finding ways to support students financially and logistically in their apostolic vocation. Unfortunately, the Church’s financial situation in

The primary challenge is to empower students to see themselves as active and responsible members of the Christian community.

the aftermath of the clergy sexual abuse crisis and the recent worldwide economic downturn has greatly impacted the student apostolate around the world. Budgets for campus ministries and student groups have been cut, campus ministers have been laid off, and in some cases, entire ministries have been eliminated.

A further challenge occurs after the students graduate and seek to become involved in their local parishes. Sadly, many young adults, especially those coming from vibrant Catholic student communities, find it difficult to integrate into local parishes which, too often, are not as welcoming to “empowered” young adults as they need to be.

Catholic students and young adults have an important vocation in the life of the Church both personally and collectively. In light of the many difficulties facing the Roman Catholic Church today, these young and empowered Christian leaders can serve as a much needed source of hope, not only as the so-called Church of tomorrow but also as the young Church of today.

Endnotes

KEVIN AHERN is a doctoral student in theological ethics at Boston College. He is the past international president of the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS-Pax Romana).

BOSTON COLLEGE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY

C21 Online

ONLINE LEARNING FOR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT AND FAITH RENEWAL



JOIN US ONLINE THIS FALL!

Log on at your convenience while the course is in session

Check our web site for more information about these courses and workshops

<p>Spirituality Matters</p> <p>What Makes Us Catholic, Parts I and II</p> <p>Christian Faith and Moral Character</p>	<p>NEW! Grace and Commitment: The Laity Teaching Religion (Elementary)</p> <p>Encountering Jesus in the Scriptures</p>
--	---

www.bc.edu/c21online

jessica.salefski@bc.edu
800-487-1187

The Laity's Participation in Public Life

BY RICHARD R. GAILLARDETZ

The Second Vatican Council called on all Catholics—and in particular the laity—to play an active role in public life. Richard Gaillardetz takes up this vision and applies it to the debates surrounding recent health care legislation. In this context, he explores the proper role of bishops, experts, and ordinary Catholics in bringing the values of the Gospel to bear on the world of politics and public policy.

The aftershocks of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) opposition to certain elements of recent health care legislation are still being felt in the Church months later. Religious communities that supported the legislation are being subjected to harsh and unwarranted punitive measures and the Catholic Health Association, whose support of the legislation was crucial to its passage, is being maligned by right-wing groups like the Catholic News Agency.

Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, current president of the USCCB, contends that the dispute is fundamentally a matter of ecclesiological principle. In a recent interview with John Allen, the cardinal said that the disagreement with the Catholic Health Association over health care legislation was “about the nature of the Church itself” and was therefore a disagreement “that has to concern the bishops.” This was a disagreement about the nature, limits, and proper exercise of episcopal authority. But there is a second, closely related matter at stake—namely, the character of Christian participation in public life. It may be helpful to begin there.

One of the most overlooked contributions of the Second Vatican Council was its theology of Christian mission. The council taught that the Church was “missionary by her very nature” (*Ad Gentes* 2). The Church realized its mission by being a “universal sacrament of salvation” (*Lumen Gentium* 48) and a “leaven in the world” (*Gaudium et spes* 40). No longer would the Church be content to denounce the evils of the world from the lofty parapets of its ecclesial fortress. Now the Church would fulfill its mission in a generous yet critical dialogue and constructive collaboration with all humanity. The council exemplified a genuine humility in asserting that even as it offered to the world the gift of Christ and the proclamation of the in-breaking of God's reign, it did not possess clear answers to every pressing human question.

The Church guards the heritage of God's word and draws from it moral and religious principles without always having at hand the solution to

particular problems. As such she desires to add the light of revealed truth to [humankind's] store of experience, so that the path which humanity has taken in recent times will not be a dark one (*Gaudium et spes* 33).

Here was a vision of the Church cooperating with all humankind in confronting the most pressing challenges of the age. This cooperation was the responsibility of all Christians who, by virtue of their baptism, were charged with proclaiming the reign of God in word and deed. But it was the special responsibility of the laity, who are typically more immersed in worldly affairs:



Photo courtesy of BC Office of Marketing Communications.

Lay men should also know that it is generally the function of their well-formed Christian conscience to see that the divine law is inscribed in the life of the earthly city; from priests they may look for spiritual light and nourishment. Let the [laity] not imagine that [their] pastors are always such experts, that to every problem which arises, however complicated, they can readily give a concrete solution, or even that such is their mission (*Gaudium et spes* 43).

The council called for the laity to be courageous in bringing their faith to bear on every aspect of their daily lives, including the public order. It follows that Christians should fulfill the responsibilities of their citizenship by drawing on the insights of their faith in their discernment about which candidates for public office to support and which public-policy initiatives to advocate.

The council bishops were surprisingly realistic about the complexity of this task and recognized in that same article that “often enough the Christian view of things will itself suggest some specific solution in certain circumstances. Yet it happens rather frequently, and legitimately so, that with equal sincerity some of the faithful will disagree with others on a given matter.” How is this disagreement to be adjudicated? Christians “should always try to enlighten one another through honest discussion, preserving mutual charity and caring above all for the common good.” These texts reflect a sophisticated grasp of both the necessity and the complexity of Christian participation in the public realm.

Such participation is complex because it involves the Church’s teachings at different levels. First, of a more general nature, are universal moral teachings regarding, for example, the law of love, the call to forgiveness, the prohibition of murder, the dignity of the human person, the preferential option for the poor, and the concern for the common good. Those teachings are firmly grounded in Scripture and appear prominently, as they ought to, in magisterial teaching. By themselves, however, such principles are too general to provide much concrete guidance.

At a second level, there are specific moral principles. These principles emerge out of ecclesial reflection on the specific implications of universal moral teachings in the light of theological inquiry, the modern sciences, and human experience. This complex ecclesial reflection has led the Church to assert various political, civic, and economic rights (including a right to health care), specific criteria for engaging in a just war, and very restrictive conditions for the just use of capital punishment.

Finally, there are prudential judgments about the concrete application of specific moral principles. This third level of moral teaching draws on a tradition that goes back at least as far as St. Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas emphasized

the importance of the virtue of prudence in the moral life. Following Aristotle, he held that prudence was an exercise of practical reason and was oriented toward the search for the good to be found in any circumstance (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, Q. 47, a. 2). The exercise of prudence required that one have a solid knowledge of the pertinent moral principles, but it also required that one attend to the concrete particulars of each situation. These particulars, unlike the principles themselves, are fluid and changing, and one’s grasp of them is necessarily more tentative than one’s knowledge of a principle. This means that one’s certitude about the rightness or wrongness of one’s judgments diminishes the more the judgments depend on contingent empirical data. And to the degree that contingency limits our certitude, there should be a greater willingness to tolerate disagreement.

This reflection on the character of Christian participation in public life may shed some light on the recent conflict over the USCCB’s opposition to the abortion-funding restrictions in the new health care law. First, we should welcome the fact that so many Catholics recognized the importance of health care reform and became involved in the public debate. Second, we should be pleased that so many of these Catholics, including many Catholic politicians, were quite open and unapologetic about the

The Council called for the laity to be courageous in bringing their faith to bear on every aspect of their daily lives, including the public order.

influence of Catholic social teaching on their assessment of the merits of the legislation. Third, it is evident that virtually all the debate among various Catholic parties concerned neither universal moral principles nor specific moral principles (there was almost complete agreement at those levels); the debate was conducted almost entirely at the level of prudential judgments regarding very complex legislative language. In other words, the argument was not about whether abortion should be legal, nor was it about whether there should be federal funding of abortion. The argument was about whether specific legislative provisions in fact did what the drafters of the legislation insisted they did—namely, prohibit federal funding of abortions in accord with the principles of the Hyde Amendment. Finally, virtually all Catholic parties welcomed the participation of the bishops in the debate and acknowledged their moral authority. What was at issue, as Cardinal George noted, was the nature, limits, and exercise of that authority.

Continued on page 22

The Laity's Participation in Public Life

Continued from page 21

In the *National Catholic Reporter* interview [with John Allen] Cardinal George expressed his concern this way: “What worries me more than a difference over empirical content, however, is the claim that the bishops cannot speak to the moral content of the law.” But is that really what’s at issue? I cannot speak for the Catholic Health Association, but I am pretty confident that the CHA and, for that matter, the many other Catholic religious communities, politicians, and scholars who ultimately supported the health care legislation do not wish to challenge the teaching authority of the bishops, or the right and obligation of the bishops to speak to “the moral content of the law.” No, the real principle at stake has to do with the character of that authority.

The bishops’ teaching authority is not binary in character; it is simply not the case that they either teach with an authority that demands unconditional and unquestioning assent or they teach with no authority at all. According to Catholic teaching, bishops receive through episcopal ordination a special assistance of the Holy Spirit in their ministry to proclaim and safeguard the apostolic faith. This ministry certainly includes teaching in the moral realm. However, episcopal authority is graduated. It is greatest where it is exercised in preservation of revealed moral teaching. As their teaching moves toward concrete judgments about public policy, their claim to authority, though legitimate, is diminished. To recognize this gradual attenuation of episcopal authority as it moves further and further away from revealed truth is not to disparage the episcopal office, but as bishops approach complicated practical questions that revelation cannot answer by itself, their reasoning will need to be more explicit and they’ll need to manifest cooperation with other, nonreligious authorities—for example, experts in public policy. The bishops’ influence in these areas will depend not only on their commitment to gospel values but also on careful study of the available facts and widespread consultation with people whose authority is based on expertise.

In the 1980s, critics of the activism of the bishops conference (including then-Cardinal Ratzinger) feared that if the U.S. bishops waded into complex public-policy disputes they would compromise their authority on more properly “doctrinal” concerns. In my view, that danger was exaggerated: As long as the bishops acknowledged that their authority with respect to public policy was not as great as their authority in matters more strictly pertaining to faith and morals, and that Catholics were allowed to disagree at the level of public policy, then those episcopal pronouncements could play a helpful role in the formation of consciences.

In fact, in the ’80s the bishops made this distinction explicit in two of their better known pastoral letters, *The Challenge of Peace* and *Economic Justice for All*. Both documents asserted that the moral applications and prudential judgments offered by the bishops must be given “serious attention and consideration by Catholics as they determine whether their moral judgments are consistent with the Gospel” (*The Challenge of Peace*, 10). Nevertheless, they also admitted that Catholics might legitimately differ with the bishops regarding these moral applications and prudential judgments.

Practically speaking, how does that work? Imagine a situation in which the bishops feel compelled to offer a moral assessment of whether a particular military action fulfills the demands of the pertinent just-war criteria. The bishops’ concrete judgment would require assessing all sorts of technical and contingent data (whether there is a just cause for the engagement, the specific rules of engagement, weapons capabilities, the status of military targets), the proper interpretation of which might well be open to dispute. Catholics would be obligated to take the bishops’ assessments seriously, but they would not be compelled to agree with them.

It is difficult to see how the bishops’ assessment of health care legislation was any different. The bishops had to make an extraordinarily complex assessment of labyrinthine legal provisions and federal statutes regarding the prohibition of the federal funding of abortion. This required a considerable dependence on the research of their staff. Of course, the very complexity of such legislation makes policy assessments by Church leadership helpful to the ordinary Catholic, who often has neither the time nor the expertise to explore these provisions with rigor. But the complexity diminishes the authority of such judgments. It is difficult to see the bishops conference’s judgment about the abortion-funding restrictions in the new health care legislation as anything other than a concrete prudential judgment, to which Catholics must carefully attend but with which they need not agree.

The bishops need to recognize that the failure to acknowledge that they speak with less authority when they speak about a highly complicated piece of public policy could lead precisely to what those earlier critics feared—namely, the discrediting of episcopal authority in general. The issue is not whether the bishops should get involved in evaluating the details of public policy; it is whether they will acknowledge that when they do so, their conclusions do not carry as much weight as their statements about fundamental moral principles.

All Catholics are obliged to attend carefully and respectfully to their bishops’ judgments about public policy. Nevertheless, the guidance bishops offer in this

Continued on page 27

The Future of Ministry

BY JOHN L. ALLEN, JR.

Following the Second Vatican Council, new forms of lay ministry burst onto the scene. Lectors and eucharistic ministers, directors of religious education and youth ministers, lay pastoral associates and parish life coordinators—all helped reshape our experience of the parish, and our expectations of lay involvement. John Allen reflects on this ministerial explosion in light of the larger demographic forces shaping the future of American Catholicism.

Earlier this year I was in Chicago to keynote the annual conference of the National Association of Church Personnel Administrators (NACPA), which is composed of folks struggling to help the Church integrate contemporary best practices in human resources and business management. It's largely unheralded work, but critical if the Catholic Church is to avoid the administrative meltdowns that too often mar its public image and impair its moral authority.

I was asked to talk about American Catholic demographics and what they suggest about the future of ministry. Though none of what I had to say constitutes news, sometimes it's useful to step back and focus on the forest rather than its individual trees.

Journalists are, of course, famous for bringing bad news. As the old joke goes, the nightly news is the program where they begin by saying "Good evening," and then proceed to explain why it's really not. That's not my intent here. The trends outlined below suggest challenges and headaches aplenty, but they're also rich with potential for creative new energies in the American Church, depending on how they play out.

The Ministers

First, the ministers of the future in America will be increasingly global.

Already, one-sixth of the roughly 40,000 priests serving in the United States are from abroad, and the American Church adds about 300 new international priests every year. Increasingly, the pastoral work of the Church in this country is dependent upon these foreign priests. An official of the Chicago archdiocese, for example, said during the NACPA conference that there would be no priests doing sacramental ministry in Catholic hospitals in Chicago were it not for the "externs," meaning priests from abroad on temporary assignment. The same basic trend holds in religious orders, in graduate programs of theology, and in various lay ministries in the Church—a greater share of Catholics doing ministry in America will be from abroad, reflecting the vitality of the faith in places such as sub-Saharan Africa and southeast Asia.

Second, future ministers will be increasingly laity. At present, there are slightly more than 40,000 priests in the United States and 31,000 "lay ecclesial ministers," meaning laity working full-time or part-time for the Church performing ministries once done by priests or religious: music ministry, liturgy, CCD, RCIA, and so on. At the moment, there are 5,500 seminarians in America but an estimated 18,000 women and men preparing to be lay ecclesial ministers, so by 2020 or so the corps of

professional lay ministers will exceed the number of priests. The growth in lay ecclesial ministry is the "tip of the spear," symbolizing a broader expansion of lay roles that includes the growth of new movements, the expansion of lay volunteer and missionary programs, the emergence of parish and diocesan councils and review boards, and the informal phenomenon of "guerrilla evangelists"—laity not waiting for any formal invitation or permission, but simply deciding to plant the flag for the faith in some sphere of life. This is a critically important transition, because if the Church does not come to see laity as the primary front-line carriers of much of its ministry, it will be locked in an "arms race" it is destined to lose. Under any conceivable future scenario, Catholicism will not turn out enough priests to compete on a level playing field with, say, Pentecostal ministers, especially in Latino/a communities, or for that matter with the apostles of secularism in 21st-century America.

Third, the ministers of the Catholic future will be increasingly "evangelical." The broad mass of twenty- and thirty-something Catholics today may be thoroughly secularized, but there is an inner core of faithful and practicing young Catholics who are the ones most likely to pursue a vocation to the priesthood or religious life, or to be most interested in making a career in the Church as a lay person. The future leaders of Catholicism in America will come from this inner core. By now there's a considerable body of data about these "millennial Catholics," and the consistent finding is that they're more traditional in their attitudes and practices than the "Vatican II" generation they're replacing. These younger Catholics are attracted to

Continued on page 24

The Future of Ministry

Continued from page 23

traditional spiritual practices such as Eucharistic adoration and Marian piety; they have a generally positive attitude toward authority, especially the papacy; and they're less inclined to be critical of Church teaching. I use the word "evangelical" rather than "conservative" to describe all this, in part because most experts say it's not really about the politics of left vs. right so much as generational dynamics. These young Catholics came of age in a rootless secular world, and are hungry for a clear sense of identity. More and more, the Church's ministerial workforce will be stamped by this evangelical ethos.

The Ministered-to

First, the Catholic population of the future in the United States, like the country as a whole, will be older. The most rapidly growing demographic subsegment of the American population is actually not immigrants, legal or undocumented, but the elderly. In 2005, there were 34.7 million Americans who were 65 and above; by 2050, the U.S. Census Bureau projects that number will be 75.9 million, meaning the 65-plus population will more than double within a half-century. Catholics in the United States are actually slightly younger than the general population, because of the lower average age among Hispanics and their higher-than-average birthrates, but nonetheless the Catholic population is also graying. By 2030, the Catholic Church in America will have an additional 6.8 million members over the age of 65. While this "gray wave" poses many challenges, both for the society and for the Church, it also hints at opportunity. Sociologists report that someone who's marginally religious at 35 will become progressively more religious as they age, so that the 65-plus population represents that slice of the demographic pie most inclined to

practice their faith, and most willing to devote their time and treasure to religious causes. If Catholicism in America can shape elder-friendly communities, it could therefore be on the brink of a "boom market."

Second, the Church in this country will increasingly be blue collar and ethnic. According to the most recent Pew Forum study on religion in America, by 2030 whites will no longer be a statistical majority among American Catholics. Whites will represent 48 percent of the Catholic population, with Hispanics at 41 percent, Asian-Americans at 7.5, and Africans and African-Americans at 3 percent. Luis Lugo, director of the Pew Forum, calls this the "browning" of the Catholic Church in America. Lugo notes that as Catholicism browns, it also becomes poorer. Hispanic immigrants are seven times less likely than whites to have completed high school, and two and one-half times more likely to earn less than \$30,000 a year. They're proportionately more likely to be underinsured or uninsured. Given these demographics, Catholicism in America in the 21st century will become an increasingly "blue collar" faith. In some ways, this is taking the Catholic Church in America back to the situation it faced in the 19th and early 20th centuries, when its demographic base was composed of successive waves of European immigration clustered in mostly blue-collar occupations and neighborhoods.

Third, the Church in America will be increasingly "tribalized." The persistent divisions in American Catholicism are often referred to as "polarization," but the fault line between left and right is hardly the only one that matters. The Catholic landscape in America is dotted with various tribes: pro-life Catholics, liturgical traditionalists, the various movements, Church reform Catholics, peace-and-justice groups, and so on. In principle that diversity is an asset, but in practice sometimes these tribes see themselves as rivals rather than allies, and hence the Church becomes bogged down by internal conflict. (It's

the tribalism of the Balkans, in other words, not the Iroquois Confederacy.) This reality reflects a broad tendency in American culture over the last 40 years, documented in Bill Bishop's book *The Big Sort*, for Americans to retreat into physical and virtual "gated communities." Increasingly, many Americans—including American Catholics—prefer to rub shoulders only with people who already share their values, worldview, and political and theological beliefs. In turn, the clustering of the like-minded produces an echo chamber effect. Positions become more extreme, and people who don't share those positions seem increasingly alien and dangerous. The political climate in early 2010 doesn't offer much reason to believe this tribalism is likely to abate soon.

The Future

During Q&A, one sharp administrator told me he's always skeptical about straight-line projections, which assume that the future will be like the present. What about some "wild card" factor, he asked, which would scramble the picture in unpredictable fashion—in the way that 9/11 recalibrated American foreign policy?

The question is obviously a good one, but unfortunately it's fairly useless analytically. "Stay loose" is always good advice, but not really a basis for allocating resources or setting priorities.

In any event, one could argue that the most important wild card in terms of how these six trends will develop isn't a possible bolt from the blue like Hurricane Katrina, but rather the choices American Catholics will make. How these six forces affect Catholic fortunes, in other words, is likely to rest in the first place on how we react to them.

For example, will the rising tide of evangelical energy among young ministers fuel tribalization in the Church? Will it shade off into a sort of "ghetto Catholicism," effectively disengaged from the broader culture? Or, will it revive important markers of Catholic identity, recharging the

Church's batteries to offer a distinctive contribution to the challenges of the 21st century?

Which way that goes will depend to a great extent on how the rest of the Church reacts. In particular, will older Catholics artificially force the up-and-coming generation to take sides in the Church's culture wars? Or, will we allow younger Catholics to be themselves—finding their own mistakes to make, rather than repeating ours?

Similarly, the growing presence of international priests and other ministers from abroad could open up the American Church to what it means to be Catholic

in other parts of the world. It could also deepen existing tensions among priests, or between priests and people. Once again, the outcome will ride in large part on the choices Catholics make in parishes, dioceses, and other venues across the country—how open or closed, flexible or rigid, they decide to be.

The great unknown isn't so much what might drop from the heavens, but how American Catholics will respond to the realities already facing them. The future, in other words, depends not so much on our stars, but on ourselves.

—

Endnotes

JOHN L. ALLEN, JR., is senior correspondent for the *National Catholic Reporter* and a frequent commentator for national and international media outlets. He is the author of several books, including *The Future Church: How Ten Trends are Revolutionizing the Catholic Church* (Doubleday, 2009).

John L. Allen, Jr., "American Catholic Demographics and the Future of Ministry," *All Things Catholic*, April 30, 2010. Online blog for *National Catholic Reporter*.

Reprinted with permission of the *National Catholic Reporter*.

CO-WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD

All of the baptized are called to work toward the transformation of the world. Most do this by working in the secular realm; some do this by working in the Church and focusing on the building of ecclesial communion, which has among its purposes the transformation of the world. Working in the Church is a path of Christian discipleship to be encouraged by the hierarchy. The possibility that lay persons undertake Church ministries can be grounded in Scripture and the teachings of the Church, from St. Paul to the Second Vatican Council and in more recent documents. "Sharing in the function of Christ, priest, prophet, and king, the laity have an active part of their own in the life and activity of the church. Their activity within the church communities is so necessary that without it the apostolate of the pastors will frequently be unable to obtain its full effect" (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, n. 10).

Today in parishes, schools, Church institutions, and diocesan agencies, laity serve in various "ministries, offices, and roles" that do not require sacramental ordination but rather "find their foundation in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, indeed, for a good many of them, in the Sacrament of Matrimony" (*Christifideles Laici*, n. 23). What Pope Paul VI said of the laity 30 years ago—and what the Catechism of the Catholic Church specifically repeats—has now become an important, welcomed reality throughout our dioceses: "The laity can also feel called, or in fact be called, to cooperate with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community, for the sake of its growth and life. This can be done through the exercise of different kinds of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord has been pleased to bestow on them."

In parishes especially, but also in other Church institutions and communities, lay women and men generously and extensively "cooperate with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community." This is a sign of the Holy Spirit's movement in the lives of our sisters and brothers.

From the U.S. Bishops' 2005 document, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*.

PASTORAL CO-RESPONSIBILITY

Trusting in the grace of the Spirit which the Risen Christ guaranteed to us, we must continue on our way with renewed energy. What paths can we take? In the first place we must renew our efforts for a formation which is more attentive and focused on the vision of the Church, of which I spoke and this should be both on the part of priests as well as of religious and lay people to understand ever better what this Church is, this People of God in the Body of Christ. At the same time, it is necessary to improve pastoral structures in such a way that the co-responsibility of all the members of the People of God in their entirety is gradually promoted, with respect for vocations and for the respective roles of the consecrated and of lay people. This demands a change in mindset, particularly concerning lay people. They must no longer be viewed as "collaborators" of the clergy but truly recognized as "co-responsible," for the Church's being and action, thereby fostering the consolidation of a mature and committed laity.

Pope Benedict XVI, at the opening of the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome, May 26, 2009.

Baptism as the Basis of Ministry

BY PAUL LAKELAND

In the wake of the clergy sexual abuse scandal, Paul Lakeland asks: How can the laity save the Church? In his Catholicism at the Crossroads, he spells out 10 steps toward a more adult Church. Here we take up Step 7: The need for renewed attention to the sacrament of baptism as the basis for the understanding of all ministry in the Church.

We have already discussed the need for the Church to become more aware of the teaching of Vatican II on the centrality of baptism, the close connection between baptism and mission, and the common priesthood of all the faithful that follows from the sacrament. That general call relates to the situation in the local parish community.

Because the Catholic Church has a strong theology of orders and a clear and distinct ordained ministry, we can easily overlook the fact that baptism is a call to ministry. All baptized Catholics have the obligation to explore the ways in which we might serve the mission of the Church. All the baptized are members of a priestly people. In a certain sense, our priests who are ordained to serve the Church are really ordained to facilitate the priestly ministry of all the baptized. And, of course, the ordained are called to ministry twice; in their ordination to diaconate or priesthood, for sure, but also—usually long before—by their baptism.

One of the reasons that this connection between baptism and ministry has been overlooked for so long is that we usually baptize infants. Only later in life will they be active in the mission of the Church. We see baptism as a sacrament of initiation into the believing community, and so it is. But this community of believers is charged by God with a mission to the world. Baptism is entry into a missioned community, and just as people who join

a rugby club will presumably do so in order to play rugby, so people who join the Church do so in order to participate in the mission of the Church. The Church is not just there for its members; in fact, it is more properly there for what its members can do for those who are not its members. Only when the Church as community and individuals accepts this mission, is it really, fully, the Church. Without this sense of mission it is primarily an act of communal self-congratulation.

Recognizing that the Church is a community of faith with a mission from God can be an important step in revitalizing parish communities. It depends for its effectiveness, however,

on getting that message across to the great mass of parishioners. A community with a mission is not one in which a tiny minority shoulders the burden of mission on behalf of a largely passive majority. Sometimes that impression can be left with people if we think of ministry as that conducted by the ordained clergy and by the lay ministers who work with them in the parish setting. But ministry goes far beyond what we usually first think of as lay ministry—education, youth ministry, spiritual formation, and so on within the parish setting. If the Church is a missioned community, then ministry is for all of us, and most of that ministry is exercised in the world around us, not within the parish confines.

There are all kinds of ways in which we can try to build ministry in our parishes, but a healthy and long-lasting approach will require at least some grounding in sacramental theology and the theology of the Church. You cannot build a culture of ministry simply on an appeal to voluntarism. People have the right to know that their personal call to



Photo courtesy of BCC Office of Marketing Communications.

minister grows out of the nature of the community to which they belong, and into which they have been baptized. So the first step, and in many ways the most difficult, is to communicate to people three key ideas: a richer understanding of baptism than most of us currently possess (including a new awareness of confirmation as the completion of baptism, the making intentional of the baptismal promises); a notion of what it means to be called a priestly people; and a sense of the Church as a missioned or missionary community. This needs to be built in a systematic way into the preaching of the community. Some parishes have also experimented with what is called a “Baptism Jubilee,” an annual renewal service at which the link between the baptismal promises and the call to ministry could be stressed.

A second important requirement for promoting the baptismal call to ministry is that we not turn it into something more grandiose than it really is. There are two things to stress here. The first is that the lay ministers who work in most of our parishes are not the models for the kind of ministry to which God is calling the majority of the baptized. These lay ministers are at work within the believing community, whereas most ministry is directed beyond the Church to the world around us. Indeed, so-called ecclesial lay ministers are probably better thought of as the vanguard of the Holy Spirit, moving the Church to reconsider the role of ordination in ministry, than they are as engaging in the specific mission of the laity. And the second point to emphasize is that God calls us to particular ministries primarily in and through the actual talents that God has given us. If I am a fairly short Englishman, there is little likelihood that God has called me to express my Christian convictions through a career as a professional basketball player. If I cannot carry a tune, it is hard to make the case that the Spirit is calling me to music ministry. If I cannot preach or don’t have many “people skills,” then ordination to diaconate or priesthood most probably is not for me.

If a calling to mission is dependent on identifying one’s talents and discerning which of them could most valuably be put at the service of the Gospel, then conducting a parish inventory of skills and talents might be a useful step in asserting the practicality of the call to ministry. The results of such a survey would be impressive for the parish community itself; through it, pastor and people would learn what a huge set of resources they have at their command. But it would be at least as important for each individual who participates in the process. It brings ministry down to earth, and it brings each of us face to face with what we can and cannot do. It shows us all that the Holy Spirit can work through a survey. And, what is most important, it causes us to become much more intentional about our posture toward the mission of the Church, and reduces the chance that we will—consciously or unconsciously—just leave it to others to take up the work of the Church.

All these steps—education self-awareness, awareness of the work of the Spirit—need to be built into the life of the parish community over a significant period of time, perhaps as long as a year. People do not become intentional about the connection between baptism as a sacrament of initiation and baptism as a call to ministry until and unless they are confronted with it. Done the right way, such a process can reawaken an individual’s sense of mission, deepen her or his faith, and—undoubtedly—reanimate the entire community of faith.

Endnotes

PAUL LAKELAND is the Rev. Aloysius P. Kelley, S.J., Professor of Catholic Studies at Fairfield University and the author of seven books, including *The Liberation of the Laity: In Search of an Accountable Church* (Continuum, 2003) and *Catholicism at the Crossroads: How the Laity Can Save the Church* (Continuum, 2007).

Paul Lakeland, *Catholicism at the Crossroads: How the Laity Can Save the Church* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 114–117.

Reprinted with kind permission of Continuum International Publishing Group.

The Laity’s Participation in Public Life

Continued from page 22

domain does not trump the obligation of Catholics to exercise their own prudential judgments in the public realm. The main shortcoming of the bishops’ assessment of the health care legislation did not lie in their concrete judgment itself, but in their failure to acknowledge the more limited authority that such a specific judgment carried.

The complexity of the many moral issues that we now face in the modern world makes the exercise of an authoritative teaching office more important than ever. Catholics generally welcome this guidance, but they also recognize that every competency has its limits. The more an authority appears to overreach its competence, the more it undermines its own credibility. This too is a matter of ecclesiological principle. Those of us who believe in the necessary role of an episcopal teaching office have to hope that our bishops will recognize that their authority is enhanced rather than diminished when they acknowledge its proper limits.

—

Endnotes

RICHARD R. GAILLARDETZ is the Murray Bacik Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Toledo. He is the author of *The Church in the Making: Lumen Gentium, Christus Dominus, Orientalium Ecclesiarum* (Paulist, 2006) and *Ecclesiology for a Global Church: A People Called and Sent* (Orbis, 2008).

Richard R. Gaillardetz, “The Limits of Authority,” *Commonweal* web exclusive, <http://www.commonwealmagazine.org/limits-authority>

Reprinted with permission of *Commonweal Magazine*.

Lay Leadership in Catholic Institutions

SUSAN K. WOOD, S.C.L.

In the United States, there are hundreds of Catholic institutions—hospitals, charitable organizations, colleges, universities, and schools—that were founded and run for generations by religious orders. For some time now, the leadership of these institutions has been passing into the hands of lay Catholics. Susan Wood reflects on this historic shift, suggesting a model of lay leadership that could be extended beyond her example of health care to other Catholic institutions.

It may be time for Catholic health care leaders to move beyond connections to “the charisms of our sponsors” into a new era when the whole notion of sponsorship is rethought from the perspective of a lay leadership model. The “charism of our sponsor” approach does not fully address the realities of sponsorship today for several reasons. Some systems, formerly sponsored by communities with different charisms, have merged and must now seek a new identity that encompasses yet transcends the various identities of the organizations before the merger. Public juridic persons—groups established by the Church to carry out a mission—may initially embody the charism of the original sponsor, but as time passes may assume a more independent identity as fewer religious are able to participate on its board or in its institutions. This raises questions about how lay leaders can continue to be formed to carry forth the charism of the originating religious community. Finally, even when a community exerts full control over its sponsored works, the charism approach is inadequate because it does not fully reflect a broader theology of the Church. “Charisms” may be identified with the work of a particular religious community rather than with the work of the larger Church.

As a starting point, it is helpful to reflect on what a charism represents. A charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit for the up-building of the Church. More specifically, the charisms of the various sponsoring communities of health care systems represent a particular way of reading the Gospel through the genius of a religious founder given credence by that person’s witness of a holy life. Three examples illustrate the point. The charism of Sisters of Charity is that of St. Vincent de Paul, who cared for orphans and children and served the poor. Their characteristic virtues are simplicity, humility, and charity. Saints Francis and Clare embodied an incarnational spirituality valuing creation and the human. Franciscans are noted for the virtue of joyfulness, simplicity, and poverty. Catherine McCauley, founder of the Sisters of Mercy, advocated union with God, service of the poor, and devotion to Jesus in his passion.

The heavy involvement of all three groups in health care is a direct extension of their core spirituality and orientation to service, especially to the suffering poor. In fact, Catholic health care as we know it today is a direct result of the ministry initiated by vowed women religious in their corporal works of mercy. Apostolic religious attempt to live out Matthew 25:40: “Whatever you have done to the least of these, you have done this to me.” They attempt to walk in the footsteps of Jesus who healed the leper, the Centurion’s son, and the man born blind and who took pity on the powerless—the widow, the orphan, and the child. This commonality is stronger than any other differences



Photo courtesy of BC Office of Marketing Communications.

in their spiritualities. When such apostolic spiritualities are the impetus and basis of sponsorship identity, we can say that sponsorship is Gospel-centered.

This work and sponsorship has also been ecclesial and identified as “Catholic” because religious communities are ecclesiastically recognized. Their mission contributes to and is an extension of the mission of the Church. From this perspective, health care sponsorship is neither simply “spiritual” nor just the individual work and ministry of a particular congregation. It is also ecclesial, the work of the Church. When the structures of Catholic health care evolve into merged ministries or become more independent of a sponsoring congregation, steps are taken to ensure continuing their Catholic identity. One way of accomplishing this is to establish a health care system as a public juridic person.

Thus there are two dimensions to sponsorship: a spirituality arising from a sponsoring congregation’s charism, which gives impetus to a corporal work of mercy from the perspective of a particular reading of Scripture, and an ecclesial identity arising from ecclesiastical recognition. In the past, the two were joined within sponsorships exercised by religious congregations, each of which possessed both a distinctive spirituality and ecclesiastical recognition.

An Alternative Approach

The relatively new phenomenon of lay ecclesial ministry offers an alternative approach to health care sponsorship. Lay ecclesial ministry is ecclesial service characterized by:

- Authorization of the hierarchy to serve publicly in the local church
- Leadership in a particular area of ministry
- Close collaboration in pastoral ministry with bishops, priests, and deacons
- Preparation and formation appropriate to the assigned levels of responsibilities¹

The concept of lay ecclesial ministry refers more specifically to that ministry that does not require sacramental ordination and is extended by individual lay persons in parishes, schools, church institutions, and diocesan agencies. Lay and ecclesial ministry is founded in the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. It is ecclesial because it serves the communion and mission of the Church community and because it is exercised in communion with the hierarchy of the Church, a necessary condition for any ministry identifying itself as Catholic. It is ministry because it is a participation in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly ministry of Christ, extending his work of sanctification, teaching and witness, and pastoral care. Examples of personal lay ecclesial ministry include pastoral associates, parish catechetical leaders, youth ministry leaders, school principals, and directors of liturgy or pastoral music.

In searching for a new paradigm within which to understand health care sponsorship, an adaptation of lay ecclesial ministry may be helpful.

First, sponsorship is a ministry of the Church with a responsibility to maintain the Catholic identity of the institution. There is a juridical tie to the Church through the sponsoring congregation, diocese, or the establishment of a public juridic person, which creates a relationship with the hierarchy (Code of Canon Law, 1983, c. 116). The juridical tie is an ecclesiastic structure establishing communion with the institutional Church.

Second, sponsorship is a *ministry* of the Church, indicating that the Church exercises its care for the sick through a Catholic health care facility. This ministry is in imitation of Jesus’ ministry to the sick. When we ask the question, “Whose ministry is this?” the answer is multiple. It is the ministry of the individual care provider, the specific health care facility, the system of which it is a member, its sponsor, and the Church.

Recognizing health care sponsorship as a ministry identifies the religious and spiritual intentionality of health care service. It is not primarily a business, whether for profit or not-for-profit, although sound business practices are indispensable. It is not just an essential human service to the neighboring civic community, although it is that. First and foremost, it is a ministry undertaken in faith with a religious intention. It differs from lay ecclesial ministry in that it is a corporate rather than an individual ministry. It also differs in that it is a ministry of the Church to the world rather than a ministry within an ecclesiastical institution.

What Spirituality?

This presentation of sponsorship has thus far addressed how sponsorship connects the service of a health care facility to the mission of the Church. This account, however, is incomplete without considering the spirituality that informs this ministry.

No single spirituality characterizes lay ecclesial ministry. Nevertheless, the spirituality animating health care sponsorship is Gospel-centered in imitation of Jesus who healed the sick and comforted the sorrowing. It is an *incarnational* spirituality that accompanies the “joys and hopes, the grief and anxieties” of the people of our time.² It is paschal, affirming the promise of life everlasting even in the face of pain, diminishment, and death. As such, it faces human difficulty with faith, hope, and love. It is *ecclesial*, fostering the bonds of communion and community that unite the human family.³ It is *ecumenical*, reaching beyond the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church to embrace those of other faiths united in the waters of baptism. It is *interreligious*, respecting those who are not Christian and promoting the common human dignity of all. However, these characteristics do not exhaust

Continued on page 30

Lay Leadership in Catholic Institutions

Continued from page 29

the possible markers of a spirituality for health care. Indeed, one of the tasks of rethinking health care sponsorship will be to identify the various components of spirituality for Catholic health care for our time.

A spirituality cannot be one element of a mission statement relegated to a plaque by the front door. Rather, it must permeate the ethos of the workplace. Not all employees need be Catholic. Indeed, in all likelihood, most probably will not be. Nevertheless, the core spiritual values must be embraced by individual employees and must inform policies and procedures. A spirituality is effective only when embodied in caring individuals and in the concrete practices within a health care facility. Otherwise, it is a spirituality in name only.

Health Progress

Health care sponsors carry the responsibility to ensure that a defined spirituality informs a health care system. Thus they must first be educated and formed in this spirituality so that they can hire employees charged with mission and identity in individual facilities. In the past, religious congregations assumed the responsibility for this spiritual formation. In the move beyond connections to “the charisms of our sponsors” into a new era when the whole notion of sponsorship is rethought from the perspective of a lay leadership model, a different entity must necessarily undertake this responsibility.

The structures of Catholic health care are changing, and this is affecting how we view the tasks of sponsorship. This essay has identified two essential components of sponsorship: Catholic identity through ecclesiastical association with the Catholic Church and spirituality. Within the changing landscape of Catholic health care a real danger exists of attending to one component and neglecting the other: to think that everything has been accomplished when we have protected Catholic identity, or to convert Catholic identity into spirituality apart from ecclesiastical recognition. Both elements are distinct and necessary.

SPIRITUALITY FOR LAY SPONSORSHIP

These are some foundational markers of a spirituality for lay sponsorship of health care institutions:

- It is in imitation of Jesus’ healing work.
- It is incarnational.
- It is paschal.
- It is ecumenical.
- It is ecclesial.
- It is corporate.
- It is a ministry of the Church to the world.

From Theory to Action

This essay has suggested that a model of corporate lay leadership based on the emerging concept of lay ecclesial ministry may offer resources for reimagining sponsorship for the future. Within this model, the charism of an originating congregation, which embodies a distinctive spirituality, is transposed into an intentional spirituality of Gospel-centered health care. Here, the emphasis must be on “intentional,” for spirituality can too easily become generic and non-specific.

Spirituality is not simply a generic “faith-based” service. That is too bland and fails to give mission adequate specificity. The task remains for health care sponsors to determine the specific form spirituality assumes in a particular time and place. For spirituality to animate health care, it must be embodied, identifiable, and distinctive insofar as it reflects a particular mission. In the past, this was identified through the charisms of the founders. In the future, this will be through reflection on the Gospel in the light of the people health care is called to serve.

Identifying a spirituality for a specific health care system requires articulating a particular mission with enough specificity so as to make it identifiable and then reflecting on that mission in a process of theological reflection with the Scriptures. If we compare this process to its analogy, the charism of a religious community, which was engagement with mission motivated by a particular reading of Scripture, something of this dialogic process of reflection on a particular health care mission in the light of the ministry of Jesus is required. In fact, mission and spirituality cannot be ordered by putting one before the other. In practice they will develop together. Elements of mission may be service to the poor carried out by auxiliary clinics for the uninsured or service to those in the Bible identified as aliens, our present-day immigrants, with attention to cultural needs, such as allowing families to accompany the sick person or providing translators. Hospice care may benefit from reflection on Job’s persistent faith in the face of suffering, reflecting on Jesus’ passion, the hope engendered by Revelation’s account of the new creation, or Jesus’ promise that death is not the final word.

If health care is not simply to be Catholic because it has ecclesiastical recognition, but also because it enacts mission through a spirituality that animates the values, mission, and beliefs of the Gospel, it must be rooted in a narrative. Reflection on the narrative will suggest practices that then embody and communicate the spirituality. Carrying on a narrative-based spirituality is easier for religious congregations, because the originating charism is embodied in a religious founder whose “charisma” attracted co-workers. In today’s health care climate sponsors may be developing the spirituality of a system or an institution through the work of committees. Nonetheless, it remains an essential task.

Continued on page 33

Exceptional Pastoring

BY MARY M. FOLEY

More than 400 lay men and women in the United States serve as parish life coordinators, appointed by their bishop to lead a parish in the absence of a resident priest pastor. This small, but significant, group of ministers offers new stories of lay leadership in the Church. Mary Foley shares her own story.

I am one of the few people I know who have been able to do what they most wanted to do in life. For the last four years, I have had the rare, joyful, and privileged opportunity to pastor a Catholic parish as a lay woman. This ministry is rare; fewer than 500 men and women currently serve as pastoral leaders of parishes that do not have a resident priest pastor, according to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate. Those who serve have titles like parish/pastoral life coordinator, parish director, or pastoral administrator. My service in this ministry ended when a new bishop decided to appoint only resident priest pastors in parishes. I am not sure how he will be able to maintain this practice over time, but the action is certainly within his rights as bishop. I look back on recent events with sadness and great disappointment, but with no animosity and with my bishop's letter of recommendation in hand.

With all my heart I hope to serve once again in this ministry for our Church. Looking for a new placement has given me some time to write and reflect. A couple of Midwestern dioceses invited me to begin the application process, but it is lengthy and there are no concrete opportunities on the horizon yet. I interviewed in two dioceses in California. Neither diocese currently appoints anyone but priests to pastor parishes, but both dioceses talked with me about

possibilities for ministry. I had a great time. We talked about the "parish life coordinator" model of ministry, as well as different configurations for parish pastoral teams. We discussed the Church's challenges today in terms of parish leadership, especially given the shortage of priests. Reflecting on these meetings, I realize that not only do I love parish ministry; I love talking about it. It is valuable to converse with different people around the country because our ideas and our imaginations can grow as a result.

In spite of the challenges, this was a ministry full of joy and one in which I felt most fully alive. In a word, it is a ministry for which I was made.

I decided to put some thoughts to paper while I remain temporarily free of responsibilities and episcopal oversight. In saying the latter, I intend no slight toward any bishop I have ever worked with, for they have all been good men and I have loved them all. I wish only to acknowledge that I now feel freer than usual to speak publicly. As a woman serving in a very unusual ministry in the Church, I am accustomed to being watched as though under a microscope, especially

by people who would write to the bishop (or even the apostolic nuncio to the United States) if they thought anything I did was suspicious. At least for now, I do not have to worry about anyone sending letters of complaint to my supervising bishop.

My last assignment in ministry was especially challenging, because I was the only person serving in such a role within four dioceses in the state, and people were generally unprepared for such a change. In spite of the challenges, this was a ministry full of joy and one in which I felt most fully alive. In a word, it is a ministry for which I was made. Pastoring is my vocation. I deeply love my Church, and I am thankful for every ministry opportunity I have had; but I am especially grateful for having had the opportunity to serve the Church as a pastoral life coordinator.

What Is a Parish Life Coordinator?

For now, talking about the ministry may be a form of service to the Church. What does it mean for the Church to have women (or deacons or lay men) pastoring parishes? Note that I use "pastor" and "pastoring" as a verb. According to canon law, the title "pastor" always belongs to a priest. Yet canon law includes a special provision that allows a diocesan bishop to appoint a qualified person other than a priest to share in the pastoral care of a parish when there is a shortage of priests (Canon 517.2). In this case, a priest is named canonical pastor. This canonical pastor, or priest moderator, as the position is often called, is responsible for general oversight of the parish, but he is most often not involved in the daily pastoral care of parishioners or in parish administration. These

Continued on page 32

Exceptional Pastoring

Continued from page 31

responsibilities are entrusted to the one who is appointed parish life coordinator. The bishop also assigns a sacramental minister (a second priest), who comes into the parish for Sunday Mass and other sacramental celebrations.

The parish life coordinator is appointed to be the pastoral leader of the parish and the one responsible for its administration. While pastoring is ordinarily associated only with priesthood, it is good that this provision exists in canon law, because at this time in U.S. history, we do not have enough priests who can become pastors, and we will have more parishes in need of pastoring. I also know that God has entrusted gifts for pastoring to others like myself.

I do not know what the future holds for ecclesial structures and roles in ministry. I believe that the power of death cannot prevail against the Church (Mt 16:18), and I trust that God will always make a way for people to receive the sacraments. The richness of the tradition of the Catholic Church is beyond comparison, yet I fear that fear itself will prevent us from adequately passing on this tradition from generation to generation. This is not something sentimental; it concerns the salvation of people and our mission as Church.

Overcoming Fears

I have served in a ministry that is feared by some, who see it as devaluing priesthood. The only need we have, they would say, is to promote vocations to priesthood and religious life. Some fear that by encouraging lay ecclesial ministry, especially when it comes to leadership of parishes, we discourage these other vocations. This I do not believe. Religious vocations are God-given, and it is the task of anyone pastoring within the Church (bishop,

priest, or parish life coordinator) to recognize, affirm, encourage, nurture, and support all the gifts God has given to the community of faith. To me, this is an essential part of what it means to pastor. In the last four years, in a parish of 935 families, I encouraged two young men who may have vocations to priesthood, and I helped another man enter formation for the permanent diaconate. I gave vocation talks in our religious education classes and spoke about bishops, priests, deacons, brothers and monks, sisters and nuns, and lay ecclesial ministers. I encouraged each child who thought that God may be calling him or her to one of these ministries and wrote letters to their parents, asking them to give encouragement as well. I also invited four lay people to begin formation in a diocesan lay ministry program.

We are not the givers of religious vocations, nor can we choose what gifts will be given. Our proper task is to recognize all the gifts God has given to the Church, especially in these challenging times. If we need vocations to the priesthood, and we do, then we must have pastors in parishes who will encourage them, whoever is doing the pastoring.

In the ministry of pastoring, I have also discovered that another concern compounds the fears of some: female leadership of parishes. When I was originally appointed, the bishop let me know that he expected me to attend cluster meetings with the priests. When the priests found out, some staged a minor revolt and protest to the presbyteral council. I avoided meetings until the matter was finally resolved. Then, over time, collegial relationships developed with some of the same priests who had originally objected to my presence.

At the parish level, I was informed by someone when I arrived that my coming was disruptive to the psyche of some of the people: "You have to understand that we have had this tradition for 2,000 years. Now, not only do we not have a priest pastor,

but we have a woman on top of it!" Should such challenges prevent the consideration of women as leaders of parishes? In truth, I was never fully accepted by some people. Most, however, came around in their thinking. Our parish grew from 750 to 935 families, and our religious education enrollment of 535 students reflected a 25 percent increase over a few years. Many people said that I was able to minister with them in ways that some priests never could. Does this comment devalue priesthood? On the contrary, effective ministry does not diminish anyone. Rather, it helps our entire Church.

The important task at hand for all pastors is to recognize the gifts that God has freely given for the benefit of the Church. Then we must also educate the lay faithful about the state of the priest shortage in our country. Denial is another form of fear. Alternate models of ministry may be needed in particular times and places. We should help people understand the situation by providing them thorough orientation on new forms of ministry. Lay people love the Church, and they can learn, adapt, and flourish under various models of pastoral leadership. God will provide priests for the Church in the future, and God will provide what we need so that viable parishes can remain active communities of faith and local centers for evangelization. Consider starting a conversation about these things in your parish or diocese. Be not afraid.

—

Endnotes

MARY M. FOLEY has served in a variety of parish ministries for more than 20 years, most recently as pastoral life coordinator for a suburban parish of 935 families.

Mary M. Foley, "Exceptional Pastoring: Women in Parish Leadership," *America* 200 (March 9, 2009): 11–13.

Reprinted with permission of *America Magazine Inc.*

Lay Leadership in Catholic Institutions

Continued from page 30

Endnotes

SUSAN K. WOOD, S.C.L., is a professor of theology and chair of the theology department at Marquette University. A longtime participant in ecumenical dialogue, her latest book is *One Baptism: Ecumenical Dimensions of the Doctrine of Baptism* (Liturgical Press, 2009).

Source: Susan K. Wood, S.C.L., "Health Care Sponsorship: From Charism to Ecclesial Minis-

try," Reprinted with permission of *Health Progress* 90 (Sept./Oct. 2009): 45-48.

1. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry* (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005), 10.

2. Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, "Church in the Modern World," 1965, 1. Available online at www.vatican.va/archive/index.htm.

3. The Church is a sacrament of the intimate union between God and all humankind. Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," 1. Available online at www.vatican.va/archive/index.htm.

TEN STEPS TOWARD A MORE ADULT CHURCH

There are thousands of proposals we could make for working toward a more open and accountable Church, but here we will look at 10 that may be among the more important or urgent issues to be attended to right now. Some will be easier than others. Some require only that the Church take seriously what it has always possessed. Some will take a measure of flexibility and openness to new ideas. Some may even look for radical change.

1. The whole Church needs to make an option for the poor and marginalized.
2. The lay/clerical relationship needs to move from one of child/parent to one of equality. Adult behavior among the laity is nonnegotiable. Acceptance of the laity as equally adult is nonnegotiable for bishops and clergy.
3. The laity and the clergy need to become better educated in the history of the Catholic tradition.
4. Seminary and ministerial training should be for ministry in real life.
5. We need to insist on genuine parish and diocesan pastoral and

financial councils that have deliberative as well as consultative roles.

6. There must be real and significant lay participation in the processes by which pastors and bishops are selected.
7. There needs to be renewed attention to the sacrament of baptism as the basis for the understanding of all ministry in the Church.
8. There needs to be a serious consideration of the implications of the centrality of the Eucharist in Catholic tradition for the life and structure of the Church.
9. The community of faith needs to become aware of the enormous resource for education and renewal represented by our Catholic colleges and universities, and the colleges and universities need to recognize their responsibilities for helping the Church to think.
10. The life of the Church will not be fully renewed until women achieve their rightful positions as fully equal partners with men.

Paul Lakeland, *Catholicism at the Crossroads: How the Laity Can Save the Church* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 105-21.

CONTRIBUTING PUBLICATIONS

- *America*, the national Catholic weekly magazine, has been published since 1909 by Jesuits in the United States for thinking Catholics and for those who want to know what Catholics are thinking. *America* online at www.americamagazine.org or call 1-800-627-9533.
- *The Living Light* was "An Interdisciplinary Review of Catholic Religious Education, Catechesis, and Youth and Pastoral Ministry" published by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops. *The Living Light* ceased publication in 2004.
- *Burns & Oates Publishers* is a Roman Catholic publishing imprint in Great Britain. Designated 'Publishers to the Holy See' by Pope Leo XIII, *Burns & Oates* has a tradition of publishing official works for the Catholic Church in England and Wales.
- *Commonweal* is an independent journal of opinion edited by lay Catholics. It has a special interest in religion (Catholic and otherwise), politics, war and peace issues, and culture. Its goal is "to bring a distinctively Catholic perspective to bear on the issues of the day." Subscribe online at: www.commonwealmagazine.org.
- *National Catholic Reporter* is an independent newsweekly that features articles and essays on topics including spirituality, human rights, living the Catholic faith, social justice, and liturgy. Subscribe online at <http://ncronline.org/subscribe> or call 1-800-333-7373
- *Continuum International Publishing Group* is an independent academic publisher based in London and New York and publishes around 600 books each year focusing on the humanities, education, and religion.
- *Health Progress* is the official journal of the Catholic Health Association of the United States, published six times a year on topics of importance to Catholic health care. Subscribe online at: www.chausa.org/HP or call 314-253-3456.
- *The Paulist Press* is a major component of the work of the Paulist Fathers. It is a leading publisher of hardcover and paperback books, audio and video tapes, educational programs, and materials for parish renewal. The Press continues its mission to bring the riches of the Catholic heritage to Catholics and persons of other religious traditions.

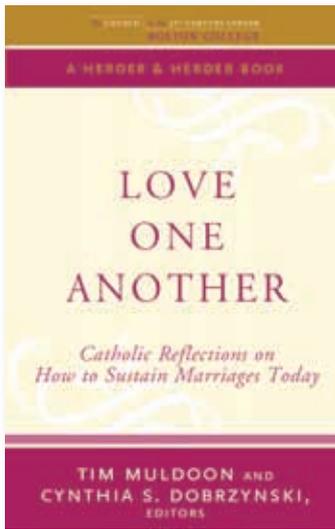


THE CHURCH IN THE 21ST CENTURY CENTER
 BOSTON COLLEGE
 HEFFERNAN HOUSE
 110 COLLEGE RD.
 CHESTNUT HILL, MA 02467

NON-PROFIT
 ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
 PERMIT NO. 55294



the CHURCH *in the* 21ST CENTURY CENTER
BOSTON COLLEGE



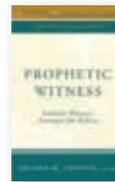
Award-Winning Book Series

A collection of volumes emerging from C21 Center events and themes published in conjunction with the Crossroad Publishing Company.

NEW RELEASE

*Love One Another:
 Catholic Reflections on How to
 Sustain Marriages Today*

Edited by Tim Muldoon and Cynthia S. Dobrzynski



*Prophetic Witness:
 Catholic Women's Strategies
 for Reform*

Leading Catholic women theologians from across the U.S. present their strategies and hopes for the church.

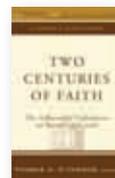
Colleen Griffith, editor



*Take Heart:
 Catholic Writers on Hope in
 Our Time*

Thirty prominent Catholic writers reflect on where they find and sustain sources of hope in their lives.

Ben Birnbaum, editor



*Two Centuries of Faith:
 The Influence of
 Catholicism on Boston, 1808-2008*

A series of essays focusing on the various ways in which Catholicism has influenced life and society in Boston.

Thomas H. O'Connor, editor

www.bc.edu/c21books