

**Women of Witness:
An Ongoing Formation Program for Women Lay Ecclesial Ministers**

by

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Table of Contents

<i>Thesis Project Abstract</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Chapter One</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Genesis of the thesis</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Recognized Limitations and Assumptions</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Outline of Chapters</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Chapter One: Introduction</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Chapter Two: Terminology and Research Method</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Chapter Three: What is the Problem with Lay Ministry Formation Programs?</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Chapter Four: Issues and Solutions with Lay Ministry Formation Programs</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Chapter Five: A New Model of Ongoing Formation</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Chapter Two</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Conceptual Framework</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>The Life and Dignity of the Human Person</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Feminist, Womanist, and Indigenous Theology</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Liberation Theology</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Contextual Theology</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Theoretical Foundations</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Qualitative Research Theory</i>	<i>41</i>

<i>Narrative Research and Autoethnography</i>	42
<i>Phenomenological Research</i>	43
<i>Social Theory</i>	44
<i>Four Areas of Complete Formation</i>	44
<i>Concepts for Cohesive Lay Ministry Formation</i>	47
<i>Emotional Intelligence for Pastoral Leadership</i>	48
<i>Examples of Spiritual Formation</i>	50
<i>Mental Health Awareness</i>	50
<i>Deficiencies in Formation Leads to Dysfunctional Leadership</i>	52
<i>Eggshell Leadership</i>	53
<i>Clericalism</i>	53
<i>Queen Bee Syndrome</i>	54
<i>Conclusion</i>	55
Chapter Three	56
<i>Introduction</i>	56
<i>Minister or Educator</i>	56
<i>History of Lay Ministry in the United States</i>	57
<i>USCCB Department Assignment</i>	60
<i>Problems Being Classified in Education</i>	61
<i>Institutional Bias toward Intellectual Dimension Only</i>	64
<i>The Number Game</i>	64
<i>Some Existing Program Examples</i>	66
<i>The Augustine Institute, Denver Colorado</i>	66
<i>Franciscan University, Steubenville, Ohio</i>	67
<i>University of Saint Mary of the Lake, Institute for Pastoral Leadership</i>	69
<i>Diocese of San Bernardino</i>	70

<i>Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, Boston, MA</i>	71
<i>Consequences of Incorrect Classification</i>	73
<i>Context: Increased Calls Without Coherent Answers</i>	73
<i>Theology Studies verses Lay Ecclesial Ministry Formation</i>	73
<i>Examples: Original Research Presented</i>	75
<i>Context of Research</i>	75
<i>Description of Participants and Methodology</i>	75
<i>Lay Ecclesial Ministers and Dysfunctional Leadership Models</i>	88
<i>Lay Ecclesial Ministers ministering with clergy in toxic workplaces.</i>	90
<i>Conclusion</i>	91
Chapter Four: Findings and Results	92
<i>Introduction:</i>	92
<i>Unprompted conversations</i>	94
<i>Missing dimensions of Lay Ministry Formation</i>	98
<i>Evidence of Decline in Lay Ecclesial Ministers</i>	103
<i>Shift in Formation after the Dallas Charter</i>	105
<i>Vocation Discernment</i>	106
<i>Evidence of Lack of Formation of L.E.M Programs.</i>	107
<i>Evaluation of the Lay Minister</i>	107
<i>Inadequate Formation Programs</i>	108
<i>Intervention Explained</i>	110
<i>Current Models of Ongoing Formation</i>	111
<i>Introduction</i>	111
<i>Tertiaship</i>	111
<i>Catholic school teachers</i>	113
<i>Lay Ecclesial Minister (USCCB)</i>	114

<i>Ongoing Formation in Other Professions</i>	118
<i>A Beginning Teacher's Program</i>	119
<i>Residency Program for Medical Students</i>	120
<i>Conclusion</i>	123
Chapter Five: A Solution	125
<i>Introduction</i>	125
<i>A New Model of Ongoing Formation for Women Lay Ecclesial Ministers</i>	125
<i>Women of Witness: Model of Ongoing Formation for Women Lay Ecclesial Ministers</i>	125
<i>Criteria</i>	126
<i>Curriculum for Ongoing Formation</i>	128
<i>Spiritual Dimension (Resurrection)</i>	128
<i>Pastoral Dimension (Reawakening)</i>	129
<i>Human Dimension (Restoration)</i>	130
<i>Intellectual Dimension (Renewal)</i>	131
Chapter Six	133
<i>Conclusion</i>	133
Appendix A	137
<i>Opening Retreat for Women of Witness</i>	137
<i>Model of Curriculum for Ongoing Formation of Women Lay Ecclesial Ministers</i>	137
Appendix B	170
<i>Archdiocese of Galveston/Houston Model of Ongoing Formation</i>	170
Bibliography	183

Thesis Project Abstract

Formation programs in the United States for women Lay Ecclesial Ministers (LEM) may not have prepared women for clergy emotional abuse that they may have experienced while serving in parishes or diocesan centers within the Roman Catholic Church. As a result of the gaps in some lay ministry formation programs while women were preparing as Lay Ecclesial Ministers, women could have been deficient in leadership development. As a result of this possible deficiency, women were unprepared to recognize emotional abuse from their clergy co-workers in the vineyard.

In 2005, the “*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*”, a document, promulgated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), was designed as a guidebook for developing comprehensive lay ministry formation programs throughout the country.¹ The guidebook details criteria for formation programs naming the need for these programs to have all four dimensions of formation originally missing from lay ministry formation programs in the United States. The four dimensions of formation based on the same model of formation for seminary formation are spiritual, pastoral, human, and intellectual. The imperative from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and members of the Alliance of Lay Ecclesial Ministers approved these standards of formation. These formation standards were essential for women as they earned their certificates or degrees through the program. The failure of the lay ministry formation program to meet the standards set forth by the United States Conference of

¹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc., “*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*,” (Washington DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005), 37.

Catholic Bishops as designated in the “*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*” guidebook, resulted in some women not being prepared or equipped to enter the ministerial workplace with enough formation to recognize or prevent emotional abuse from the clergy co-workers. Due to the lack of attention given to three of the four dimensions of formation; spiritual, pastoral, and human, and intellectual, when emotional abuse occurred in the ministerial workplace, many women did not have the knowledge or skills to prevent being wounded as a minister. The same can be said for seminary formation however for purposes of this paper, the focus will be on the woman in a formation program and the women employee in a parish or diocesan center.

This thesis project examines three lay ministry formation schools and the top three colleges and universities with the most students preparing for lay ministry in the United States. After this examination of the three colleges and universities with the most students and the three programs approved that have met the standards set by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, a model of ongoing formation will be developed to address the gaps in formation for women that may have been a cause for woundedness from clergy who have used emotional abuse as a means of leadership. The importance of materials about emotional intelligence, mental health, and spirituality will be paramount to assist women lay ecclesial ministers in preventing, identifying, and healing from clergy emotional abuse. The final course of action for the women lay ministers who experienced clergy emotional abuse will be a transformative framework consisting of one opening retreat, four courses offered in the spiritual dimension of formation, four courses offered in the pastoral dimension of formation, four courses offered in the human dimension of formation, and four courses offered in the intellectual dimension of formation.

The ongoing formation program will consist of three years of formation for a woman lay ecclesial minister desiring to learn how to serve as an effective minister in the Catholic Church

with wisdom, prayer, and education needed to navigate possible clergy emotional abuse in the ministerial workplace. A model may be used throughout the country for lay ministry formation programs after a person completes her certificate or degree.

Chapter One

Introduction

Women created by God as revealed in the creation story in the Book of Genesis, may have been set up from the beginning to take on choosing the fruit from the tree of good and evil. This does not mean that women need to continue taking the blame for something written as a story revealing how to listen to the voice of God and not to the voice of the serpent. This same voice of God has called women since their conception and are gifts to the world and the Catholic Church. Women are essential in parishes and diocesan centers throughout the world as volunteers, lay ministers, women religious, and parishioners. This same voice from God continues to call women into full service inside and outside of the church's walls. Choosing to answer the call to serve the church as a woman requires her to be formed with the intellectual, spiritual, pastoral, and human dimensions of formation. If this does not occur, she may face some unpleasant situations in the ministerial workplace.

American universities and colleges have been instrumental in fundamentally teaching adults how to think for centuries. With the inception of the first Catholic university in the United States, at Georgetown University in Washington, DC founded in 1789, men were provided with a robust education in fundamental thought.² Later, men and women were taught theology in these Catholic

² <https://library.georgetown.edu/infrequently-asked-questions/georgetown-oldest-catholic-university-america#:~:text=Georgetown%2C%20founded%20in%201789%2C%20is,still%20in%20operation%20in%20America.>

universities which provided them with an understanding of Catholic thought through knowledge and experience.

“The first European universities largely trained students for careers in the church. Theology, then dubbed the "queen of degrees," ranked as the highest-status degree, followed by law and medicine. In medieval Europe, where universities in Oxford, Cambridge, Paris, and Bologna flourished, and higher education was meant for men, as women couldn't become priests, lawyers, or physicians.”³

Women were relegated to other professions that may have appeared more ladylike to the men. What would entice women to pursue a degree in theology except perhaps to join a religious community? “Even women religious were not encouraged and often not endorsed by the bishop to pursue a theology degree.”⁴ If they did desire to study theology, how would they have been accepted by their male counterpart studying the same subject matter? It was not until centuries later when religious women would appear tired of being pushed out of same-gender institutions that they took up the cause and created their own Catholic college.

Catholic colleges founded and sponsored by women have been historically committed to women's education and this is a distinctive feature of their Catholic identity. Until the 1960s and 1970s, most Catholic colleges and universities in this country were single sex, including universities such as Georgetown, Boston College, and the University of Notre Dame. “Had it not been for the numerous congregations of women religious founding, funding, leading, and staffing Catholic women's colleges throughout the United States, the women they served would not have

³ Genevieve Carlton, “*A History of Women in Higher Education*,” *Best Colleges.Org* (2023): <https://www.bestcolleges.com/news/analysis/2021/03/21/history-women-higher-education/>

⁴ Carolyn Custis James, “*When Life and Beliefs Collide*” (Grand Rapids, MI: Harper Collins Christian Publishing, 2010), 14.

had access to a Catholic college education.”⁵ Women such as Mother McAuley who founded the Sisters of Mercy religious community as a means to help the poor can now be seen leading the St. Joseph College in Standish, Maine as a way to help foster women’s vocations to religious life and lay ministry. “For the past seventy years, women have been admitted to theology programs in the United States being trained to provide liturgical ministry, catechesis, and pastoral care.”⁶ Yet, from the research conducted for this paper, many of the women who have been trained in these ministries through comprehensive theology and pastoral ministry departments entered the parish or diocesan centers unprepared for the behaviors, attitudes, and workplace emotional abuse that many encountered not because of their education but possibly because of being a woman. Most entered lay ministry formation programs in the same education system as men preparing for the priesthood with the same dimensions of formation. The courses remained the same, and so did the instruction. Time and time again, many women and those who shared unprompted conversations for this thesis project were subjected to poor leadership, emotional outbursts, and sexism with no place to heal their wounds except to leave the ministerial workplace. While these same women felt prepared to share the intellectual dimension of formation by teaching, they felt unprepared for ministry in the parish or diocesan center because of the deficiency in the spiritual, pastoral, and human dimensions of formation. Most did not want to leave the ministry that they believe God called them to serve, but they knew they were unable to stop the emotional abuse from the clergy. Many felt inadequate with organization skills, emotional intelligence, and ministering with persons who demonstrated dysfunction in the ministerial workplace. They encountered women who acted as pastors and were

⁵ Katherine Grenier, “A College of One’s Own: The Need to Explore the Contributions of Women Religious in Catholic Higher Education,” (2014): <https://dailytheology.org/2014/10/22/a-college-of-ones-own-the-need-to-explore-the-contributions-of-women-religious-in-catholic-higher-education/>.

⁶ Heather Grennan Gary, “What Woman Theologians have done for the church” (2012): *US Catholic*: <https://uscatholic.org/articles/201212/what-women-theologians-have-done-for-the-church/>.

perceived as the queen bee of the hive. Most felt unsupported and caught off guard by the behaviors because they believed those who work in the church should “know better.”

Pope Francis said, "The mission of the church must be like a field hospital that cleans and heals wounds." (February 5, 2015, Santa Maria, Vatican). My thesis is as the mission of Jesus Christ and his church, there are wounded parishioners in the field hospital but there are also wounded women lay ecclesial ministers who are not equipped to minister to the wounded parishioners because they are also wounded due to emotional abuse from their clergy co-workers. These women's lay ecclesial ministers received these wounds by not learning how to recognize, prevent, or even avoid clergy emotional abuse because they were never given the tool needed to prevent their wounds from these men. If the proper formation was provided in their lay ministry formation programs when they earned their graduate degree or certificate as lay ecclesial ministers, they may have been better prepared to name the abuse, seek proper mental health treatment to heal from the abuse, and teach others about the dangers of working in the ministerial workplace. Therefore, because of not being properly formed in all four dimensions of lay ministry formation; spiritual, pastoral, human, and intellectual, and being subjected to clergy emotional abuse, they were ill-equipped and were not prepared to serve as a lay ecclesial minister without being subject to being wounded by clergy emotional abuse. Since this is a deviation from the initial thesis written earlier as a part of the thesis project proposal, it will be explained that the women's lay ecclesial ministry formation had gaps in the education and the formation process that did not provide the proper knowledge or tools to combat dysfunctional behavior on the part of leadership in the church.

What began as a personal quest to discover why women were prone to emotional abuse in the ministerial workplace by clergy, the research would prove if the women received the proper formation in lay ecclesial ministry as prescribed in the “*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*”

document, there may be fewer opportunities for women to be wounded from clergy emotional abuse. This is not to say the clergy are off the hook for their poor formation that they received causing some of the issues surrounding clergy emotional abuse. The women would have learned how to recognize and understand emotional abuse when they may be victimized by it. All four dimensions of formation will be explored but major emphasis will be placed on the spiritual, pastoral, and human dimensions of formation that appear to be the places of formation at its weakest level of teaching. In the spiritual, human, and pastoral dimensions of formation, lay ministers learn how to develop leadership skills, acquire emotional intelligence, perfect their communication, learn how to deal with dysfunctional leaders, overcome the need for power, maintain healthy boundaries, and live a healthy work-life balance. These fundamentals are necessary to combat episodes of dysfunctional leadership by clergy. It will also reveal how they may be gaps in the seminary formation of priests particularly in the areas of spiritual, human, and pastoral formation. With these deficiencies in the formation process for lay ecclesial ministers and men studying for priesthood, it could be a recipe for a disaster when both celibate men and women are together in the same work environment.

A solution for the inadequate formation programs offered by academic and diocesan institutions is not to ask the women to return to school and learn the missing formation components. Instead, they could attend classes and formation sessions as a means of ongoing formation. Therefore, a model of ongoing formation for lay ecclesial ministers will be developed that will provide continuing education courses, opportunities for personal reflection, retreats, feedback, and learning assessment. This ongoing formation handbook will provide some of the missing pieces in formation that were not accomplished through being formed for ministry by participating in academic classes, ie., the intellectual path in lay ministry formation. The field hospital becomes the

framework for the place where wounds can be healed but first, the woman lay minister must recognize the wounds that are present and how to prevent more from occurring as she serves as a lay ecclesial minister.

What is a Field Hospital?

The metaphor of the mission of the church must be like a field hospital, which Pope Francis used to begin the search for direction. Through my research, field hospitals were used in war times for wounded soldiers who come off the battlefield. In the field hospital, the nurses, doctors, and other staff members take care of the wounded, battered, and bruised soldiers. Why then, is Pope Francis using this metaphor to describe the mission of the church? Those who are members of the church may come ready to have their wounds bandaged and hearts healed. Pope Francis said.

“The thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugar! You must heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds. And you must start from the ground up.”⁷

It was this “ground up approach” that Pope Francis mentions in the above quote that prepared me for some serious theological detective work in determining the cause of so many wounded women lay ecclesial ministers. How are these wounds cleaned and healed and by whom? There are many women lay ecclesial ministers who may not have receive proper instruction in learning the necessary safeguard measures for preventing wounds. By listening to the stories of women who shared the extent of their emotional abuse while being employed by the Catholic Church, the women appeared to lack the tools to help guide their experiences. Being unaware of

⁷ Francis, “In Need of Mercy,” *National Catholic Reporter* (2016): <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/francis-chronicles/pope-s-quotes-field-hospital-church>.

personal boundaries, one may have overshared her feelings, appeared emotional, or spoken from a place of fear that all came from her woundedness. She may have led a person down a path that could be detrimental without her even knowing she did it. The pope already recognizes that the church has become a field hospital filled with wounded people. He did not define what he meant when he stated this metaphor. He did say that it would not be prudent to treat someone who had high cholesterol if they have gaping wounds someplace else. “*Treat the wounds first*” is what I was reading when I read this quotation in the National Catholic Reporter magazine. This paper provides some important ways the wounds can be treated through an ongoing formation model.

Genesis of the thesis

The genesis of this thesis is the story. When I was beginning to do research for this project, which originally focused on emotional abuse committed by clergy on lay ministers, I began sharing my desire with my colleagues my personal experiences with clergy emotional abuse. I wanted to learn from other women who had been emotionally abused by priests or bishops so I would not feel alone with my woundedness. Unprompted and unplanned, several women told me their stories or gave me names of women who revealed to them the abuse that they received. One story led to another, without much effort on my part. I did not reach out to any laywomen, but some found me. I did not take any notes, but I do remember what was shared with me. I have their stories in my heart and mind. The conversation was free and life-giving to these women simply because I listened and shared some of my life history as an employee in the Catholic church. Many shared that no one would ever believe what had happened to them in the workplace by priests and bishops. No one ever asked them about their experiences or why they left the profession or institutional church. After each conversation, I thanked them for sharing their story and offered to pray with them.

In receiving the stories of these women, my heart was breaking but my head was thinking: If women were willing to share their stories about clergy emotional abuse without any prompting on my part, how many others would be willing to share their stories? How many women who were employed by the Roman Catholic Church as lay ecclesial ministers were abused emotionally by priests or bishops in the United States? Knowing this question would be difficult to answer (and problematic given the limitations of dissertation guidelines), my research took me to examine the root causes of clergy emotional abuse among women lay ecclesial ministers. This direction was a different path than originally shared at my thesis project proposal review. Why are there so many similar stories of emotional abuse? What did these women not learn when they were in college earning their degree in pastoral studies or divinity? It was these questions that began the formal research for this thesis project and changed the trajectory of my thesis project proposal as set forth in May of 2023. The focus took me away from researching the causes of clergy emotional abuse from the perspective of being abused, to a healthier approach of research that focused on the causes for women who allow themselves to be wounded. This led to research regarding formation programs as well as the original research into women's lived experiences of formation programs.

The research that I will provide for this paper will be specifically centered on the inadequate formation in the spiritual, pastoral, and human dimensions of formation offered by academic institutions of lay ministry formation for women. It is my theory that women lay ministers who received degrees or certificates from an institution of formation in which states a person received formation in all four dimensions can be called a lay minister was not prepared in all four dimensions of formation as prescribed in the "*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord.*" Therefore, she may not be able to avoid clergy emotional abuse without learning new skills through a model of ongoing formation after she receives her degree or certificate. Sending women to earn degrees in

lay ministry gives the impression that the pastor or the bishop is concerned that lay people are given education and pastoral formation to minister to God's people in the field hospital. The USCCB also acknowledges women earning a graduate degree in theology, pastoral studies, or divinity essential to minister among the people entrusted to her care, yet the credentials or oversight in the formation program have appeared to be weak.

Decline in Lay Ministry Formation Programs

Over the decades with the rising cost of formation programs in diocesan centers, many have opted to not pursue advanced degrees "20% of those who participated in lay ministry formation programs stated their tuition was supplemented by the diocese. 9 % stated that their diocese covered 50% of their tuition, yet their salaries were at or below the poverty level for a family of four." ⁸ If bishops have relegated the formation of the laity to online programs such as "*Franciscan at Home*" through Franciscan University in Steubenville, OH., University of Dayton, or University of Notre Dame's Satellite Theological Education Program (STEP), then the bishop believes the program offers the information and formation necessary for his layperson to serve in a parish. Without ever seeing the contents of the courses being offered, there is a blind approval of a program simply because of the reputation of the school not necessarily the program. This blind oversight may have caused some fractured formation programs and wounded people due to the inadequacies in formation. The education offers information for women, but it may not offer the formation to give her the complete formation necessary for a comprehensive approach to being a lay minister.

Who are the wounded?

⁸ Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, "*Research review: Lay Ecclesial Ministers in the United States,*" (Washington, DC: Georgetown, 2015): 21.

Through the course of the research for this paper, what appeared to be one root cause which was clericalism, the deeper the research was conducted, the deeper the well of mystery surfaced. It would have been an easier paper to write by naming clericalism as the root cause of clergy emotional abuse but there was something at the root of this issue. It appeared by listening to the unprompted conversations that clericalism was a factor in ordained men choosing to emotionally abuse women, but it was only the “tip of the iceberg.” What could appear as personality conflicts on the surface only grew deeper into an institutional gaping hole with the formation process. Also examining women as called and gifted not under their education but by their baptism. Are women needing further studies in pastoral theology to serve in the field hospital? Looking at women who serve in the church without degrees through the lens of feminist, womanist, and indigenous theology, women were serving in the church long before institutions became breeding grounds for lay ecclesial ministers. Using the nomenclature of the lay ecclesial minister was only a title given to someone who participated in a credentialing process designated by the USCCB but centuries after women in tribal communities received the title of chief not because of their degree but because were chosen in the community to lead God’s people. Also in the African American community, women, particularly grandmothers were instrumental in passing on the Catholic faith to their children and grandchildren. It did not take degrees to lead others to God, they simply did this by their actions and words about our Savior Jesus Christ. Having a master’s degree in pastoral studies did not give them the tools to lead others but their faith and commitment to the church were the key pieces.

Recognized Limitations and Assumptions

The topic of the effects of clergy emotional abuse upon women lay ecclesial ministers in the workplace is rarely discussed or acknowledged as an issue in pastoral settings, this thesis project

has some limitations. There was a limited number of resources about lay ministry formation programs and their efficacy in preparing women for employment in the ministerial workplace but there were not as many resources available on the topic of inefficiency of lay ministry formation programs. The resources were found primarily on the USCCB website and the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA). This was not a topic researched, especially in the examination of the gaps in lay ministry formation. The women were not reluctant to share their stories but because of the impediments in hearing their stories, the independent review board believed it would cause undue distress and did not encourage surveys to be taken from the women who experienced clergy emotional abuse. As a result, the stories shared are only written from a generalized perspective and not specific to the person. These stories are written in the unprompted conversation section of the paper.

The men who worked as lay ministers or permanent deacons were not a part of this paper. The priest who caused emotional abuse among women were also not consulted for this paper. The research conducted does not include the programs or courses men would have taken in preparation for priesthood. The information provided only included women lay ecclesial ministers, male lay ministers were not included in the research or surveys. Although men attended the same lay ministry formation programs and would be susceptible to the same formation courses, the focus of this paper was strictly on the experiences of women. *A Model of Ongoing Formation of Lay Ecclesial Ministers* is limited in scope and sequence since it is specifically written for women who attended a lay ministry formation program and earned a certificate or a degree. *A Model of Ongoing Formation of Lay Ecclesial Ministers* will not address people who did not complete a lay minister formation program.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter One: Introduction

In Chapter one, the metaphor of a field hospital as the Catholic Church will be examined as the place where wounded people come to be healed. Many of these wounded people are staff members and parishioners. The wounds they carry come from various places, but this paper will examine how the female lay ecclesial ministers received their formation that may not have educated them on ways to recognize, prevent, or treat wounds stemming from clergy emotional abuse.

Through the eyes of a practical theologian, the academic centers of learning and formation, church documents, culture among bishops, and educational centers will be explored as probable causes for the wounds that women received by being employed as lay ecclesial ministers in the field hospital. This chapter will not address how the clergy receive their wounds or the causes of their emotional outbursts or need to cause emotional abuse upon women.

Chapter Two: Terminology and Research Method

In Chapter two, sixteen women were surveyed using specific questions regarding the formation aspect of their graduate degrees. The questions developed asking what topics or subjects were offered that may have prepared them in the four dimensions of formation. How many classes were offered in theology versus pastoral studies, were any classes offered in emotional wellness or spiritual development? Was there a practicum and if so, how was it conducted? The questions were developed to identify possible gaps in formation programs. Questions regarding who attended classes and participated in formation with other students and the method of instruction delivery were asked. Were people separated in classes or were wives of deacon candidates attending classes apart from their husband preparing for the diaconate? The case of separation is important to

understand because after experiencing a separation in lay ministry formation apart from deacon formation, in 2009, at the University of St. Mary of the Lake, there appeared to be a concern about putting men and women in the same room learning the same material. The men and women preparing for lay ministry formation in the same class as seminarians preparing for priesthood will be explored as well. Yet, the men preparing for priesthood were given the same four dimensions of formation as an institutional guide for creating courses and workshops.

Further research examined the criteria used for approval conducted on three lay ministry formation programs, University of St Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, IL, Archdiocese of Galveston/Houston, TX, and Diocese of San Bernardino, CA. What each program provided were courses being offered to their lay ministers without any content or curriculum being offered for reviews. Furthermore, the research regarding the data collected from the student count at the universities and formation programs listed in the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), opened Pandora's box. It will be noted in this paper, the findings regarding the student count from numerous dioceses, lay ministry formation centers, and universities. This raised concerns about the student numbers being used for marketing and grant proposals.

Chapter Three: What is the Problem with Lay Ministry Formation Programs?

Chapter three examines the methodology and research used to determine which lay ministry formation programs are offered in the United States. The research will share how many women through unprompted conversations shared their experiences of clergy emotional abuse. Without pointing a finger at who or what caused the emotional abuse it is important to understand exactly what emotional abuse is, and how to avoid or prevent it from occurring in the ministerial workplace.

In examining the “*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*” document, chapter three will also explore the curriculum and content of the lay ministry programs throughout the country. Are women receiving the education and formation that prepares them to be the best minister in the workplace? The USCCB, as a governing body of bishops oversees formation programs such as priestly formation and deacon formation under the Committee for Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations⁹ establishes standards and protocols but bishops may never have served in the role of lay ecclesial minister. The bishops who may or may not understand the intricacies of the title of lay ecclesial minister does not have one woman on the committee. Is it because lay ecclesial minister is not seen by the USCCB as a vocation? Placing the committee that equips and resources lay ecclesial ministers in the education department at the USCCB, there appears to classify this position as a job to teach and not a vocation from God. The definition of a vocation according to Webster's dictionary,

“a) a summons or strong inclination or course of action especially a divine call to the religious life. An entry into the priesthood or in a religious order, or the work in which a person is employed.”

It is interesting to note who has a vocation and who does not have a vocation. Perhaps, this thought could be left up to God instead of an office in Washington.

Chapter Four: Issues and Solutions with Lay Ministry Formation Programs

Chapter four combines the research, findings, and solutions to the issues that have arisen. Examples of programs for ongoing formation, Catholic school teachers, and priests will be reviewed not only for their content but the accountability and responsibility of the individuals' taking courses. If the pastor does not have accountability to his bishop, why would he encourage the

⁹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc, *Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2023). 26.

lay ecclesial minister to continue with ongoing formation? The policies are in place for all lay ministers to participate in ongoing formation as set forth by the document, “*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*”, written in 2005, yet this paper will prove there is a gap in the formation requirements written in the document versus what transpires in the workplace. Addressing these gaps throughout the paper will demonstrate the need to retool lay ministry formation programs to form women into becoming a lay ecclesial minister with proper instruction. It could prepare instructors who understand lay ecclesial ministers instead of being seminary professors being paid as an adjunct teacher in the lay ministry formation program. Having the proper tools to do her job as a lay ecclesial minister is imperative for her success in ministry and when these tools are not part of the formation program, she will have less access to navigate through the emergency room of the field hospital. A doctor does not enter the hospital on the day after she graduates from medical school fully prepared to serve as an attending physician nor does a teacher serve as the principal of the school on her first day as a teacher. An example of a residency program will be explored as some of the models for ongoing formation for women who are educated as lay ecclesial ministers but did not have any practicum preparing for the ministerial workplace.

Chapter Five: A New Model of Ongoing Formation

Chapter five provides a prototype of a “Model of Ongoing Formation for Women Lay Ecclesial Ministers, called *Women of Witness*.” The model consists of a retreat with experiences of wellness and rest. After the retreat, there are twelve lesson plans developed for continuing education credits that fall under the four dimensions of formation: spiritual, pastoral, human, and intellectual dimensions of formation. This model of ongoing formation provides opportunities for new education and formation filling the gaps she may have experienced while studying to become a lay ecclesial minister. The four dimensions of formation begin with the spiritual dimension not the

intellectual as written for seminary formation. This is a clear distinction regarding the need for change in formation.

Conclusion

After collecting data, examining the context, comparing lay formation programs, and recognizing the gaps in formation, chapter six provides the conclusion on what was learned through the process of completing this thesis project. What began as a model of healing, ended as a new model of ongoing formation. The model of formation serves as a prototype and may be edited as women begin the courses. There also may or may not be continuing education credits given to the participants.

Appendix A

Appendix A contains the retreat model and curriculum for the *Women of Witness: A Model of Ongoing Formation Program for Lay Ecclesial Ministers* consisting of the spiritual, pastoral, human, and intellectual dimensions of lay ministry formation. This model of ongoing formation is important to be revised as participants attend the sessions and provide feedback and evaluation. Forms for accountability may be used from the model of ongoing formation used in the Archdiocese of Galveston/Houston.

Appendix B

Appendix B provides a model of ongoing formation created by the Archdiocese of Galveston/Houston and is fully implemented for their lay ecclesial ministers as a means of support, guidance, and evaluation during their course of employment.

Chapter Two

Introduction

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual frameworks for this project fall into three main conceptual categories: theology, research, and leadership. The theological foundations of this thesis include not only fundamental Christian concepts, such as loving one's neighbor but also more recently developed schools of theological thought such as feminist/womanist, indigenous theology, and liberation theology. In addition to these theological underpinnings, this thesis makes use of contextual theology, a philosophy of understanding that all women are created equally but have distinct cultural experiences with how their identity as ministers is lived in the church and the world. Finally, the four areas of complete formation, spiritual, pastoral, human, and intellectual dimensions, as expressed in "*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*,"¹⁰ provide the final theological foundation crucial to this project.

In terms of research concepts and methods utilized in this project, they all fall under the broad term qualitative research theory. Qualitative research theory refers to the types of research and methods of analysis that take human experience and perspective seriously as data. Thus, narrative research uses the stories and experiences of the subjects of research. To use the subjects of this thesis as an example: what has happened to the person because of being emotionally abused by

¹⁰ *Co-Workers in the Vineyard*, 19.

a priest or bishop become data points as well as examples of the words or actions that had taken place, and finally the result of those experiences. These stories would be shared anonymously and over the phone without any identifying markers. The analysis of such data then uses the concepts of phenomenological research which proposes that the phenomena that people experience deserve serious study and can be analyzed objectively through a rigorous process. Also, social theory will be used to identify the circumstances that surround the data collected, in the case of this thesis: the ministerial workplace. For example, using the model of social theory, the education and training received in the lay ministry formation programs provide a foundation for understanding the culture of the university where the woman lay ecclesial minister was trained. This social context then provides the starting point from which to ask questions like, “Were the women who attended the university or formation program trained adequately enough to prevent clergy emotional abuse?”

What makes for healthy religious leadership makes up the last category of the conceptual frameworks necessary for this project. In this category, the concepts of emotional intelligence, Ignatian and contemplative spirituality, as well as the basic importance of mental and physical health as they contribute to leadership formation all play a role in understanding the dynamics at play in the research and response of this thesis. Were these subjects taught adequately through the formation program at the university or formation program as elements of the spiritual, pastoral, and human dimensions of formation? Finally, a brief overview of the dysfunctional models of religious leadership that occurred because of improper or lack of spiritual, pastoral, and human dimensions of formation at the university must be presented to provide context for understanding the research presented below. Specifically, three different models will be offered: the eggshell leader, the concept of clericalism, and the ‘queen bee’ phenomenon.

Theological Foundations

The theological foundation of this thesis is one of the most fundamental facets of our Christian faith: human dignity. To understand not only the conclusions of this thesis but also its urgent need, one must have a thorough understanding and acceptance of the basic tenet that among Jesus' most important principles is the need to respect the dignity of all human beings. This tenet appears in both sacred scriptures, in Jesus' own words, as well as sacred tradition, in the documents of the Church especially those laying out and explaining Catholic Social Teachings. This foundation then finds more modern expression in the perspectives of feminist, womanist, indigenous, and liberation theology as well as drawing upon the insights of contextual theology.

Basic Theology

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus presents one of the clearest articulations of the basic tenet that all humans should be respected as having dignity and worth when in describing the final judgment that will come at the end of time, Jesus distinguishes between the sheep who will follow him into his kingdom (heaven) and the goats who will be cast out into the eternal fire (hell) by one criterion: whether they cared for him: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."¹¹ And when the Righteous question the Lord by asking when they did those things for him, Jesus' response is profound in its implications: "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'¹² In other words, the least count just as much as the Lord, because they represent the Lord. This echoes the inherent goodness proclaimed in Genesis when humanity's creation is hailed as "So God created

¹¹ Matthew 25:35-36 (NIV).

¹² Matthew 25:40 (NIV).

mankind in God's own image, in the image of God, God created them; male and female God created them."¹³ Jesus reiterates this basic claim of goodness when in the second half of his description of the final judgment the goats who are to be condemned are told they did not care for the Lord; and, as the sheep did before them, the goats ask when they didn't care for the Lord, with the same answer: "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'"¹⁴ In other words, every human deserves to be cared for, because every human, even "these least ones," created in the image of God, represents the pinnacle of God's creation inherent with dignity and worth demanding respect.

Jesus makes it clear what form this care should take, beyond the simple matter of providing for the hungry, thirsty, naked, and imprisoned: "A new command I give you: 'Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.'"¹⁵ This command, this imperative, goes well beyond taking care of basic human needs like food and clothing. Jesus loved us to the point of death and "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."¹⁶ Thus, when Jesus calls us to love each other as he has loved us, he calls us to love one another with the greatest love, self-sacrificial love without discrimination or limit.

This love of one another Jesus demands finds incarnate examples in his parables, especially in the parable of the Good Samaritan.¹⁷ The parable emerges from a conversation Jesus had with an eager scholar of the law, wishing to test Jesus and promote himself. The scholar asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. As Jesus often does, he turns the question back on the questioner who

¹³ Genesis 1:27 (NIV).

¹⁴ Matthew 25:45 (NIV).

¹⁵ John 13:34 (NIV).

¹⁶ John 15:13 (NIV).

¹⁷ Luke 10:25-37 (NIV).

answers by quoting the Shema¹⁸, ending with the addendum “and your neighbor as yourself.”¹⁹ Jesus agrees but the scholar persists by asking who his neighbor is. In reply, Jesus tells the story of a man beaten by robbers and left for dead on the road. While a priest and a Levite (figures who at the time would have been considered upright Jewish persons) passed by the beaten man, a Samaritan, a Gentile from a land considered enemy and beneath the Jews, picked up the man, bore him to an inn and paid to see the man receive care. When Jesus then asked the scholar who was the neighbor (again making the questioner answer their question) the answer was clear: the Samaritan.²⁰ Thus, Jesus ends the conversation by saying “Go and do likewise.”²¹ This admonition reinforces the idea that all people have dignity worth respecting in two ways. First, if we are to love our neighbor as ourselves and the neighbor might be of the lowest class (as Samaritans were considered at that time) then we are put on par with the lowest class. Furthermore, the parable demonstrates that at times, concern for actual human beings should be more important than rules like what defiles and prompts a mandatory ritual cleansing, as what stopped the priest and Levite.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus continues to expand his call for love, this time beyond just men. As he approaches the very same town of Samaria, from which the hero of the above parable hails, he encounters a woman who was perhaps there at the same time, about noon. There could have been other ways that Jesus could have walked to get to his destination, but he chose a path that led straight into controversy. Yet, Jesus took this path perhaps to get away from others. Perhaps he wanted to test the boundaries? Regardless of his intentions, the focus of this passage in John’s Gospel²² was to show how Jesus and this unnamed woman shared a conversation quite intimate by

¹⁸ Deuteronomy 6:5 (NIV).

¹⁹ Luke 10:27 (NIV).

²⁰ Luke 10:37 (NIV).

²¹ Luke 10:38 (NIV).

²² John 4:1-26 (NIV).

today's standards, let alone 2000 years ago. The conversation between the two revealed her past, yet it also revealed who Jesus was as a foreigner in a foreign land. It did not go without questioning the logic between the two of them. Why is he at this site? Why was she at this site? Why were these two people engaged in a conversation? The example of this passage is not to describe the exchange of life-changing words or water, but it is about the encounter between the two of them. Jesus knew her background, yet he still engaged in the conversation. The Samaritan woman knew his background, yet she engaged in the conversation. Why? It was because of human dignity. Jesus and the woman put aside their differences and engaged in an honest conversation about love and respect. Jesus was not there to condemn her nor was she there to question his authority; they were together in mutual love. In other words, the exchange between them told a story of human dignity. How different the story would have been had it been about countries at war with each other, the reputation of the woman, or the filth of the Samaritan people.

Another example of Jesus demonstrating respect for a woman comes in Luke 8:40-56. A woman afflicted with a disease that caused uncontrollable bleeding was cursed by her community. No one wanted to include her in conversations or activities. She was ruled unclean by everyone. She most likely lived in isolation and had severe loneliness. She could have felt unloved and unwanted. Her human dignity was condemned by those in her circle who she thought were friends and family. Yet, she had hope that she would be rescued and healed by Jesus Christ. It appeared by reading the passage, that she wanted to be included and loved. She was willing to do anything, even being put to death, so she could "fit in" with those whom she loved. By approaching the town and desiring this miracle she believed it would bring back her human dignity. How? If she were to be healed of this disease, then others in the community would accept her. She lacked the self-confidence or the knowledge of the love of Jesus Christ. And yet, when Jesus arrived in the village,

she pushed through the crowd and was able to be close enough to Jesus to touch him. She was not concerned at this point about what others thought of her. She desired in her heart this healing. She sought to have her human dignity restored. By simply touching the cloak of Jesus, she was made whole again. The physical bleeding stopped. It is also believed her emotional and spiritual bleeding stopped as well. With this restoration of human dignity, Jesus gave her the ability to feel whole again. By stopping and taking a moment to encounter this woman and saying, “Your faith has healed you,”²³ Jesus provided the window into her soul and revealed the love that was always there from God.

The human dignity of a woman is even clearly defined in the Old Testament as well in the Book of Proverbs: “She is clothed with strength and dignity.”²⁴ King Solomon, when he wrote the Book of Proverbs, was not writing about the role of wife or mother. He did not write about what she had to do to acquire this dignity. He simply wrote that she was “clothed with strength and dignity,” by being born and brought into the world. Her dignity was because she was a creation of God.

Having seen overwhelming evidence from Sacred Scripture that Jesus meant for all people to be treated with dignity and provided a basic level of respect, it can hardly be surprising that this tenet would emerge in the sacred tradition of the Church as well. Specifically, and most explicitly, the teaching of the need for dignity for all leads to the seven principles that have collectively become known by the name Catholic Social Teaching (or CST for short). The seven pillars of CST are:

1. The Life and Dignity of the Human Person
2. The Call to Family, Community, and Participation,
3. Rights and Responsibilities

²³ Luke 8:48 (NIV).

²⁴ Proverbs 31:25 (NIV).

4. Care for God's Creation
5. The Dignity of Work and The Rights of Workers
6. Solidarity
7. A Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

The Life and Dignity of the Human Person

While there is insufficient space here to elaborate upon all these pillars, note that the very first pillar expresses a cornerstone concept used for this research paper: the dignity of the human person. When introducing the doctrine on their webpage dedicated to this principle, the USCCB puts it quite plainly: “The Catholic Church proclaims that all human life is sacred, and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of the moral vision of society.”²⁵ This document specifically states that all human life deserves dignity which can be defined as deserving of respect, love, equality, and compassion. It is not because of the work that one does, but it is because of being created in the image of God which demands this dignity. This definition will be used as a reference when using the research methods for this paper.

The teachings of the Catholic Church on human dignity are part of the fabric and foundation of the Church; and yet, it is important to remember why we have CST in the first place. If the tenets of our faith are life and human dignity, why is there a need to have these teachings? The premise of CST is built on the reality that throughout history, people have ignored the fact that everyone has dignity and a certain set of rights in favor of profit and power. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII wrote about this reality in the encyclical *Rerum Novarum, On Capital and Labor*.²⁶ This encyclical was written

²⁵ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc., Office of Justice, Peace, and Human Dignity, *Life and Dignity of the Human Persons*, (Washington D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops), 1.

²⁶ First Vatican Council, *On Capital and Labor (Rerum Novarum)* (1891), https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html.

during the time of the Industrial Revolution. A time when machines were replacing workers. Manual labor was being exchanged for a machine that would work faster and longer. The livelihood of workers, through which they earned the money that was the only way to meet their basic survival needs, was being threatened and disappearing. The pope felt the need to write this encyclical to perhaps buoy people up by sharing how regardless of their jobs or wealth, they are still a child of God and deserve love and dignity. It was a reminder for human beings to see each other as a creation of God and not as simply a worker, a cog in a machine without inherent rights or dignity. From this beginning grew the entirety of CST. But throughout the centuries, the first and most basic principle has been reiterated.

This need to be reminded of a person's inherent dignity was just recently reiterated again by our current pope. In his encyclical entitled "*On Fraternity and Social Friendship*" (*Fratelli Tutti*) Pope Francis wrote: "The dignity of others is to be respected in all circumstances, not because that dignity is something we have invented or imagined, but because human beings possess an intrinsic worth superior to that of material objects and situations. This requires that they be treated differently. That every human being possesses an inalienable dignity is a truth that corresponds to human nature apart from all cultural change. For this reason, human beings have the same inviolable dignity in every age of history regardless of gender. No one can consider himself or herself authorized by situations to deny this conviction or act against it."²⁷ Thus, the centrality of human dignity, the worth of all, and respect due all humans cannot be denied from Scripture and Tradition. This thesis examines the need to respond to a particular way in which this tenet has been violated.

²⁷ Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, encyclical letter, Vatican website, October 4, 2020, § 213. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html.

Feminist, Womanist, and Indigenous Theology

Not only does Sacred Scripture and Tradition uphold the dignity of all, but more modern theological movements have sought to call for greater adherence more forcefully and specifically to this basic principle, through the lenses of specific populations and the ways in which they have been marginalized or maltreated, especially women. Thus, not only has the institutional church built a tradition with CST, but theologians have developed a body of work that has come to collectively be known as feminist and womanist theology. The Catholic Church has not identified nor written much about Indigenous theology, but it will be referred to in this document.

And despite its modernity, this theology finds its roots in Sacred Scripture as does all good theology. In Luke's Gospel, Mary's Fiat gave us the gift of Jesus Christ. Mary gave her life to us by saying yes. The ministry of Jesus Christ, his teachings, and his gift of self to us would not have been possible without a woman, named Mary, saying yes.²⁸ With this agreement, the beginning of Jesus' life on earth was filled with women journeying with him as disciples. Using the "Yes" from Mary as well as the "Yes" from Eve, the role of women regardless of title has been a crucial part of humanity. Without women, there would be no existence. God created a woman to complete man not to compete with a man. With Mary, God brought forth the Savior of the world through the womb of a woman who provided us with this greatest gift of life. The opinion of many is that women's influence in the creation of the world has been ever-present, yet, often unrecognized, especially in the Catholic Church.

Recognition of the gift Mary brought to us has evolved over time, with the final endorsement of her importance finally arriving in the eighth chapter of *Lumen Gentium* written

²⁸ Second Vatican Council. *Lumen Gentium*' (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 1964). § 53.

during the Second Vatican Council.²⁹ It stated emphatically, “In the interim just as the Mother of Jesus, glorified in body and soul in heaven, is the image and beginning of the Church as it is to be perfected in the world to come, so too does she shine forth on earth, until the day of the Lord shall come, as a sign of sure hope and solace to the people of God during its sojourn on earth.³⁰ Yet, even with this place of honor in the Catholic Church, her role continues to be relegated to that of mother, only acknowledging her humility and not her leadership. Should she not be revered as a woman leader who brought people to her son Jesus?

And yet, the exclusion of women from leadership roles finds its roots in the earliest conceptions the Church has of itself, in its creed. As the Nicene Creed (finalized in 325 AD) states, the four marks of the Roman Catholic Church are one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. From its inception, the Catholic Church claims an apostolic origin, meaning “coming from the apostles,” who were all men. Choosing to prioritize apostolic succession as the reason the Catholic Church names only men as priests and only allows priests to hold roles of power and authority in its hierarchy therefore only male hierarchy leads definitively to the conclusion that women should be seen as lower than men in hierarchical terms. In Matthew’s Gospel, “Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”³¹ Jesus chooses the twelve apostles to “make disciples and does not mention the gender of these disciples.” After the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, Peter, who was given the “keys” to build the church accepted the role of disciple maker.³² Although it is not clear in

²⁹ *Lumen Gentium*, § 52, 57, 58.

³⁰ *Lumen Gentium* § 68.

³¹ Matthew 28: 18-20 (NIV).

³² Acts 2:38-47 (NIV).

this passage who was present in the room when Peter was baptizing, modern feminist theology challenges all to see that ALL were called to be part of the Great Commission. Such citation of this Gospel passage and many others by feminist theology leads to the conclusion that women were also called by Jesus Christ to be one of his disciples to carry his message of hope and dignity to all persons. It is very unusual for some Catholics to even mention that priests are the only people who live “*in persona Christi*” which devoid Christ from others who are not priests. Three women who were all close followers of Jesus (Mary the mother of God, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James), are among the earliest witnesses to the Resurrection.³³ Mary Magdala has been depicted as someone with a seedy past, yet Jesus chooses her first to be a witness to his resurrection. Most homilists on Easter Sunday barely mention this fact.

Through the lenses of feminist, womanist, and indigenous theology, this passage, this inclusion of these women, shines as an example of how Jesus included women as disciples. Why then would John include them in the Gospel, if women were not part of the apostolic succession of Jesus? Jesus appeared at the tomb to these women not only in the Gospel of John but also that of Luke. This example and others point to the cause for reviewing how scripture has been used in defining the role of women as apostles and in the line of succession of apostles. In the Gospel of Mark, “Jesus bids his disciples keep alive the memory of the woman who prophetically anointed his head, thereby commissioning him to his messianic destiny: ‘Truly I tell you, whenever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.’”³⁴

From the Gospel of Matthew, when the apostles were charged with the Great Commission was not the end of the making of disciples but the beginning. Feminist theology shines a light on

³³ John 19:25 (NIV).

³⁴ Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is* (Crossroad Publishing Company, 2002), 83.

those who were called to be present at the tomb as the first disciples called to bring forth the Good News of the resurrection of Jesus, and are therefore called to be seen in a more significant place in Catholic Church history by also calling them apostles much like St. Paul has called himself an apostle even though he was not one of the first twelve chosen by Jesus Christ. The Catholic Church may be a little different today, if Mary Magdala chose to do the same. Feminist theology provides a way to “help the church to reflect on its present-day witness and practice to see if it continues to be faithful to the revelation of God manifest in Scripture, tradition, and the ongoing life of the Christian community.”³⁵

And yet, Feminist Theology not only challenges the place of women in the question of apostolic succession but also in other places of authority within the hierarchical structure of the Roman Catholic Church. A striking commonality in many cultures, including my own, reveals how one significant person, the grandmother, serves as a bridge of faith in passing on Catholic traditions. How women pass on the faith, in an ‘unofficial’ or familial manner, points to the need for the Church to listen to feminist, womanist, and indigenous theologies that call for greater recognition of the leadership role women already have in the Church. That call applies to the issue of abuse demonstrated in Chapter three and the resolution proposed thereafter. The remainder of this section provides ample contextualization and justification for the Church to do more in training and preparing women more officially for the role they have already traditionally played.

The need to recognize the value of women is nowhere more urgent than in the case of black women. It did not take the “Black Lives Matter” movement to recognize the importance of black women in the Church. For centuries and from my lived experiences of ministering in African

³⁵ Joyce Mercer, “Feminist and Womanist Practical Theology”, in *Opening the Field of Practical Theology*, eds. Kathleen Cahalan and Gordon S. Mikoski (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 99.

American communities, black women have been the gatekeepers, breadwinners, and sole providers for their families and communities. Religion has been the backbone of women, especially those being raised by slave owners. In her book “*Enfleshing Freedom*,” M. Shawn Copeland shares how Toni Morrison, in her book “*Beloved*,” demonstrates how “some women's bodies were made in the image and likeness of God, and others were not. Reducing a person to the level of slave and designating a person of color to be three-fifths of a human resulted in decades of abuse among women. Their bodies were not vessels of the Holy Spirit, but ‘A slate upon which others have written.’”³⁶ Black women carry within them the stories and experiences of being unequal and unimportant as evidenced by how they were treated and abused in and out of the church. And yet, the faith of black women cannot be denied. That faith often grows from the story.

The story plays a prominent role in the African American tradition. Professor, Dr. timone davis shares how African Americans use stories to help them learn how to “should and should not act to be useful members of society, community, and family.”³⁷ Stories told are the sacred places where Jesus was first introduced to many who may not have thought Jesus was a man for them. Through the experiences I encountered while being a minister in the African American parishes on the south side of Chicago, the children were often brought to church by their grandmother. Through her influence in raising the children, it appeared to be a requirement to attend Mass on Sunday wearing the “Sunday best,” hats, and gloves. Others in the congregation wore white pressed suits worn by the women who served as nurses not only to provide healing but to provide support if a member of the community would faint. The women gathered in the vestibule to share stories of their weeks with the support of an unofficial sisterhood that happened without committees or

³⁶ M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom, Body, Race, and Being* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2023), 36-37.

³⁷ timone davis, *Intergenerational Catechesis*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2021), 30.

authority from the hierarchy. Before the choir entered and took their allocated rows and rows, the congregation would be abuzz with the latest hearings and clearings of the community. It was not unheard of for the pastor to wait an additional fifteen minutes to begin Mass. It was then and only then they would hear a female member of the community raise her voice for all to hear, announcing “Let’s have Church!” Soon, they would gather their families together and sit as one unit. When the time would occur for the sharing of peace, there was an outburst of movement out in the aisles to truly welcome everyone and find out where everyone was going after mass for lunch. It was not a surprise that when the priest was taken ill by ambulance, the mass continued with a woman leading the congregation in a healing service for the pastor and others who “in their opinion” were ill. Grandmothers, sisters, nurses, and prophets were all a part of scripture and lived in the African American community. It did not take theology degrees to serve the poor, listen to the stories of the new settlers, or hold the hand of the abused.

Specific examples of the power of black women passing on faith to other women come from “*The Color Purple*,” an epistolary novel written by author Alice Walker in 1983 and won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the National Book Award. This story has provided generations of black women with representation and inspiration. It was adapted into a movie of the same name in 1985 and further adapted into a Broadway musical in 2005. That musical was then brought to movie theaters in a 2023 movie (screenplay by Alice Walker, produced by Oprah Winfrey). In this latest incarnation, the character of Celie, having been abused by her father and others, is sold into a relationship because she is “ugly and of no use” but she prevails and “tells no one but God.” She fails to recognize her beauty within, given to her by God her creator. Despite all the suffering she endured at the hands of men, her spirituality depended on God upon whom she relied for her faith and community. The sisterhood she formed with her blood sister Nellie, and others in the

community, was pure love wrought from tenacity and integrity. Another character in “*The Color Purple*,” Shug Avery, stands apart as someone special and different. She is independent and fierce; she will not allow abuse or vicious rumors to take her soul. She is a woman determined to make a better life for herself and other women. Interestingly, in this most recent version of the story, Shug is the daughter of a minister, but the relationship is strained. Shug, who held no degrees in theology, was able to minister to Celie, providing a fictional illustration of the very real occurrence of women showing women how Jesus can live and love amidst the rubble of human cruelty. Shug fictionally portrays the actuality that women can pull out the beauty within a person’s spiritual storm. Celie finds faith, even during abuse, through the women in the community who share it with her, even though those women have no ‘official standing’ in any church hierarchy to be passing on the faith. This character provides but one small example of the way women has been unofficial ministers of faith worthy of greater recognition. As women empowered to help anyone in their time of need, these women could serve as role models for Catholic leadership today, where the perspective of feminist theology allowed greater sway.

In addition to the black community, indigenous communities also provide examples of women who have long carried the role and responsibilities of promulgating the faith among their communities. In 1686, in St. Augustine, Florida, a native woman came to educate and form the indigenous living among the Franciscan and Dominican missionaries about the Catholic faith.³⁸ As shared in the book, “*Feast of Souls*” that woman, Dana Maria, was intrigued by the Franciscans arriving with their goods in big fancy boats. She was raised in the community as a Chief, for in Native American communities the term chief is gender neutral. There did not appear to be any male

³⁸ Corinna Laughlin, and Andres LeBas, *The Martyrs of La Florida*, (France: Editions du Signe, 2019), 18.

hierarchy claiming rights to the title of chief.³⁹ One could say, they were truly living according to the edict that all were created equal in the image and likeness of God. Dana Maria learned that the missionaries could not understand the language of the Apalachee people, so she taught these men how to communicate with the people of the land; and, in turn, she learned about Jesus, the Sacraments, and the Catholic Church. Soon, hundreds of men and women were converting from the tribal rituals of the indigenous community to the rituals and sacraments of the Catholic Church. When the bishop arrived to confirm the hundreds of men and women converts, she was lifted by the Franciscans as a true evangelizer. Yet, her name is not mentioned or even given credit for so many conversions in the official annals of the Church. To most, her history has vanished, only shared by those who read the *“Feast of Souls.”*

Perhaps the most famous indigenous individual Catholic (being the first to be canonized as a Saint) is Kateri Tekakwitha, a Mohawk. And yet, “Many Catholic narratives portrayed Tekakwitha as saintly because she is so different from her indigenous kin.”⁴⁰ In other words, her value as a Catholic was separated from her identity as indigenous. However, throughout her short life, Kateri adamantly prayed for and succeeded in creating “communities of women apart and distinct from religious communities even when the religious advisor of the time, Jesuit priests, forbade them to pray together.”⁴¹ Just as feminist theology calls for greater appreciation of the contributions of women to the church, so indigenous theology does the same for the contributions of indigenous. Interestingly, most of the indigenous individuals like my ancestors, who have made such contributions are women.

³⁹ Robert C. Galgano, *Feast of Souls*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 66.

⁴⁰ Michelle Jacobs, *Indian Pilgrims*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016), 53.

⁴¹ Jacobs, *Indian Pilgrims*, 93.

Indigenous theology calls for greater recognition of the basic human dignity of all those who lived in a land before those who would take it from them. The Church only recently took an official step away from continuing to denigrate the dignity of Native Americans by their recent overturning of an over 500-year-old document, the “*Doctrine of Discovery*”.⁴² Written in 1493, this document merited the native peoples as three-fifths of a human, the same fraction used to denigrate persons of color in the original American governmental documents. This Doctrine of Discovery classified indigenous to be lower than humans, especially if they did not heed the call to become Catholic. This document remained officially in effect until it was rescinded in March of 2023.⁴³ One would ask why it took the Catholic Church so long to abolish such an evil document.

Like the African American grandmother’s influence, strong women in the Native American community also served significant roles in passing on religious tradition. Many grandmothers served as the bridge between the native culture and the Catholic church. “To be a strong community, a group of people must sense that they belong to the community, believe in the values of the community, and believe the activities that bring together the people are an expression of the values that are collectively held.”⁴⁴ Given the independence of indigenous reservations within the United States requiring them to provide all their services, women of the reservations have stepped up to serve as catechists, nurses, doctors, and tribal leaders. Religiously, women have particularly paid attention to serving their population by creating prayer circles where the women teach the faith to one another. Sr. Kateri Mitchell served as executive director of an organization called

⁴² David Wilkins, “*Deconstructing the Doctrine of Discovery*”, <https://upstanderproject.org/learn/guides-and-resources/first-light/doctrine-of-discovery>.

⁴³ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, The Dicastery’s for Culture and Education and for Promoting Integral Human Development, “*Doctrine of Discovery*.” <https://www.usccb.org/news/2023/responding-indigenous-vatican-disavows-doctrine-discovery>

⁴⁴ Jacobs, *Indian Pilgrims*, 83.

“Tekakwitha Conference” which serves indigenous communities and assists with liturgy training and ministerial outreach.”⁴⁵ Each year during the conference, the attendees would learn the techniques of drumming that were used for creating prayer circles and rituals. The story telling and drumming practices could become a means for managing stress.

Women religious prove to be another category of women who have held significant roles in raising children in the Catholic faith with little official recognition as examples of leaders in the Church. With the inception of the Catholic school system in the United States, through the influence of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and the sisters of charity began teaching children of immigrant families. The Catholic faith was practiced at home, but the teaching of the faith was handed over to women religious who lived in those communities. The women who taught in the Catholic schools which were led by women religious helped pass on the faith to the children. The Anglo, African American, and Indigenous communities had strong women leaders, yet, due to the nature of the male influence, the women were made to serve and glorify men, none of which was the gospel message of Jesus Christ. Through these feminist, womanist, and indigenous lenses, multiple cultures demonstrate women serving as strong, influential leaders in the Catholic Church. But their stories remain mostly unheard and unspoken. There are many examples of where and how women in the Catholic Church could support one another through advocacy, training, and support, otherwise known as formation.

In the modern day, two women who have been instrumental in sharing dignity and their spiritual life with others are Mary Ward and Dorothy Day. Both women faced opposition from the hierarchy yet continued to serve God’s people regardless of the consistent resistance.

⁴⁵ Sister Kateri Mitchell, “*From the Desk of the Tekakwitha Conference Executive Director.* ” <https://tekconf.org/our-history>.

” Mary Ward lived in the early 1500s. She felt called to live as a woman religious but was not drawn to the Franciscan sisters who lived in the community as Poor Clare’s. Instead, she wanted to serve the church not as a cloistered sister but as a woman religiously living and serving among the people. Her idea of community would be like the Society of Jesus. “After petitioning Pope Urban VIII and waiting years for a response to form a new religious community, her request was denied. Not only was it denied but Pope Urban responded that establishing a community like the Society of Jesus would cause “a poisonous growth among women.” Nearly 150 years later, in 1703, The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a religious community that did not require women to live as cloister sisters, was approved by the Vatican.”⁴⁶

Dorothy Day experienced similar distrust in the hierarchy. “It is rumored that when she could no longer take being held to a higher standard than her brothers serving the same community, she explained to the bishop that she could take the Catholic Worker House and move it to a different diocese. It was then that the Cardinal chose to allow her work to continue. By doing so, Catholic Worker Houses now serve 175 communities in the United States and nearly 30 communities internationally.”⁴⁷ These women were bound by the Holy Spirit to continue their work as women called by God to serve others. Having someone in the hierarchy who tried to prevent the good work that was part of their calling would have been trying to put the Holy Spirit into a box.

Having to learn the “proper” theology, the intellectual dimension of formation, is the beginning but learning how to apply the other three dimensions of formation, spiritual, pastoral, and human, will be the key to empowering women to serve their sisters in Christ. It is evident through examining the influence of women in the Church, that the sharing of bible stories was an evening staple of conversation among the women and was an important thread in the fabric of their lives. The lenses of women's eyes in many bible passages were used in explaining the encounters people, men, and women, experienced when they saw and were healed by Jesus. These experiences gave

⁴⁶ Sarah Kohles, ed. *Creating Spaces for Women* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2023), 18.

⁴⁷ Jim Forest, “*The Trouble with Saint Dorothy*” (Presented at the Dorothy Day Centenary Conference, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI. October 10, 1997).

women an eyewitness account through the stories shared by our gospel writers. Most of the mothers, grandmothers, and women religious who were sharing these stories were not scholar women but faith-filled individuals with hearts healed by the Lord and they wanted to share the good news with other women. If it was not for the grandmother, mother, or woman religious passing on the faith to the younger generation, women may have never witnessed or felt a calling from the Lord inviting them to consider a significant leadership in the Catholic Church. By having women role models at home and school, women began to feel empowered to serve the church not necessarily as vowed religious or married mothers but as a female called by God in the same way God calls men.

Liberation Theology

The next conceptual foundation of this thesis is Liberation Theology. Liberation theology "turns its focus to suffering and oppression that demand redress for who suffer from the oppression generated by unequal power structures."⁴⁸ Thus, after feminist, womanist, and indigenous theology spotlighted the need to appreciate the dignity of women, especially in light of how they have been either at least ignored if not at worst abused, liberation theology turned the attention to the suffering of those oppressed by systems that unevenly distribute power and worth, of which women religious, womanist and indigenous can certainly be counted. Not only does liberation theology seek to draw attention to unfair systems that oppress, but also the need to redress them, to do something practical about the suffering of those in such systems.

"Liberationist practical theologians beginning and ending place of theological reflection attends to common human practices."⁴⁹ This very methodology for collecting and interpreting data will be used for this thesis. It will bring together research on the effects of the poorly designed

⁴⁸ Katherine Turpin, "Liberationist Practical Theology" in *Opening the Fields of Practical Theology*, 153.

⁴⁹ Turpin, "Liberationist Practical Theology", 157.

academic center of lay ministry formation for the laity, and inconsistency in applying standards for certification and oversight. For instance, women who are in the ministerial workplace may see themselves as being on the margins especially if they voice a complaint and their voices are minimized as “having a bad day.” Feminist, Womanist, Indigenous, and Liberation Theology calls out for redress of the injustice of a system that can dehumanize and frankly abuse women in the ecclesial workplace.

Everyone in the workplace, regardless of gender, is entitled to a safe and non-hostile environment. Lay women, by virtue, of their baptism were formed as disciples and were given their authority by Jesus Christ to lead people to Jesus. They can minister “*in persona Christi*.” It is not a result of their job description or their education but because of their baptism which has formed them as priests, prophets, and kings/queens: “The baptized serve as priests through sacrificial efforts to bring people to God. They serve as prophets through their witness to the truth in word and deed. And they serve as kings/queen in their efforts to lead others—again through word and deed—to use their talents to advance the Kingdom of God.”⁵⁰ Through the sacramental grace that all baptized receive, women just as much as men are equipped with the grace to bring the good news to all persons.

Liberation theology calls for the oppressed to be set free, free to then lead others to the promised land. ‘Liberationist practical theologians to their liberation theologian forebears, who clearly connect the love of God and neighbor to the idea of seeking justice for those who are oppressed.’⁵¹ It is not enough for women to be given the ‘right’ to lead persons to Jesus; it is part of their responsibilities as baptized persons who received the indelible mark on their souls at baptism

⁵⁰ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000), 1241.

⁵¹ Turpin, “Liberationist Practical Theology”, 157.

to go forth and make disciples, to evangelize and lead others to Jesus. As a social movement, liberation theology empowers lay ecclesial women to share their concerns and speak out on behalf of the gospel. The freedom which comes from knowing and believing that all persons through the virtue of their baptism are called to be priests, prophets, and kings/queens demands implementation in the form of redress for those injured doing what their baptism calls them to do. It is this key element that will be used in discussing liberation theology for this research paper and to which the solutions proposed later will be oriented.

Contextual Theology

Contextual Theology can be described as the church's practice of coaching its teachings according to the times and culture of the period. "It is doing theology that takes seriously both the experience of the past and the experience of the present."⁵² In other words, the Church uses what occurs in the day to craft its understanding of what Jesus taught. The teachings were written in the context of the period. In the period when Jesus called the twelve apostles, the men were the likely candidates to follow Jesus as the first twelve given the sexist culture into which Jesus was born. Making his outreach to and inclusion of women in his ministry that much more notable and consistent with feminist and liberation theology.

More specifically, "the skills of these twelve men were valuable to the community and were helpful resources for Jesus to use as he began his ministry to baptize all nations. For instance, Jesus could have called these twelve apostles because of the need to be fed (Peter and Andrew), the need to acquire goods and services (Matthew), the need for good counsel (Big James and Little James),

⁵² Stephen Bevans, SVD, "Contextual Theology as Practical Theology" in *Opening the Field of Practical Theology*, 153.

and the need for leadership (Nathaniel).”⁵³ Furthermore, laws were written for the Church that was led after the death of Jesus by these very men. Theology began based on the teachings of these men. Thus, for centuries, the rules and teachings of the Church were drenched in the male-dominated leadership of the institutional Church without consideration for other perspectives or possibilities. But as time continued, theology, theories, and practices eventually changed as culture recreated and adapted to the various historical movements and expansions of the Church through the ages. Such a time of transition and expansion is happening now in the Catholic Church. The vocabulary of feminist, womanist, indigenous, and liberation theology points to that fact. Contextual theology provides the conceptual framework from which to understand the needs of today’s Church and the methods for addressing them, by legitimizing the perspectives of feminist, womanist, indigenous, and liberation theology to demand redress for harm done.

Contextual theology provides the underpinning on which to research the context of the vocations of men pursuing priesthood and their formation as opposed to that of the laity receiving education to earn degrees in lay ministry formation. The church finds itself in a new evolution, a time of change, in which men and women pursuing positions within the Catholic Church fill different needs and take on different responsibilities than in the past. Contextual theology will be used to explain how the church needs changes to be made to the formation systems that provide the context in which men and women study theology, especially as they relate to using all four dimensions of formation: spiritual, pastoral, human, and intellectual. More on this need will be presented below.

⁵³ Tim Henderson, “The Right Ingredients of Discipleship.” Cru.org. <https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/help-others-grow/discipleship/what-is-discipleship.html>.

Contextual theology demonstrates the need to understand and evaluate the systems in which the Church currently finds itself. Specifically, the historical changes to the formation system of the Church need to be appreciated. While preparing men and women for service to the Church was once done within the local community, the original context of formation, such preparation has changed into something far more formal and gender-segregated, with the seminary system to educate men and a primarily academic system to prepare women. This change in context, from the shared community to the separated preparation processes, created avenues for clericalism and abuse. Contextual theology also justifies researching the educational system developed for lay ecclesial ministry and how higher education provides only the intellectual dimension of formation, thus creating a context riddled with problems.

Theoretical Foundations

Qualitative Research Theory

In terms of the most basic research methodology pedagogy, one must distinguish between quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research focuses exclusively on measurable, numerical, scientifically verifiable data. Qualitative research, on the other hand, gathers information regarding the quality of a person's experiences, especially but not limited to their emotions. Since "feelings" are not quantifiable data points, "qualitative research theory uses such collection techniques as stories, surveys, and case studies to gather information regarding persons."⁵⁴ This thesis utilizes a qualitative research approach to collect and analyze data. Under the umbrella term of qualitative research, this thesis makes use of two more specific forms.

⁵⁴ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013), 26.

Narrative Research and Autoethnography

The first more specific form of qualitative research used in this thesis is narrative research. In practical terms, narrative research uses surveys or interviews with individuals to collect insight into the topic being researched. More theoretically, narrative research seeks data points from which the narratives that people tell, their stories, their histories, their struggles, and their triumphs. Put more formally:

“Narrative research aims to explore and conceptualize human experience as it is represented in textual form. Aiming for an in-depth exploration of the meanings people assign to their experiences, narrative researchers work with small samples of participants to obtain rich and free-ranging conversations. The emphasis is on the storied experience. This takes the form of interviewing people around the topic of interest, but it might also involve the analysis of written documents.”⁵⁵ Narrative research begins with individual stories and seeks data within them about their experiences.

Narrative research itself is an umbrella term encompassing several research approaches. One such that this paper also uses is called Autoethnography. Christopher Poulos provides the following summary definition: “Autoethnography is an autobiographical genre of academic writing that draws on and analyzes or interprets the lived experience of the author and connects researcher insights to self-identity, cultural rules and resources, communication practices, traditions, premises, symbols, rules, shared meanings, emotions, values, and larger social, cultural, and political issues.”⁵⁶ In other words, autoethnography makes use of the author’s own experiences to inform, critique, and further contextualize the experiences of the research subjects. The auto ethnographer does this through intensive self-reflection and deep thought about the self. In their book *Research Design*, Creswell

⁵⁵ Ruthellen Josselson, “Narrative Research.” In *Encyclopedia of Research Design on Sage Research Methods*. Accessed Feb 9, 2024. <https://methods.sagepub.com/reference/encyc-of-research-design/n259.xml#:~:text=Narrative%20research%20begins%20with%20a,individual%2C%20but%20sometimes%20in%20groups>.

⁵⁶ Christopher Poulos, *The Essentials of Autoethnography*. (Washington DC, American Psychological Association, 2021), 4.

shares that “Muncey (2010), one of the architects of the term autoethnography, defines autoethnography as the idea of multiple layers of the vulnerable self, the coherent self, or the critiquing self in social contexts. They contain the personal story of the author as well as the larger cultural meaning of the individual’s story.”⁵⁷ The vulnerability and critique of the author play into the interpretation of culture and broader context.

This thesis utilizes both the broader narrative research, using the stories of others to understand their experiences, as well as the narrower autoethnography which uses the author’s own experiences to provide further critique and place into context the culture in which their own story takes place. While both these narrative research methods begin with the individual understanding their experiences, other qualitative research techniques do not use this method.

Phenomenological Research

Phenomenological research is a qualitative research method that begins with an experience, with a phenomenon, and then attempts to understand it through the lived stories of many subjects. As Delve put it, “Phenomenological research is a qualitative research approach that seeks to understand and describe the universal essence of a phenomenon.”⁵⁸ Phenomenology allows the researcher to examine the commonalities and differences in the experiences of individuals to reach an understanding of what they’ve experienced. Generally, the researcher looks for the central themes that were prevalent among all persons being researched: “In simpler terms, researchers use phenomenological research designs to understand a phenomenon’s universal nature by exploring the views of those who have experienced it.”⁵⁹ In this thesis, narrative research led to

⁵⁷ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 73.

⁵⁸ Delve Ho, L., & Limpaecher, A. (2022c, March 17). What is Phenomenological Research Design? Essential Guide to Coding Qualitative Data. <https://delvetool.com/blog/phenomenology>.

⁵⁹ Delve Ho, L., & Limpaecher, A. What is Phenomenological Research Design?”

phenomenological research; hearing the individual stories of women (narrative research) uncovered an unusually common experience that resulted in shifting the attention from the individuals to the phenomenon of clergy-initiated abuse of women lay ecclesial ministers and ultimately how that phenomenon might be understood and addressed.

Social Theory

Separate from the qualitative research concepts of narrative and phenomenological research, the final research-related foundational concept providing underpinning for this thesis is social theory. Social theory refers to a very broad spectrum of disciplines that all relate to how and why societies work the way they do and can include sociology, political science, and philosophy. Social theory research examines how societies change and develop over time, especially because of circumstances that cause a change in behavior, attitudes, culture, power, and gender.⁶⁰ Social theory considers the society in which research participants live as well as changes within that society over time. This thesis focuses on women who had similar experiences of education in lay ministry formation programs.

Four Areas of Complete Formation

In addition to these research frameworks, several other theoretical concepts inform this thesis. These remaining theoretical foundations involve the proper ways to form someone for ministry. As the subject of this thesis is specifically lay ecclesial ministers, the most important document outlining the proper formation of for women lay ecclesial ministers is “*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry.*”⁶¹ In

⁶⁰ Anthony Elliott, *Contemporary Social Theory: An Introduction*, (Routledge; Australia, 2008).
<https://socialtheoryapplied.com/about-this-site/what-is-social-theory/>

⁶¹ *Co-Workers in the Vineyard*, 33.

addition to setting the general context that the lay ecclesial minister must be formed first by the Holy Spirit and within the Catholic Church community, this document also lays out four areas of formation required for proper preparation for such ministry. These four areas include spiritual, pastoral, human, and intellectual formation. And since all are required to best perform such ministry, “they must be integrated as a unified whole in the person of the well-formed lay ecclesial minister, which happens best if these elements are integrated into the formation program.”⁶² Thus, complete formation in ministry should involve all four of these dimensions. The failure of not being formed in all four dimensions could result in a person ill-equipped to serve as a Lay Ecclesial Minister. These same four dimensions of formation are used in seminary formation programs as well.

The intellectual disciplines of ministry formation are by far the most familiar. Intellectual formation engages the mind to inform of the gifts and teachings of the Catholic Church “*rooted in God’s revelation and embodied in the living tradition of the Church.*”⁶³ Traditional academic courses typically provide a framework to understand “systematic” theology such as Scripture, Sacraments, Christology, Morality, and Church History. These courses would classify as forming the mind and fall under the intellectual dimension of formation.

Although not necessarily taught as an academic course, spiritual development guides a person inward to form one’s heart and soul for ministry. The spiritual dimension of formation “aims to arouse and animate true hunger for holiness, desire for union with the Father through Christ in the Spirit, daily growing in love of God and neighbor in life and ministry, and the practices of prayer and spirituality that foster these attitudes and dispositions.”⁶⁴ Spiritual formation moves the

⁶² *Co-Workers in the Vineyard*, 52.

⁶³ *Co-Workers in the Vineyard*, 45.

⁶⁴ *Co-Workers in the Vineyard*, 38.

minister from “knowing *about* Jesus” to “*knowing* Jesus.” Under the spiritual dimension of formation, the lay ministry formation program should offer courses in multiple spiritualities, such as Franciscan, Benedictine, Ignatian, or Contemplative that allow a person to develop an interior life filled with prayer, contemplation, and silence.

Pastoral formation is a culmination of one’s education, spiritual experiences, and leadership skills combined for use in a ministry environment. “The term pastoral, having etymological connections to the word pastor, indicates a certain kind of approach a person takes to perform a ministry or duty. How does one define pastoral? “*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*” identifies several characteristics that pastoral skills encompass, including providing formation for others, leading prayer, having a Catholic family perspective, exercising relationship and communication skills, being able to collaborate, and several others that all amount to what’s normally thought of as the work of ministry.”⁶⁵ How one is formed in the pastoral dimension of formation will assist her in the ministerial workplace where she may encounter dysfunctional leadership, workplace harassment, and emotional abuse.

Looking at one of the four dimensions, the human dimension of formation, refers to the person. Human formation provides the means to enhance one’s mental and physical health for the greater good of the minister and the Church. As “*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*” states, the goal of the human aspect of formation is this: “Human formation seeks to develop the lay ecclesial minister’s human qualities and character, fostering a healthy and well-balanced personality, for the sake of both personal growth and ministerial service.”⁶⁶ Interestingly, the human aspect of formation is the first one presented in “*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord.*” While

⁶⁵ *Co-Workers in the Vineyard*, 49.

⁶⁶ *Co-Workers in the Vineyard*, 36.

the description of human formation is comprehensive, including eleven elements and five methods,⁶⁷ nevertheless, there is one significant issue that needs to be highlighted, especially given the topic of this thesis. The human dimension of formation consists of the mental and emotional health of a person seeking to become a minister. If the person who is in a formation program has some mental health crisis such as anxiety, stress, or depression, the document requires the person to address it first before applying for the formation program. If the formation program has a component of formation in the human dimension, there may be opportunities to learn meditation or stress management reduction. Without having a person assigned to a lay minister in formation who oversees her courses, stress management skills, spiritual growth, and ministry training, her formation may be off balance causing distress when issues may arise in the ministerial workplace.

Concepts for Cohesive Lay Ministry Formation

Under the context of these four principal areas of formation, the intellectual dimension will be set aside as the most understood and comprehensively executed, even to the detriment of the other three. Given the context of formation, especially lay ministry formation, taking place within academic institutions of higher learning, many are either ignorant of or overlook the development of the other three dimensions of formation: spiritual, pastoral, and human elements. As the problem identified by this thesis can be traced to the lack of formation and resources in these elements, it is valuable to present ideas related to these three areas, both those that benefit formation in these areas as well as concepts that describe what happens when these three areas are lacking. All these ideas are returned in the research and solution presented by the rest of this thesis. Furthermore, all the

⁶⁷ *Co-Workers in the Vineyard*, 50.

remaining concepts direct their attention to leaders and leadership as anyone engaged in ministry in the Church today will be called upon to lead. Three additional areas of spiritual, pastoral, and human dimensions of formation need to be included in lay ministry formation programs for ministers who are engaged with the mental health crisis of the 21st century.

There are new concepts being taught in formation programs such as Catholic Theological Union (CTU), in Chicago that were not present when the *“Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord”* was written in 2005. One of the recent studies taught in current in seminary and lay ministry programs is the understanding of Emotional Intelligence in Religious Leaders. This concept new to the Catholic formation programs was taught for decades in protestant seminaries. Dr. Angela Swain, the instructor for the Emotional Intelligence course at CTU shared the importance of learning the method of EI especially when ministering among clergy. In the course, material that was given was new to her Catholic students. Most, if not all, had never heard this information. Listening to her lectures, the light bulb for this thesis was lit. How can a minister work in the church today with all the opportunities for leadership, not have this education?

Emotional Intelligence for Pastoral Leadership

What is emotional intelligence? Emotional intelligence is how one responds, behaves, and understands one’s emotions. “It is the ability to monitor one’s own and other emotions, to differentiate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior .”⁶⁸ Emotional intelligence is not intuitive but is an

⁶⁸ John Lee West, Roy M. Oswald, and Nadyne Guzman, *Emotional Intelligence for Religious Leaders* (Rowman & Littlefield. Lanham, MD 2018), 2.

acquired tool one uses in life. Knowing oneself and one's limitations becomes key to having emotional intelligence.

Leaders with proper emotional intelligence could have mentors who lead them in learning new leadership skills, such as conflict resolution and organization management, that can help in avoiding conflicts or falling into poor management. Leaning into healthy emotional intelligence religious leaders appear to emulate the style of leadership that Jesus used with his apostles. When Jesus was confronted with speaking to a woman from Samaria, he told the apostles that the water she needs is living water. His use of emotional intelligence was a way of not confronting the apostles when they questioned him speaking with a woman from "another country" but gave them something to consider that was outside of their understanding of what he was doing speaking with this foreigner.

Using emotional intelligence when leading, listening, and responding are key elements in formulating healthy religious leaders. "Religious leaders must endeavor to blend rationality and emotionality in ways that are truly transformative."⁶⁹ The tool of emotional intelligence in pastoral formation is an important way to share how a person engages in conversation with another person. If a person begins a conversation by sharing her opinions on a bible verse or a pastoral situation such as losing a loved one, emotional intelligence is used as a gauge in response. Where is this person coming from in her life? Before launching in a defensive mode, a woman lay minister with emotional intelligence will engage in a meaningful and less offensive conversation. "Pastoral Leadership is all about relationships, you may be a brilliant theologian, great at biblical exegesis, but if you are not emotionally intelligent, your ministry will be difficult."⁷⁰ When learning

⁶⁹ John West, and Lee Roy M. Oswald, Nadyne Guzman. *Emotional Intelligence for Religious Leaders*, 7.

⁷⁰ John West, Roy Oswald, and Nadyne Guzman, *Emotional Intelligence for Religious Leaders*, 7.

emotional intelligence as a subject, it will be important to acknowledge where and how this new tool can be used in the ministerial workplace. Having an additional course will be included as part of this thesis project.

Examples of Spiritual Formation

One cannot give away what she does not have in ministry. If the internal spiritual well is depleted, the ministry will provide a dry approach to prayer and spiritual wellness. There are many opinions that spending time in prayer and contemplation daily is essential for any minister to thrive. One tool that can be used is Ignatian spirituality that was developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola. Other means of spirituality could be contemplation and action, meditative practices, or yoga. Having a medicine bag filled with the proper instruments for one's spiritual formation is important. Having a keen awareness of one's limitations and time is also paramount for a healthy lay ecclesial minister.

Mental Health Awareness

God created our mind, body, and spirit yet, the amount of time spent on protecting these three elements of God's creation can be often put on the back burner. As the qualitative research develops, a special note will be made regarding the mental and physical health of lay ministers. During the periods of formation, how has the human dimension of formation developed the person's understanding of how to take care of one's physical health? Physical health is defined as the body's response to good nutrition, adequate sleep, and hormonal responses to stress. It is important to note there will be research on how institutes teach lay ecclesial ministers how to maintain a healthy balance between all these areas of physical health. Using the book, "*The Body Keeps the Score*" written by Dr. Bessel Van Der Kolk, questions will be formulated about the courses that a student needs to combat stress and anxiety. 'Will students learn the skills needed in class to help identify

when “a feeling of being lost, overwhelmed, disconnected, or feeling helpless occurs in the workplace? In other words, were the proper courses offered during lay ministry formation that could help a person identify areas of physical, spiritual, and mental distress?”⁷¹

Mental health can be defined as the mental effects of unresolved anger, grief, trauma, and mental health diagnoses that can impact one's ability or understanding of someone's approach to communication and leadership. Having an awareness of one's mental health can impact how a person leads from a wounded mentality or a healed mentality.

While the document does list psychological health as a characteristic of human formation, both its description and methodology for achievement seem important to recognize and understand. In defining ‘psychological health’ “*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*,” simply states it is “marked by integrity, appropriate interpersonal boundaries, and the ability to honor and safeguard the trust that people place in them as Church ministers.”⁷² No mention of emotional well-being, the possibility of mental health challenges such as mental illness, or the development of skills such as stress tolerance or empathy. Furthermore, the lack of a mature grounding in psychological health manifests blatantly when the document lists counseling as a method to achieve human formation (good) but then states: “Counseling can be a means of personal growth and problem-solving. However, if psychotherapy is called for, it is normally better to complete this before presenting oneself or continuing in ministry preparation.”⁷³ This is an outdated understanding of mental health, treating therapy, and the challenges it seeks to address as though they were ‘one-and-done’ issues that can be ‘cured’ or ‘solved’ and left behind, like a broken bone or case of the flu. As if one cannot have mental health challenges and effectively minister. This attitude, patriarchal and

⁷¹ Bessel Van Der Kolk, MD, “*The Body Keeps the Score*”, (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 123.

⁷² *Co-Workers in the Vineyard*, 36.

⁷³ *Co-Workers in the Vineyard*, 37.

patronizing, damages the value of listing these four elements and certainly lets off-the-hook institutions that would seek to provide formation for lay ecclesial ministers. Since such institutions tend to be academic, such as colleges and universities, it appears they may lack the infrastructure and funding to properly provide the opportunities and resources needed to achieve this kind of formation, thereby leaving the candidate for ministry on their own in this area. This reality informs much of the rest of this thesis. A conversation to see a counselor could make a huge difference in the life of a minister facing obstacles in the workplace. If she knew it was okay to ask for help or know where to go for help, then perhaps the obstacle could be removed.

Deficiencies in Formation Leads to Dysfunctional Leadership

The research for this paper will define the term dysfunction which is the style of leadership that does not use all voices in establishing a goal. Normally, it is one-person commanding results without the input of other leaders on the team. Dysfunctional leadership is not caused by only one person but because of several people on the team who take on other roles and responsibilities to cover the mistakes of the leadership. This can be done by doing the work of a person who has responsibilities but neglects to complete the work or leads a meeting for a person who came to the meeting unprepared. Other forms of dysfunctional leadership could be the failure to listen, be attentive, take responsibility for the assignments or the mistakes made in the assignment, or project the problem of leadership onto another staff member. Many members of a dysfunctional leadership team fear conflict, avoid accepting new responsibilities, and do not have allegiance to the group. In other words, does not want to serve as a team player. There are various types of dysfunctional leadership roles which will be explained in this paper.

Eggshell Leadership

This type of leadership is a relatively new term that is being used to explain the increasing role moms play in raising their children. “According to a recent TikTok video, this new definition came about when women were relegated to working remotely while also raising their children. These two career moms (raising children and working full time) created eggshell leadership.”⁷⁴ This style of leadership was demonstrated by the mother who would have emotional outbursts and tantrums during work hours as their children were watching television or attending school remotely. Children were taught without ever attending a class on poor leadership that when mom is working by her computer, you are to “walk on eggshells” around her. She is not to be interrupted or called upon to help in any way. While it will not be a course taught at any academic schools of formation, it is a term to know as it implies a person needing to “thread light” in a ministerial workplace if they are confronted with clergy emotional abuse. Often, staff members in a dysfunctional environment may be warned about a leader being in a bad mood. This alert could cause a person to walk on eggshells. The emphasis of this term will not be used in the research but only as a point of concern in describing a person’s style of leadership.

Clericalism

This type of leadership provides power to persons who are in ordained or non-ordained leadership. Clericalism allows persons to use their influence as a “cleric” to gain influence in decision-making without earning the authority to make the decision or having accountability for their decisions. Normally clericalism is seen in places where clerics are seen as superior to others who are without the title of cleric. It can also be used to gain employment, special favors, and

⁷⁴ Tik Tok Video www.tiktok.com/channel/walking-on-eggshells October 19, 2023.

places of honor. “Clericalism epitomizes a women-insulting patriarchy that cuts deeper into culture than other forms of male dominance because clericalism claims nothing less than divine authority for itself.”⁷⁵ This special recognition and attention may not be earned and is given simply because of the collar. Oftentimes, clericalism is not only the fault of the cleric but the fault of others who give the cleric special favors simply because of the profession. This becomes unhealthy when people use their influence as clerics or know a cleric to cause corruption or unhealthy power structures. While it may be advantageous to write about the causes for clericalism, the research conducted was not focused on the cleric but on the women lay minister. Many men who are ordained priests may deny having clericalism but the mere fact of being educated in a secluded environment and having the laity receiving the same education in a different room at a different time, may create an illusion that there are differences between the laity and ordained. Women are also prone to clericalism especially if there are given authority by the pastor “*in absentia*.” The women leader may be perceived as the “work wife” in making decisions about leadership in the workplace. Many may see her role as the priest in charge or a queen bee.

Queen Bee Syndrome

The Queen Bee Syndrome occurs when a woman is working and achieving great results in the office. She is a confident leader who has organizational skills, volunteer management, and business sense. Due to this proficiency in the workplace, she is seen as a threat by a woman who serves in a higher level of management. The person known as the Queen Bee, “in a higher level of management, perceives a threat that there is a woman on staff with an advanced degree and may have enough skills, talents, and business sense to one day take the higher-level position.”

⁷⁵ James Carroll, *Truth at the Heart of the Lie* (New York: Random House, 2021), 175.

⁷⁶Therefore, as a queen bee, she will do whatever in her power to distinguish the confident leader by failing to support, evaluate, or promote her. Usually, queen bees have the “ear” of the boss and will use falsehoods and fabrications of the confident leader in hopes of having her leave her position.

Conclusion

Women lay ecclesial ministers are equipped with leadership capabilities by their vocational call to serve. It is not only given to her through her baptism as a Catholic but by the elders who set the stage for her to grow and learn as a Catholic woman. The deficiencies in lay ministry formation can be remedied by knowing where the gaps are present in one’s formation if given the proper context for growth. If she is equipped with a four-dimensional formation program, she may have the right tools to function in the ministerial workplace and learn how to navigate when dysfunctional leadership shows up in the office. The research and theories explained in chapter three will open new understandings of a leader in the field hospital instead of being a wounded patient in the hospital.

⁷⁶ Pergola health.com, <https://www.pelagohealth.com/resources/hr-glossary/queen-bee-syndrome/>

Chapter Three

Introduction

According to the Association of Graduate Programs in Ministry, an organization of Roman Catholic graduate programs, the national standards for certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service have revised a small portion of the standards from the 2005 document, “*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*”, the standard of the bishop needing to grant authority for the woman to be called Lay Ecclesial Minister was not removed from the revised document. Even with the large number of people from 1990 to today attending classes and going through the certification process, many women have yet to be called a Lay Ecclesial Minister because of authority not being granted, me included. Is the term lay ecclesial minister necessary or has it become a roadblock for ministry formation centers? This chapter will address this question as it pertains how women are called to serve as lay ecclesial ministers and what they need formation to be effective.

Minister or Educator

As the research for this thesis unfolded, it became clear that one of the primary issues at the heart of the problem with the treatment of women lay ecclesial ministers and their ability to handle such treatment involves the very definition, or lack thereof, of lay ecclesial ministry in the Catholic Church today. There seems to be a fundamental mistake made in categorizing lay ministry as primarily about education rather than about ministry. After presenting a brief history of lay ministry in the United States that demonstrates the origins of this mistake, the current United States

Conference of Catholic Bishops (hereafter USCCB) designation of Lay Ecclesial Ministry as under education rather than the vocations department will be explored as a source of formation problems that lead to the conclusions of this thesis.

History of Lay Ministry in the United States

To begin our survey of the history of lay ministry in the United States, William Cahoy in his book *“In the Name of the Church: Vocation and Authorization in Lay Ecclesial Ministry”* points out that the USCCB noted the increase in lay involvement in the church with a document in 1980: “In 1980, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops published a brief but influential statement titled *“Called and Gifted: The American Catholic Laity”* which was a document written to draw attention to the laity in the United States living out the call from the Second Vatican Council, to have greater participation in the Catholic Church.”⁷⁷ With the desire to offer their gifts and talents in and out of the church, men and women joined lay movements in parishes. Groups gathered to sing in praise of God’s blessings upon the church. Soon, men and women wanted to learn more about the Catholic Church and theology specifically. Bible study and adult faith formation programs were being offered by the hundreds. The seeds of vocational discernment were planted not only by the priests and religious but also by other lay people who may have wanted to become priests or women religious but chose the vocation of marriage instead. Lay ecclesial minister was not a title these men and women may have been looking for but a place to be who God called them to become. The identity was created not by what these men and women did but by who they felt called to be in the church. The title “Lay Ecclesial Ministers” was given to them by the US Catholic bishops in 1980:

⁷⁷ William Cahoy, ed. *“In the Name of the Church”* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012) 6.

“Ecclesial ministers, i.e., lay persons who have prepared for professional ministry in the Church, represent a new development. We welcome this as a gift to the Church. Some persons serve the Church by the witness of their lives and their self-sacrificing service and empowerment of the poor in works such as administration, housing, job development, and education. All these lay ministers are undertaking roles that are not yet clearly spelled out and that are already demanding sacrifices and risks for them and their families.”⁷⁸

As the involvement of the laity in the church increased, what mattered to most priests and bishops during this time was not if lay people could serve the church but where they could serve. Roles within the church which were once filled by women religious were now being offered to lay women. The role of a Catholic school teacher or a Director of Religious Education (DRE) could easily be filled with women who were educated as teachers and thereafter wanted to share with the Church the knowledge gained from their college degrees. This increase in lay involvement did not come without concern from the hierarchy. As more lay women were hired to roles in the Church, questions asked by staff members in the lunchrooms of diocesan pastoral centers arose such as: Were these women educated in the faith? Did they know theology enough to teach children? How are they sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ without ever learning scripture? This was a period of great commission where men and women were sent out on a mission to share the good news to non-Catholics as evangelizers but without the title of such: “In 1986, The USCCB Committee on the Laity completed the first nationwide study of formation designed to prepare Catholics for parish-level ministry. “The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate began collecting data in 1994 regarding employed lay men and women in the Catholic Church, at that time there were 21,569 employed lay people serving 19,000 parishes in the United States, and by 2005, the number of men

⁷⁸ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc “*Called and Gifted: American Catholic Laity.*” (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1980), 5.

and women employed by the Catholic Church increased 42% to 30, 632.”⁷⁹ What also became evident was the need to have materials and resources available written for the laity.

During this period of wild expansion in lay ministry, it also became evident there was the need to have materials and resources available written for the laity. At the same time, a call from Vatican II for a new resource for the faithful came to fruition.

In the Apostolic Constitution titled *Fidei depositum*,⁸⁰ the process is laid out that in 1986, Pope John Paul II gathered bishops and priests to start the writing of a document that contained all the dogma and doctrines of the Catholic Church that took nearly six years to create. The new document was named *The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*. This book was to be used by professors at universities who may have to teach the Catholic doctrine and dogma to the laity. What seemed to be a small task at the time created a surge of popularity among the laity. Many were formed by the *Baltimore Catechism* where they were instructed to read the catechism and recite verbatim definitions of the church’s teachings. Now, this new catechism was widely available on the marketplace and Catholics were not afraid to buy it and read it. It was a time of awakening to what the church teaches and why. Reading the Catechism through the four pillars: Creed, Prayer/Scripture/Morality, and Sacraments excited many about their faith. Terms such as apologetics were commonplace among the schooled especially in terms of defending the faith. Several priests were given the means to teach the world about the Catholic faith through the eyes of scholars. Programs such as Word on Fire, Franciscan at Home, and Formed.org were commonplace offerings for adult faith formation at the parish or online. Catholics became wiser about the faith and addressed the reasons why they believe. What was used as a resource in instructing the faith

⁷⁹ Michal J. Kramarek, Thomas P. Gaunt, and Maria Andronicou, eds. “*Catholic Ministry Programs*” (Washington, DC: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University 2023), 219.

⁸⁰ John Paul II. *Fidei depositum*, (1992) https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_19921011_fidei-depositum.html

became a reference book on the shelves of many Catholic homes and offices. Yet, the CCC was never intended to be a resource book for the common layperson. Still to come were the local catechisms (eventually producing the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* written by the USCCB and published in 2004) and many Catholic publishing companies who rushed to create resources for parishes and lay Catholics, young and old. The development of those publications and the very nature of lay ministry and its formation it was shaped by a decision the USCCB made regarding how to classify or categorize Lay Ecclesial Ministry. If people were able to learn about the Catholic faith through the online offerings and email subscriptions, why would men and women desire a master's degree in pastoral theology or divinity? Yet, this was the requirement set forth by the USCCB for those who chose to gain employment at a parish or diocesan center in ministry.

USCCB Department Assignment

The USCCB, until just under a year ago (March 14, 2023), maintained a Subcommittee on the Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service⁸¹ which was placed under the Catholic Education Committee and not, for instance, under the Committee for Evangelization and Catechesis or under the Committee for Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations. This placement demonstrates a perspective on lay ministry, that it is less about evangelization or vocation and more about education. Thus, the formation programs that developed followed that logic. If a woman wants to enter ministry, typically she would seek a degree program, perhaps pursuing not only a basic degree but an advanced one as well.

⁸¹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc. *Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service* (Washington DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2023), 1.

If a woman earned a master's degree in theology, she would be educated to serve as a theologian in a high school or college. Master of arts in theology programs are filled with courses that prepare an educator to teach. She is a specialist in the field of theology; therefore, education and teaching make sense. Her formation was clearly in the intellectual path only. If she earned a master's in pastoral studies from an accredited Catholic university, her field is more of a generalist. Pastoral studies courses include biblical studies, philosophy, sacramental theology, moral theology, and church history. But it should also include how she will exercise her ministry as a pastoral theologian not a teacher of theology. How she is taught and formed would make a world of difference in her approach to ministry. This is another avenue of disconnect because both women, the one receiving a master's in theology and the one receiving a masters in pastoral studies are taught, with few exceptions, the same course content at the same institution by the same profession. It becomes a course about facts and not formation. This again is where the intellectual path resides but is not what is needed at the parish level when pastoral issues arise among the staff and clergy.

Problems Being Classified in Education

Given that the USCCB had formed a subcommittee on the certification for ecclesial ministry and service (now Legacy as explained above), even if placed under the Catholic education committee, expectations might be raised that such a subcommittee would have produced standards for certification that were clear and might have included all the four dimensions of the formation called for by the USCCB's document *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*. Not only were all those dimensions not present, but clear and defined standards for formation in lay ministry were not provided by the American Church at all. Without such standards, the laity (as well as the institutions that provide formation) were left to their own devices to create programs.

The (now disbanded) subcommittee on the certification for ecclesial ministry and service only lists three programs that received the USCCB “accreditation” on their website. That oversight committee, led by Bishop Emeritus Gerald Kicanas, produced a document that approved the standards of certification of three diocesan schools of formation.⁸² And yet, the same document does not provide clear and definitive standards to which to adhere when designing programs or seeking ‘accreditation.’ There is no reference on the website to who else was on the committee to help Bishop Kicanas with the review. The three schools were the University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, IL, the Diocese of San Bernardino, CA, and the Archdiocese of Galveston/Houston. In each of the programs, there are lists of courses that are necessary to be taught in the lay ministry formation program. Students of these programs would earn a Master’s in Pastoral Studies. “Some Existing Program Examples” below.

It seems from this document that accreditation must come from a governing body that has the authority to provide such authority. Such a governing body might be the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) or the Association of Graduate Programs in Ministry (AGPIM).

If the governing bodies of the American Theological Society (ATS) and the Association of Graduate Schools in Ministry (AGPIM) were the accreditation bodies that could offer the gold stamp of accreditation upon the theological schools and ministry formation programs, then why were there only three schools or programs that were evaluated? According to the website of the USCCB, the Alliance which was formed by members of various lay ministry organizations was dismantled in 2020. Therefore, the oversight (if the alliance was given this responsibility) ceased to offer any help or guidance in new ministry programs or have any oversight in existing programs.

⁸² United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc, “*Lay Ecclesial Ministry Standards*” (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2018),3.

For the past four years with the decline in the number of students attending theological schools, this would be a cause for concern as more parishes are being led by fewer priests, and fewer lay people are earning degrees from theological schools.

To further exacerbate the situation, in 1990 Pope John Paul II wrote an Apostolic Constitution titled *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, written for Catholic colleges and universities as guidelines for ensuring their Catholic identity.⁸³ As long as Catholic universities abide by these guiding principles, then the students should have the proper knowledge as leaders in our Catholic Church. In Article 5, paragraph C, it reads: “Catholic teaching should have a place, if appropriate to the subject matter, in the various disciplines taught in the university. Students should be provided with adequate instruction on professional ethics and moral issues related to their profession and the secular disciplines.”⁸⁴ There may be other subjects that may be appropriate for the student to learn at this Catholic institution especially when the student desires to become a theologian at the same school? Yes, of course, there are many subjects as mentioned above but it is clear this document does not offer any guidance as to when the subjects should be taught and what should be taught to the students. Ethics and moral issues are the pope’s only concern in this document. Regarding the other three dimensions of formation, it is clear *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is not the document to use in determining if the university is offering or participating in the spiritual, pastoral, or human formation of the student.

However, in the same document, the bishop’s role in providing for the pastoral care of the university’s students, faculty, administration, and staff are made clear.⁸⁵ Unfortunately, it is not abundantly clear how and when this pastoral care is to be exercised if at all. The document calling

⁸³ John Paul II, “*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*” (1991), https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_15081990_ex-corde-ecclesiae.html

⁸⁴ *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, § 5.

⁸⁵ *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* § 6.

for the pastoral care of the bishop undermines itself by not including any call for the institution to implement any pastoral, spiritual, or human dimensions of formation for those under the bishop's responsibility. This principle at least complicates if not contradicts the notion that formation programs should use an accreditation process through the USCCB for approval instead of seeking approval from each local bishop. In sum, there seems an accreditation mess right now leaving the formation of lay ministers in a kind of limbo with only the momentum of its original academic placement as a subset of Catholic education to provide context for formation. And that academic placement results in bad outcomes for formation. The next such consequence to be examined: is when ministry formation is housed in academic institutions, the nature of academic institutions warps what formation should and can offer.

Institutional Bias toward Intellectual Dimension Only

The Number Game

The first consequence noted of ministry formation programs being housed in academic institutions seems to be the need to play number games with the statistics available about them. Through analyzing the data collected for the annual report produced by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (hereafter CARA), it appeared the numbers sent into CARA for the report had duplicate centers for formation. For instance, 121 dioceses partner with Franciscan University as the site for formation. When looking at the Franciscan University School of Formation, the numbers count the diocesan lay ministers as their students. This is double counting. If a diocese counts several students in lay ministry and is not providing any formation other than sending their students to Franciscan University for academics and not formation, can they count that they have students in lay ministry formation? Also, if the lay ministry students are only taking

classes with no lay ministry formation in the other three dimensions, can the diocese say that they are offering a lay ministry formation program?⁸⁶

The CARA study proved to have some gaps in the recording process, but it cannot be completely tossed aside because it does show the number of dioceses relying on one program of formation to be extremely high (and therefore of some limited use). It appears, using the data from CARA's The Catholic Ministry Formation study of 2022, that the role of the laity and their participation in the ministry of the Church has evolved considerably in the decades since the Second Vatican Council: "It is a ministry because it is a participation in the threefold ministry of Christ who is priest, prophet, and king."⁸⁷

At the same time, the number of formation programs to train lay people for professional church ministry has decreased: "In 2022-2023, CARA identified a total of 164 confirmed and unconfirmed programs. There were 114 confirmed programs, in 2022-2023 (as compared to 116 a year earlier). This includes 106 active and 8 dormant programs. The number of these programs averaged 231 and ranged between 114 and 331, from 1994-1995. The confirmed and active programs were in 36 states and 70 arch/dioceses, in the United States."⁸⁸

The data collected was alarming with the inconsistencies with a reputable data collection company, but it was not surprising. Why would the numbers match if these numbers were given by universities who may not have been aware of the true numbers of students in the graduate programs versus participants in the webinars or information sessions? After all, if they filled out an application and were accepted into the university, the number is there as an active student regardless of whether she ever attended the university. Being caught up in these "numbers" games was not the intent of the research but was a by-product of inaccurate data collected. What was

⁸⁶ <https://franciscanathome.com/>

⁸⁷ "Catholic Ministry Programs", 219.

⁸⁸ "Catholic Ministry Programs", 220.

important for this project was the awareness of the courses being offered by five of the top graduate theology schools. The five schools offered similar subject titles which were governed by the document *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Did the college presidents have a say in what was going to be offered in their theology departments or were the bishops the ones in charge? The accreditation mess described above, combined with the number of issues outlined here, demonstrates significant issues with lay ministry formation writ large. Specific to the rest of this thesis, let us examine several of the most prominent programs of lay ministry formation and how this legacy of being housed by and created within academic institutions impacts their content.

Some Existing Program Examples

The Augustine Institute, Denver Colorado

According to CARA, the Augustine Institute has the highest number of people participating in their graduate degree programs. They offer four degrees: Master of Arts in Theology, Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies, Master of Arts in Biblical Studies, and Master of Arts in Catholic Education. The program requirements for the Augustine Institute include the following courses: Salvation History, The Creed, Jesus, and the Gospels, Mystagogy: Liturgy and the Sacraments, Discipleship, Moral and Spiritual Theology, Catechesis in the Mission of Evangelization, Pastoral Care and Ecclesial Life, and Leadership for the New Evangelization.⁸⁹ Also, from their website, is a summary of their understanding of the human dimension of formation but there is not a mention on the website how the human dimension of formation is accomplished. They had eighty-five people graduate from their institution, according to the “Light of Faith,” the institute’s online graduate school journal.⁹⁰ Although the journal article gives praise for the graduates and how important it is

⁸⁹ “*Catholic Ministry Programs*”, 235.

⁹⁰ <https://www.augustineinstitute.org/light-of-faith-journals/rejoicing-in-our-new-graduates>

for these students to study scripture, church history, and patristics, what is not offered is the need to learn emotional intelligence, leadership skills, or managing dysfunctional people. It is concerning that the Augustine Institute, listed as having the largest number of students in their formation program in 2023, does not appear to address any of the four dimensions of formation except the intellectual. Through coursework, seminars, and practicum experiences, students receive practical and essential human formation that would prepare them to be effective leaders for the New Evangelization. These crucial skills and dispositions include the key moral virtues for lay ecclesial leadership, as well as communication and management skills, appropriate awareness and understanding of ecclesial life and structures, and interpersonal skills related to ecclesial life and service, however, when reviewing the website, it does not indicate how and where this is being offered. The Augustine Institute and Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio are often seen as favorite institutions for bishops in the hiring of lay ministers. My own experience in an interview once, the bishop has indicated that he normally would not hire someone outside of a degree from Augustine Institute or Franciscan University. It appeared the bishop in this interview was not interested in hiring the lay person based on institutional bias.

Franciscan University, Steubenville, Ohio

Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio partners with 118 out of 195 dioceses (61%) to offer lay ministry formation through their online education program known as *Franciscan at Home*.⁹¹ This is not the same as their Master's in Theology program which has an expectation to earn fifteen credits in foundational theology followed by additional catechesis. The courses in *Franciscan at Home* are Evangelization and the Liturgy, Scripture, the Heart of Catechesis, Deposit

⁹¹ Franciscanathome.org.

of Faith, the Pedagogy of God I, and the Pedagogy of God II. *Franciscan at Home*, with 61% of dioceses partnered with this program, provides a powerful example of just how much the other dimensions of formation (human, pastoral, spiritual) are missing from most of the lay ministry formation. To provide a more personal and experiential example, when I worked as a Diocesan Director of Religious Education that partnered with Franciscan University for their master's in theology degree, students who were attending Franciscan University earning a master's in catechesis were expected to receive the three elements of formation through the diocese's own Institute of Catholic Studies. Unfortunately, that Institute did not exist during my tenure in the diocese due to a lack of staffing. The department chair for the theology department did not reach out to anyone in the diocese asking how these individuals were being formed. Therefore, it would seem the formation in the human, pastoral, and spiritual dimensions had failed. Even more disturbing was that these students were formed using their online education program which may have lacked any on-campus interaction with other students. Where were the theological reflection, the practicums, the community building, the deep personal reflection, or the liturgical experiences for these students that would fall under the human, pastoral, and spiritual dimensions of formation? Why are these dioceses partnering with Franciscan University? By doing so, the diocese can be "let off the hook" of forming or providing formation for any of their diocesan lay ministers. These people attending these basic certification classes are learning the basics of theology and that is all that is offered. For many attending an online formation program even if the formation was in the intellectual dimension was advantageous based on the hiring practices of many bishops. What would it take to send a lay person to an institution that could provide the four dimensions of formation?

University of Saint Mary of the Lake, Institute for Pastoral Leadership

This program, hosted by the largest diocesan seminary in the country in Mundelein, IL uses the document *National Certification Standards (NCS) 2011* developed by the above-referenced defunct subcommittee and developed courses therefrom which included Canon Law, Capstone Thesis Project, Catholic Social Teaching, Christian Anthropology, Christology, Church History, Ecclesiology, Field Placement, Foundations of Catholic Doctrine, Lay Leadership of Prayer, Moral Theology, New Testament, Old Testament, Pastoral Care, Sacramental Theology, and Spiritual Theology. The program also includes days and weekends for formation but there is no plan associated with these formation programs except the word “retreat.”⁹² If a person is preparing to serve as a pastoral associate, she may need to take the sessions as a Saturday workshop. Again, the material being taught was vague at best. I would hope that when Bishop Kicanas decided to approve the school and offer the recommendation for approval of the lay ecclesial ministry program, there would be materials provided to him, such as a curriculum or plans for the ‘retreats.’ How else could he know if there was truly a day of formation or an ordinary day at the beach? However, this critical information was not available to the public and leaves doubt about it.

Notably, the final three programs presented here are the only three listed as having been accredited by the (now defunct) USCCB Subcommittee on the Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service. These would be the best examples out there. And yet, each of them demonstrates their strengths and weaknesses. In reviewing the three approved programs, one program did stand out because of the networking capabilities with higher institutions of learning.

⁹² <https://usml.edu/sple/parish-ministry-programs/lem-english/>

Diocese of San Bernardino

In reviewing the course offerings at the Diocese of San Bernardino, it does not strictly use the document *National Certification Standards (NCS) 2011* from the USCCB website, but an edited version of the National Certification Standards which was developed by the Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers.⁹³ Perhaps it was because the member of the alliance who oversaw the writing and implementation of the national standards became the director of the lay ecclesial ministry program in the Diocese of San Bernardino shortly after the writing of the document was completed. Doing a little digging into their program, the *Department of Ministry Formation Institute* offers a parish ministry formation program that consists of five classes and one retreat. By examining what was being offered through the Diocese of San Bernardino here are the offerings: Beginning the Journey Orientation, Experience of God (five sessions), Jesus of Nazareth (five sessions), The Church Continues the Mission of Jesus (five sessions), Disciples for the Kingdom (five sessions), and a Called to Serve Mini-Retreat. In addition to the courses for the parish ministry program, a student may continue with her education and receive a specialization in marriage, catechesis, ministry with young Catholics, Office of Life, Dignity, and Social Justice, worship, marriage and family, or technology. Again, many courses were listed under the intellectual dimension of formation without any evidence of spiritual, pastoral, or human formation courses or experiences being offered under the parish ministry program. There were also listed at the bottom of the screen some logos from educational institutions partnering with the Diocese of San Bernardino without any reference to these schools.⁹⁴ Perhaps these are the schools that are offering a

⁹³ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc. “*National Certification Standards*,” (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. 2011) <https://www.usccb.org/catholic-education/certification/approved-standards>.

⁹⁴ Diocese of San Bernardino ministry formation institute
<https://www.mfisbdiocese.org/departmentofministryformation>

master's in theology or pastoral studies that offer more than a micro-credential course in discipleship or catechesis. Many schools are beginning to revisit the value of having a governing body of educators and theologians to explore theology departments and pastoral ministry institutes. There are many new and innovative opportunities in the pipeline especially with several institutions receiving grants from the Thriving in Congregation grants from Lily Endowment.⁹⁵

There was one school that appeared to have most of the four dimensions of formation available for their lay ministry formation students. The comprehensive offerings in courses were namely under the master's degree in divinity but it did give the impression there were plenty of opportunities for learning and formation.

Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, Boston, MA

The final school of formation to examine here, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, proves to be a program of study defined by all four dimensions of formation. In reviewing their course requirements for the master's in divinity program, courses in the intellectual dimension consist of Introduction to Theology and Ministry, Church, and Mission, Introduction to Old and New Testament, Liturgy and Sacraments, Human and Psychological Development, and Christian Doctrine. In addition to these courses are pastoral practicum assignments, clinical pastoral education, and a capstone project. All these elements paint a positive picture of courses being offered to develop the pastoral, spiritual, and human dimensions of formation in addition to the intellectual dimension. This example proves two things. First, an academic institution can create and maintain a ministry formation program that addresses the four dimensions. Second, being the

⁹⁵ News release "Lily Endowment Inc. Awards Three Grants Help Congregations in the Archdiocese of Chicago Thrive" Archdiocese of Chicago, April 4, 2024, <https://www.archchicago.org/news-release/-/article/2024/04/04/lilly-endowment-inc-awards-three-grants-to-help-congregations-in-the-archdiocese-of-chicago-thrive>.

only one to be found, such a program is difficult to create and requires significant resources and will to bring it about.⁹⁶ It was a wonderful exploration through the website of Boston College School of Theology and Ministry because it the courses appeared to be exactly what could be offered in institutions interested in developing a true lay ministry formation program using all four dimensions of formation.

Examining the colleges and universities that offer graduate degrees in theology and prepare men and women in lay ministry, the course selection for classes in 2023 is the same list as the courses being offered in 1985 when I was studying to become a lay minister. Yet, with the invention of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the document *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, there does not appear to be many changes to the courses offered for the laity in the 21st century. People need to have courses offered that provide *both* information *and* formation.

It appears from the data collected that the courses offered only provide information. Few of the universities studied offer classes that would be essential in navigating the sexual abuse crisis introduced in 2002 (and continues today). And yet, there is not one course in any of the top five schools researched for their extensive lay ministry formation program that addresses mental health that would be an essential subject to address especially with employees who minister in a parish with a priest accused of sexual abuse. There is not one school mentioned that offers classes or formation weekends that address workplace issues as simple as leadership skills, or emotional intelligence. As a result of the lack of formation, men, and women, educated in the knowledge of the faith, lack the skills that can help them navigate the personality differences that may arise among the clergy and laity, especially lay women.

⁹⁶ Boston College, School of Theology and Ministry. 2024. <https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/stm/about.html>.

Consequences of Incorrect Classification

Context: Increased Calls Without Coherent Answers

Has anything changed for women pursuing these degrees or are schools only focused on the intellectual path of formation? “In 2005, there were 30,632 lay ecclesial ministers who worked for the Catholic Church in the United States. In 2022, there are an estimated 44,556.”⁹⁷ These numbers reveal there is a growing interest in persons becoming lay ecclesial ministers in the United States; but how were they prepared and by what standards? According to the CARA report, 44,556 people consider themselves lay ecclesial ministers. Still, the data does not acknowledge if these men and women are employed full-time, part-time, or as volunteers. “The number continues to climb as more men and women lay and permanent deacons are being asked to fill positions of leadership in parishes that were once assigned to the clergy. Yet, these men and women are not entering colleges or universities for formation.”⁹⁸ In 2022-2023, there were reported 6,809 candidates to Lay Ecclesial Ministry enrolled in formation programs (an increase of 9% since a year earlier).⁹⁹ With 6,809 candidates in LEM formation throughout the country, who has a handle on what is being taught in the four dimensions of formation? All the evidence presented above demonstrates that the answer is no one.

Theology Studies versus Lay Ecclesial Ministry Formation

The research into what lay formation programs entail makes clear that many schools provide the same cookie-cutter version of seminary formation but call it lay ministry formation. There is no

⁹⁷ Mark Gray, “*Blog for Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate.*” (8.12.2022). <http://nineteensixty-four.blogspot.com/2022/08/updated-catholic-populations-for-2022.html>

⁹⁸ Mark Gray, “*Blog for Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate.*”

⁹⁹ “*Catholic Ministry Programs*, 235.

evidence that the students are not being taught the same curriculum or being taught by the same professors as the seminarians. I experienced (at the University of St. Mary of the Lake, in Mundelein, IL) that the lay ecclesial ministry students receive instruction from the same professors, with few exceptions, as the seminarian, except the women lay ecclesial ministers are being taught in the evening or on the weekends when the seminarians are not in class. History has taught us that 'separate but equal' doesn't yield just results. If the professor is teaching the course during the day for seminarians and in the evening for the laity, how has the professor adjusted their teaching? Was anything left out because the material may be "too hard" for the lay ecclesial minister to understand? If the seminarian did attend class with the lay ecclesial minister, what was his impression or understanding of the person sitting at the desk? Did he feel superior, smarter, and more prepared since he was home in his dorm studying all weekend while the woman may have been working at a parish, raising a family, or grocery shopping? Were there provisions made in the assignments for the lay ecclesial minister which may seem like "cutting her some slack" which was not made for the seminarian? All these questions were not answered in collecting the data regarding the course subjects, programs of study, or the survey collected. What was researched and comprised into this chapter regarding the research collected and what can be surmised from the data collected was there was no way of knowing the content of the courses being taught or if the instructors were adequately preparing the students for all four dimensions of formation or were they only charged with teaching in the intellectual path of formation. Even though the data collected was not provided regarding the manner of instruction or the content of instruction, based on several conversations with women, the education received was not sufficient for them once they were employed in parishes and diocesan centers. Many had degrees but the real learning began once they stepped foot in the office while working with priests.

Examples: Original Research Presented

Context of Research

All this research into lay formation programs provides context for the original research at the core of this thesis. I wanted to discover what was at the core of women's formation that was not taught when they were in school. Having served in diaconate formation for fourteen years, I knew the courses offered but there were also elements of scrutiny that took place for the men preparing for the diaconate. This level of scrutiny did not take place while I was in formation as a lay minister, nor did I see any indication on scrutiny shared on websites for the three schools researched.

It was then that I contacted women asking if they would be able to complete a survey regarding the education and formation they received as a lay ecclesial minister. They all agreed and were excited to help in any way especially if helping would help identify the root of the problem of being a victim of clergy emotional abuse.

Description of Participants and Methodology

Twenty-four women participated in the survey; all had entered a lay ministry formation program. Since the questions were all about the formation received, the survey did not address any questions regarding whether the women were emotionally abused by priests, recognizing the limitations of possible research avenues in the context of a dissertation project. However, the narrative research that preceded the survey (receiving these women's stories, unprompted and of their own volition) provided that these same twenty-four women who completed the survey had a story about themselves or women they knew who were emotionally abused by a priest or bishop. These stories were shared in complete anonymity and were not recorded for this paper. Although I

could sympathize with the women, the research conducted was not to understand why priest emotionally abused women. The research conducted was to determine why many women received the same abuse and why they allowed themselves to be wounded by this abuse. In other words, why were they not aware or prepared to step away when the abuse occurred or why did they allow themselves to be wounded when the abuse was taking place? It was not the research that was needed for this paper since the focus was on the women not the priest. It was this thought that began the deeper analysis on the lay ministry programs preparing women. While the commonalities among the survey results, about things like the amount of time required to complete the degree, degrees they received, courses they took for the degree, courses they took with clergy, and any required practicum, cannot be definitively tied to their experiences of abuse, but the overwhelming commonalities seem to provide a reasonable basis for the need for further investigation.

The survey that was created uses the tool known as Survey Monkey. Each question pertained to the formation they received while they were preparing to serve as lay ecclesial ministers. I sent the survey to 24 laywomen. Out of the 24 women, 16 completed the survey and emailed the answers. There was a link sent to their email. There were no identifying markers on the survey, and none made their way into this thesis; anonymity remains paramount and respected primarily.

Presentation of the Data

These are a sample of the questions and responses I received from the survey.

1. What type of Lay Ecclesial Ministry Formation did you receive?

When I finished the formation program, I received a bachelor's degree from the college/university. When I finished the formation program, I received a master's degree in pastoral studies.

When I finished the formation program, I received a master's degree in theology. When I finished the formation program, I received a master's degree in divinity.

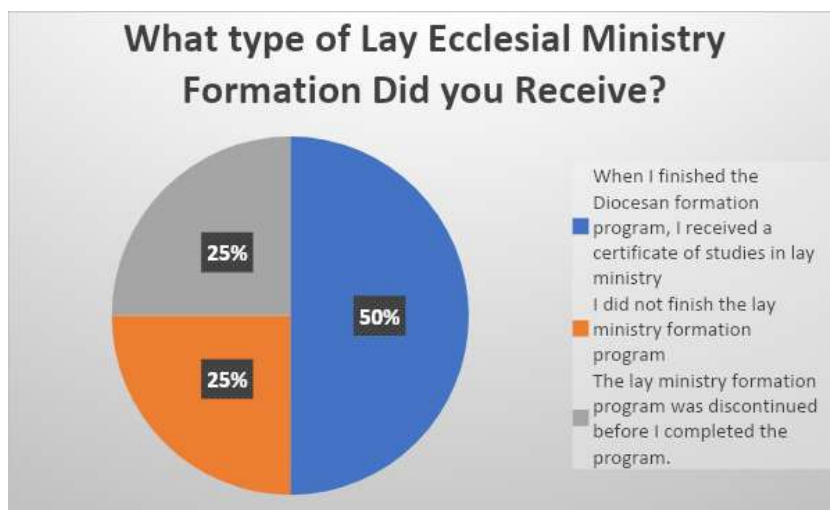
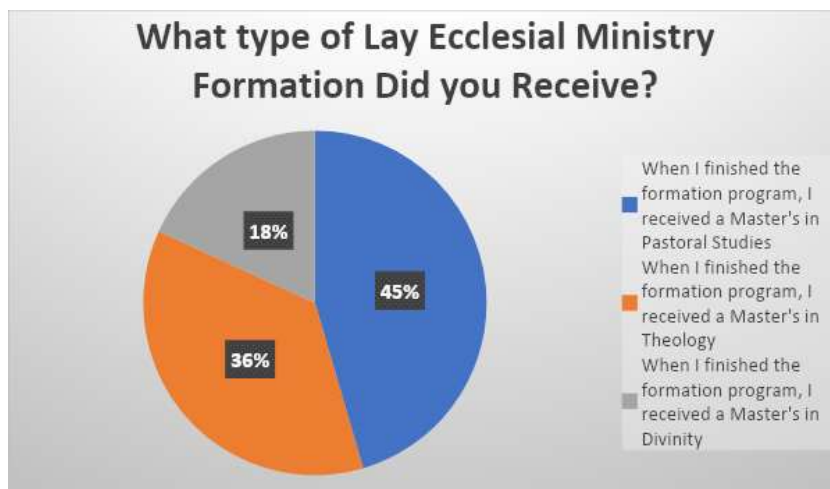
When I finished the formation program, I received a master's degree in another field other than those mentioned.

When I finished the diocesan formation program, I received a certificate of studies in lay ministry formation through the (Arch) Diocese.

When I finished the parish formation program, I received a diploma/certificate from the pastor/parish. I did not finish the lay ministry formation program.

I finished the lay ministry formation program through the diocese but did not receive any certificate or diploma.

The program was discontinued in the (Arch)diocese; therefore, I did not receive any documentation.

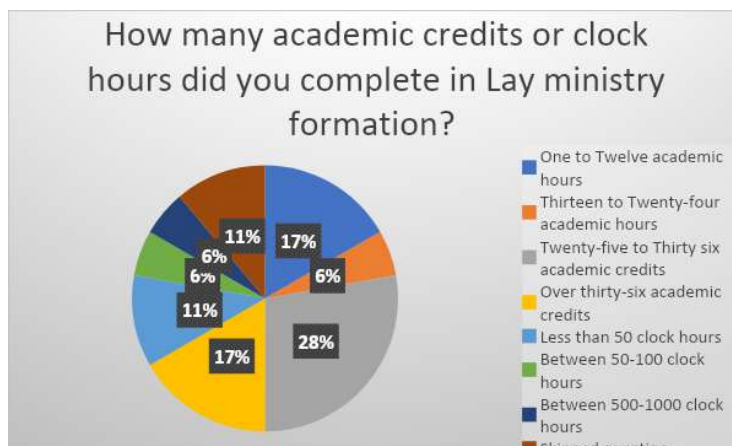


The first question was written to determine how many of the women earned an advanced degree or certificate in becoming a lay ecclesial minister. Was there a requirement to earn this degree to gain employment? According to the survey results, 45% received a master's in pastoral studies, 36% received a master's in theology and 18% received a master's in divinity. Of those who did not receive a graduate degree but participated in a lay ministry formation program, only 50% completed the program. Furthermore, 25% did not complete the lay ministry formation program and 25% had the program dissolved before they were able to complete the program.

This question in the survey leads to asking about whether having a graduate degree, or a certificate of studies in lay ministry formation helped a person to have the skills and education to serve in a parish or diocesan center. In other words, does having an advanced degree in pastoral studies, theology, or divinity help or hinder a person in the workplace?

2. How many academic credits or clock hours did you complete in the lay ministry formation? (Please note, that some lay formation schools only offer CEU or completion hours. This is not the same as clock hours. Clock hours are actual hours in which you had to attend classes or formation gatherings to complete the requirements for lay ministry formation.)

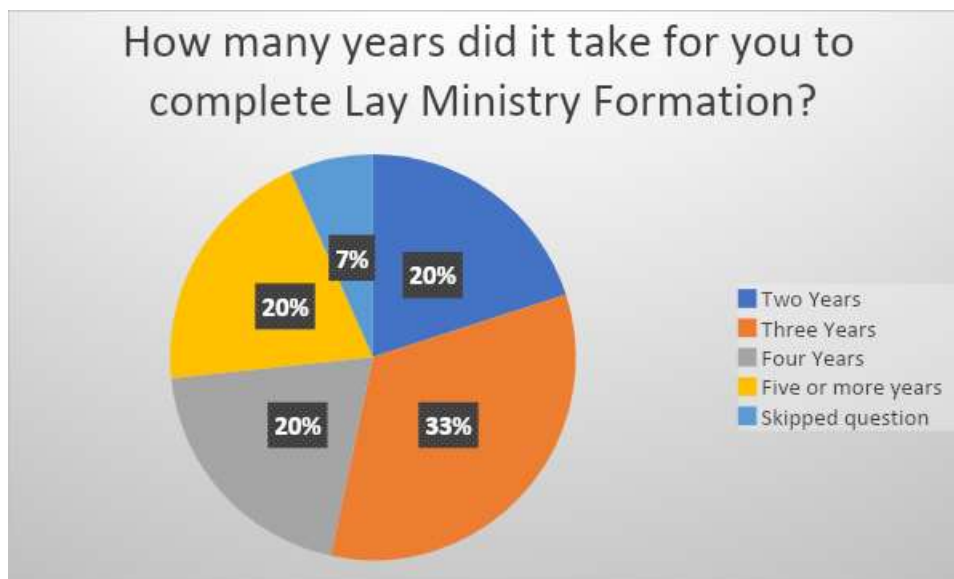
1. 1-12 academic credits
2. 13-24 academic credits
3. 25-36 academic credits
4. Over 36 academic credits
5. Less than 50 clock hours
6. Between 50-100 clock hours
7. Between 100-500 clock hours
8. Between 500 and 1000 clock hours
9. Over 1000 clock hours



The **second question** was written regarding the amount of time each woman needed to complete the degree. Did earning the degree take a large amount of time? Did earning a certificate of studies take less time or more time? Of the same group of women, 34% of the women surveyed completed between 25 and 35 graduate credit hours of academic formation known as the intellectual dimension of formation. Of those who completed a certificate of studies in lay ministry, 6% completed between 500-1000 academic hours of formation. 73% of those women surveyed shared that earning the degree took between three and five years to complete the lay ministry formation program. There was not a survey question regarding the cost of their participation concerning finances or emotional support.

3. How many years did it take for you to complete the lay ministry formation program?

1. One Year
2. Two Years
3. Three Years
4. Four Years
5. Five or More Years

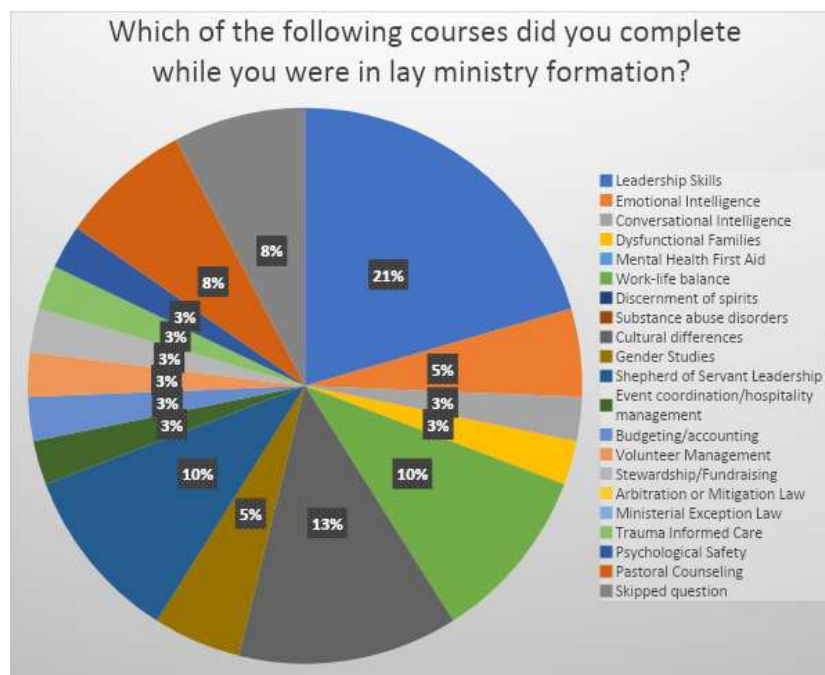


Questions three, five, and six were designed to inquire if there was more formation in the human dimension if the students attended classes onsite or online. Of the women surveyed, 27% of the women attended classes onsite with men preparing for the priesthood, 27% attended classes onsite with diaconal candidates, 20% attended classes onsite with lay ministers, 13% attended classes online with lay ministers, and 7% attended classes with lay ministers onsite and online (hybrid). While the modality of the formation may not be an issue for delivering the intellectual path, being with others serving in the same ministry may impact the spiritual, human, and pastoral dimensions of lay ministry formation.

4. To the best of your knowledge, please check the box if you completed any of the following courses or formation days.

- Leadership Skills
- Emotional Intelligence
- Conversational Intelligence
- Dysfunctional Families
- Mental Health First Aid
- Work-Life Balance

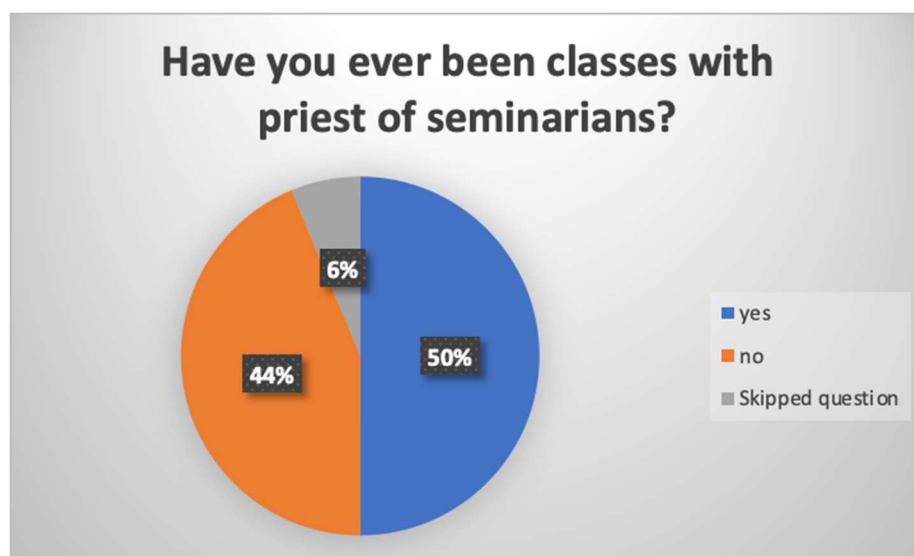
Discernment of Spirits
 Substance Use Disorders
 Cultural Differences
 Gender Studies
 Shepherd or Servant Leadership
 Event Coordination or Hospitality Management
 Budgeting-Accounting
 Volunteer Management
 Stewardship and Fundraising
 Arbitration or Mitigation Law
 Ministerial Exception Law
 Trauma Informed Care
 Psychological Safety



Question four was designed to examine the number of participants who took courses that are developmentally essential in ministerial workplaces. These courses will enable students to learn new ways of leadership especially if the woman serves in a ministerial workplace with poor leadership among the clergy. When asked which courses the women completed, 21% of the women had a course in leadership skills, 13% had a course in cultural differences, and 10% had a course in psychological safety. The remaining courses were attended by one person who also earned her master's in divinity.

5. *Were you ever in classes with seminarians or priests?*

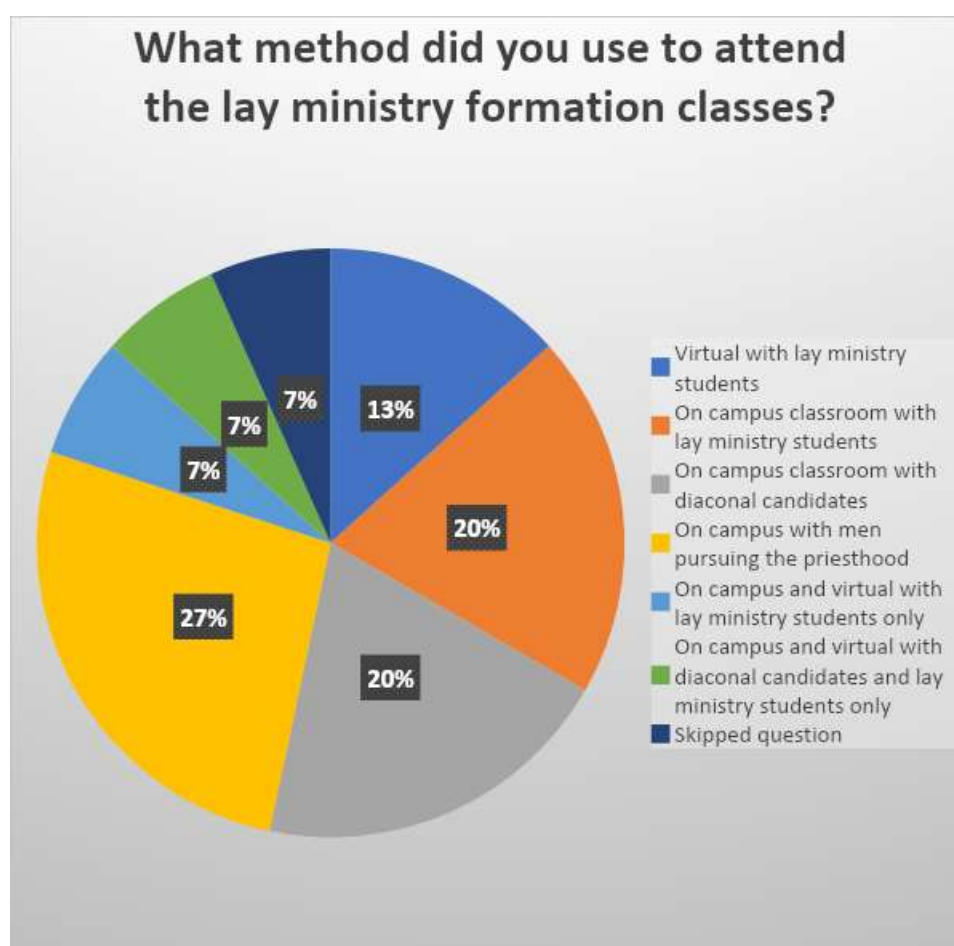
Yes
No



6. *What method did you use to attend the Lay Ministry Formation classes?*

1. Virtual with lay ministry students only.
2. In a classroom with lay ministry students only.
3. In a classroom with others pursuing the diaconate.
4. Virtual with others pursuing the diaconate.

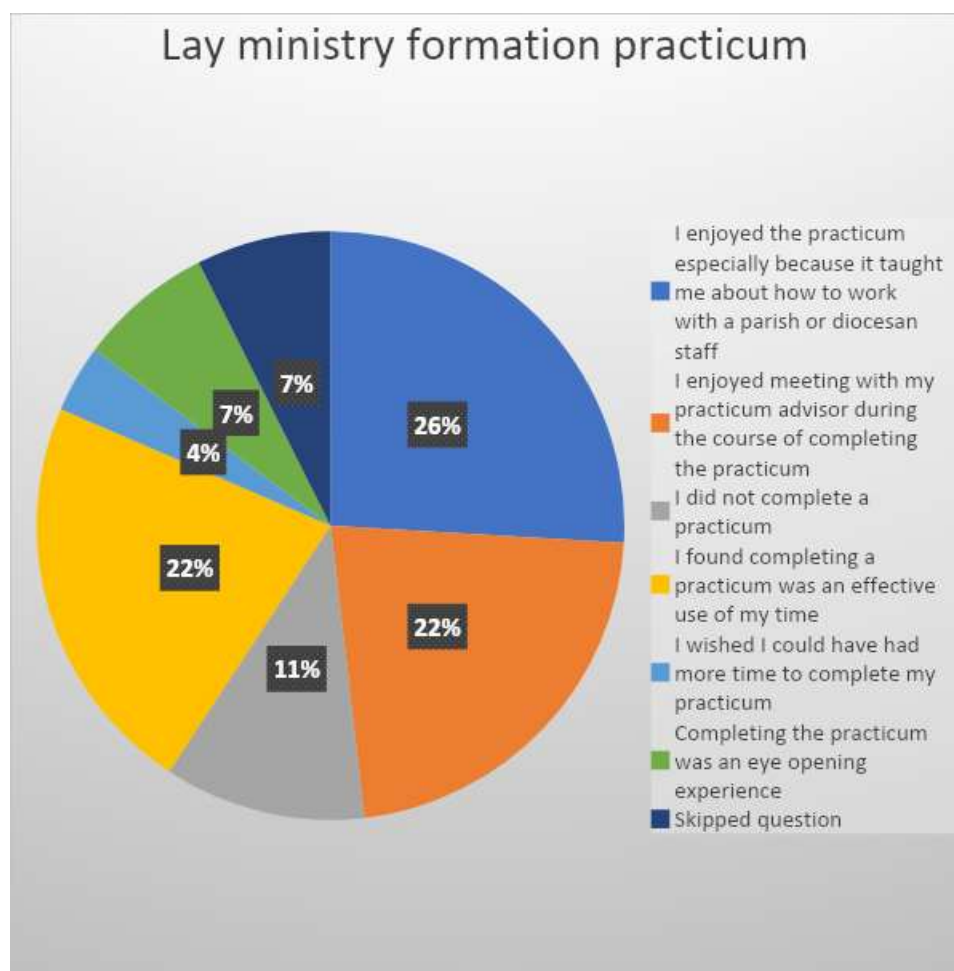
5. In a classroom with others pursuing the priesthood.
6. In a classroom with others pursuing the priesthood.
7. Hybrid, Virtually, and in a classroom with lay ministry students only.
8. Hybrid, Virtually, and in a classroom with others pursuing the diaconate.
9. Hybrid, Virtually, and in a classroom with others pursuing the priesthood.



7. Lay Ministry Formation Practicum: Please check the box that reflects your experience of your lay ministry practicum.

1. I enjoyed the practicum especially because it taught me about how to work with parish or diocesan staff members.

2. I enjoyed meeting with my practicum advisor while completing the practicum. I did not complete a practicum.
3. I found completing a practicum was an effective use of my time.
4. I wish I could have had more time to complete my practicum.
5. I did not feel completing a practicum was necessary.
6. Completing the practicum was an eye-opening experience.



Question seven, regarding lay ministry formation practicum, asks if there was a need for the women in formation to have a component where there was an opportunity to use the academics at the parish or diocesan level. If they were only studying theology, how and when

could they use their education in ways relevant to ministry? When surveyed about their practicum experiences (using the pastoral dimension of formation), 26% believed the practicum experience of formation was useful because it taught them how to work with parish or diocesan staff. 22% percent believed participating in a practicum was an effective use of their time. Yet, 11% said that they did not complete a practicum and another 4% wished they had more time to complete their practicum. Twenty-two percent believed that it was worth their time to meet with an advisor during their practicum.

Analysis

The amount of time commitment and the degree received through lay ministry formation programs would give a pastor or bishop a clear idea that the woman applying for a lay ministry position in the parish or diocesan center is qualified to be employed surely based on the degree or certificate. When asked to complete the survey, all twenty-four women responded with an affirmative “yes” in completing the survey. There was a sense of willingness on their part to help a fellow woman lay minister complete her course requirement. 100% of the women surveyed earning master’s degrees completed their degrees. 50% of the women surveyed who participated in a Lay Ministry certificate program completed the necessary courses and activities to earn their certificate of studies in lay ministry. This shines a light on the dedication and determination to complete the necessary courses to earn the title of Lay Ecclesial Minister.

How do we know if these women formed properly? Were the courses attended by these women enough to prepare them for lay ministry in the parish or diocesan center when they had to work alongside men who may or may not have acquired the proper skills and education to work with them? The time commitment to earn the degree is also a factor to consider. Nearly 50% of the women surveyed spent over 500 hours completing the academic requirements to earn the

degree or certificate. This was a time probably spent apart from family or friends. This was time spent studying, while others could be watching a ball game with her children or a play recital. Finally, only 27% of the women surveyed attended classes with men preparing for the priesthood. This is a concerning percentage due to the distinct separation between men and women. If the woman earning the Master of Divinity earned the degree apart from her male counterpart, there was an unspoken division set forth between them. Could men and women listening to the same subject and taught by the same instructor, hear the material differently? Of course, and by being apart from each other both the seminarians and lay minister candidates are robbed of learning from those differing perspectives; yet, both genders were learning how to serve the same Church. With 73% of the women surveyed participating in lay ministry formation apart from the men who may be their boss one day, this disconnect seems significant.

Through the original narrative research that led to the survey, the women's vocation story, who gave them the idea to pursue lay ministry formation and who taught them about the faith, proved a common and important sharing. These vocation stories uplifted and engaged me. Each woman shared beautiful testimonies of who and how they felt the call to serve the church. There was always a woman mentor, a teacher, a woman religious, a mother, or a grandmother. Someone saw in her the beauty that God saw as well. By sharing her story, there was freedom which was in her sharing. She would share how her instructor took her under her wing and carefully planned the next courses for her to take at the school. Another woman shared how it was her grandmother who believed that she should be a "nun" but the time for women joining religious life was changing as well. This was her opportunity to serve the church but in a way that could include being married and having children.

These women and many more whose stories were not shared are examples of women who believed in their hearts that God was calling them to serve the church in whatever capacity that was available. As a result, many chose careers as directors of religious education, youth ministers, and pastoral associates which are careers in ministry typically held by women. Going to graduate school and learning theology was important for employment so they believed they were going to be able to minister in the Catholic church as lay ecclesial ministers. Through the informal sharing, the women expressed disappointment in their choice of education and profession. What appeared to be a lucrative position turned into a nightmare for some who were not prepared for some places that had poor leadership and workplace toxicity.

The survey questions paint a scene of the education for the students, and especially of its lack in the four areas of formation. Did the women receive the proper education and formation that prepared them for the ministerial workplace alongside priests or bishops? The research and data collected reveal that the women received education in theology (the intellectual dimension). Six women surveyed did receive pastoral formation while they were earning their advanced graduate degree in theology. Ten of the women surveyed did not receive any pastoral formation. All sixteen women did not receive any formation in the human or spiritual dimension. The fact that the women were not formed in all four dimensions of formation and only formed in one or two areas of formation must be a contributing factor to the emotional abuse that the women received in the ministerial workplace of a parish office or diocesan center.

An important part of the survey asked whether the courses that the women took could prepare them for any dysfunctional leadership behavior in the ministerial workplace. Did they take classes that would help them identify if there was a queen bee that would threaten them if they were to lead a group without her permission? Or any courses that could help ministers fend

off clergy without any emotional intelligence or set boundaries against those who would be eggshell leaders? Phenomenological research in collecting the data from the surveys proved that 93% of the women surveyed did not take any classes while they were earning their degree that could have prepared them for clergy emotional abuse or any other types of dysfunctional leadership. Are the skills acquired through years of graduate studies in theology being used in the workplace?

When they return to the parish, with their basic certificate in hand, the pastor assigns them to the role of catechetical leader, coordinator of music, or business manager of the parish. This same bishop, perhaps without any knowledge of the content received by programs such as “*Franciscan at Home.org*” can rest in his office knowing he did his due diligence by sending the volunteer to the program, to earn the degree, to step into a role once filled by a master level lay ecclesial minister and offer 1/3 the salary to provide the same job. The lack of quality formation with this individual and many more like her will eventually cause some poor catechesis because of her lack of understanding of the church’s teachings, sacramental theology, and moral development. The women who have earned their degrees by working day and night, studying, and typing, and attending classes and maybe formation weekends will become a memory of the past if this continues. This may be happening now in some rural dioceses or places where the bishop does not have the time or personnel to provide any theological studies let alone formation to the laity.

Lay Ecclesial Ministers and Dysfunctional Leadership Models

Phenomenological research explains what is similar among the women surveyed. The stories that were shared through information conversations opened another place for research. If

these women engaged in workplace dysfunction, what did they have in common? With the sharing of the stories and the survey produced, the women expressed heartbreak and sadness regarding what they believed was a vocation from God. Now, this vocation for them was not what they had learned in college. Many felt duped by the system. What was surprising was the fact that many women who shared their unprompted stories did not know where to turn when they had issues in the workplace. It is this phenomenon which puzzled the research. The Archdiocese of Chicago website under the human resource department, there was not a person's name listed who could assist an employee in registering a complaint against an employee or priest. It would appear the proper place to voice a complaint would be in the victim's assistance department which handles sexual abuse complaints. Also in the research, with another diocesan human resource center (Diocese of Venice) under the victim's assistance department, there was only a name listed as a contact person. This person was not a staff member but an independent person working namely for persons who voice a complaint regarding a priest. Further research discovered, one diocese, Archdiocese of Minneapolis / St. Paul that offered a woman's name employed by the archdiocese who stated on the website that she is available for persons who believe they are being emotionally abused by a member of the clergy. After speaking with her directly, she shared how many women have called or emailed her over the past three years since her office opened. She offers classes on workplace bullying, emotional abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, and the queen bee syndrome. She also relates to Awake Ministries in Milwaukee which is an emotional support group for persons who have been sexually abused by priests. Awake Ministries also offers support groups for persons who are secondary survivors of clergy sexual abuse. After speaking with both the woman at the Archdiocese of Minneapolis / St. Paul and the executive director of Awake Ministries, the phenomena of women being emotionally

abused and ill-prepared for what transpired in the parishes or diocesan centers had been occurring for many more years than I had imagined. The women appeared to believe no person would believe them or a place where they could register their complaints. By conducting further research there are at least two places where a person or a group is available to assist a person learn how to manage or heal from workplace emotional abuse. It is important to have resources such as these for women who do not have knowledge of these dysfunctional situations as well as resources to prevent her from being the subject of emotional abuse.

Lay Ecclesial Ministers ministering with clergy in toxic workplaces.

There was a need to survey women who may not have experienced emotional abuse for this paper. Although it was clear that many expressed disappointments in the education system that prepared them for lay ministry, could blame be placed on the person, the clergy, or the institution preparing both clergy and laity? The phenomenological research conducted asked the question: whose fault is it that these women experienced clergy emotional abuse? Taking a different set of women lay ministers, the survey was developed to examine the education system as a factor for blaming fault. This does not leave the clergy off the hook, but it does shift the focus away from the problem. How could women be better prepared in the workplace if there were instances of emotional abuse. There was only one person out of the sixteen who believed she received the proper formation for her degree. It is the same person who earned a master's in divinity degree which consisted of 72 graduate credits including three practicums and field education experiences. Yet, the courses in emotional intelligence, shepherd leadership, and mental health were not offered during her years of academic formation, so it was up to her, and the other fifteen women surveyed to acquire the training, education, and support to learn these

skills. How can this problem of insufficient formation be resolved with the women surveyed and those currently in formation?

Conclusion

The data collected and the research provided cause concerns but there is a remedy that can be applied which will give the bishop autonomy among the laity (since he must grant authority) but also the knowledge that the lay ecclesial ministers are trained and educated to minister among the people in the field hospital. The women need to step into their identity as Catholic women, formed and created by God to serve others as disciples, not as employees. Much like the woman at the well, Jesus did not ask to see her transcript when she gave him water to drink. Therefore, these women who encounter Jesus at the well, or in the field hospital can step away from the charge nurse station or wait for the doctor to order tests and step into the operating room to start providing the healing necessary to minister in the field hospital of today's church. It is essential if the women continue to answer the call to serve the wounded people in the field hospital to find a remedy of their own woundedness that they may have experienced in their ministerial workplace.

Chapter Four: Findings and Results

Introduction:

Due to the Second Vatican Council document *Lumen Gentium*, lay ministry formation programs were developed in the 1980s and 1990s addressing the growing number of baptized Catholics who recognized their call to ministry. “All Christians by their baptism, share in the priesthood of Christ and all are called to render their entire lives a sacrifice, living, holy, and pleasing to God.”¹⁰⁰ This document may have opened the eyes of many lay people who believed by their baptism, they were called to ministry. Even though *Lumen Gentium* may have been written, there was a slow implementation to integrate this new document into parish and diocesan lay ministry programs. It was not until 1984, that the document was used for a new style of educating and welcoming those known as catechumens and candidates into the Catholic church. “The North American Forum on the Catechumenate provided education and formation to adults who were seeking entrance into the Catholic church through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults.”¹⁰¹ This was not enough to contain these curious seekers of the Catholic faith so Catholic universities and seminaries opened their doors to adults desiring to become a lay ecclesial minister or permanent deacon. It was exciting times but there were also sad times in the same decade.

From my perspective, what would appear as a wonderful opportunity to become an educator in the Catholic faith, regrettably became an avenue for schools of formation to teach

¹⁰⁰ Richard Gaillardetz and Catherine L. Clifford, *Keys to the Council*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 80.

¹⁰¹ Nick Wagner, “*The dissolution of the North American Forum on the Catechumenate.*” *Team RCIA*, (May 4, 2013),” <https://teamrcia.com/2013/05/the-dissolution-of-the-north-american-forum-on-the-catechumenate/>

adults using the same style as men preparing for priesthood. It is this awareness, through this research that the formation programs were discovered in six programs used throughout the United States between those women who believed they were receiving the education and formation through the lay ministry formation program. It was also evident through the research there was a disconnect between the bishop of the sponsoring diocese, the pastor of the sponsoring parish, the institution offering classes, and the individual herself attending classes. The woman was the one who was caught in the middle. By paying the tuition, she may have believed she was receiving the spiritual, pastoral, human, and pastoral dimensions of lay ministry formation. This gap in their formation may have caused women to be educated in theology without receiving the proper skills that could prepare them for the emotional abuse they may have encountered in the ministerial workplace. If she entered a lay ministry formation program as it was advertised and only learned theology which was the intellectual path of formation, where was she to learn the other three dimensions of formation? Assuming the pastor was sending the layperson from his parish expecting her to receive all four dimensions of lay ministry formation, yet she would graduate with only 25% of the formation completed. She would have a degree stamped with a master's in theology, pastoral studies, or theological studies, without any spiritual, pastoral, or human dimensions of formation to help her, especially in emotional intelligence, clericalism, and women colleagues acting with a queen bee attitude.

The data collected by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (hereafter CARA) was also troubling. Many institutions of higher learning may rely on the CARA report to determine how many lay ecclesial ministers are being educated throughout the country. It would not be surprising if some institutions fudge the numbers for the report to claim to be the first or second highest number of students at the institutions. It does not appear that CARA and others

are not responsible for verifying the information given, they are only responsible for adding the data to the report which was taken from a form submitted by the diocese or educational institution. “With the nearly 7000 lay ecclesial ministers studying in some form in one of the 114 confirmed lay ministry formation programs in 2022,”¹⁰² there is a need to continue offering classes for these women who desire to live out their baptismal call by serving in a diocesan center or parish as a lay ecclesial minister. If the diocese of the parish is sending someone for lay ministry formation, there is an expectation this is what is being offered. What if the bishop or pastor sends the woman to a lay ministry formation program and only must pay for 25% of the tuition because she only receives one element of formation, would that matter? Women (lay ministers) are brought together to discuss pastoral, spiritual, or human situations they rely on memories of how and when this issue was dealt with in their personal life, if at all. For example, we are allowing doctors and nurses to assist people in the field hospital without the proper residency program or counseling to help them deal with the traumas of our church.

It is not the purpose of the research to prove the institutions are offering 25% of the formation namely, only offering the intellectual dimension but to prove it is happening and it is causing harm to women. The degree alone especially without any training or formation to help them combat some experiences of emotional abuse in the ministerial workplace must be corrected through a model of ongoing formation for women lay ecclesial ministers.

Unprompted conversations

Each story of the women who participated in the informal conversations regarding their experiences of emotional abuse in the Catholic parish office or diocesan center shares the

¹⁰² “*Catholic Ministry Programs.*” 222.

common thread of being a woman, called by God, to serve the church. Each story that was heard gave some insight into why the women stayed in the workplace and continued accepting the form of emotional abuse that caused wounds. Through the research on feminist theology, the love and passion for the church that these women shared overrode the continued abuse they were experiencing. Feminist theology explains how these women who served in ministerial positions saw their role as witnesses of the Gospel. Using feminist theology as a framework for explaining the lived experiences of the women was an important piece of describing when the emotional abuse took place and how the women became victims of such emotional abuse. “Priest, acting *in persona Christi*, are the official dispensers of the sacraments, but the sacraments can only be dispersed through mother church. St. Hippolytus teaches that Eve has become the Church.”¹⁰³ Having Eve, a woman, as the Church St. Hippolytus states brings a feminine influence in how the Church is seen and understood. When a mother or grandmother shares her faith with children, it is not only for instruction, but she is giving the gift of wisdom and understanding of why faith and belief will guide her children through joys and challenges.

There was not much written about Eve in scripture, but for years women many who are my peers felt blamed for being a woman because of Eve taking the fruit from the forbidden tree. Women in the past were told that our monthly menstrual cycles were a result of the pain inflicted upon Eve for eating the fruit. Of course, science proved this to be false, but the narrative given to young girls began years of feeling personal monthly punishment for something Eve did in the story of Yet, by her power of choosing from the wrong tree, she sets the world in motion by introducing good and evil. Even calling Mary, the “New Eve” according to Sr. Elizabeth Johnson

¹⁰³ Monica Migliorino, *The Authority of Women in the Catholic Church* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2015),146.

in her book *“She Who Is”*, continues to place the blame on a woman, as the mother of Jesus. From my experience, this blame continues in today’s Church culture with the negative impressions from some clergy when the term feminist or womanist or ministering with women who have more education and experienced that the newly ordained priest or the recently installed bishop. How does this negativity foster itself in the workplace with men and women working together? There were many instances in my ministerial career where I witnessed, women in the ministerial workplace that cause tension between women and women because one may see herself as the director of the building even though her job description does not share the same title. Her “queen bee” attitude and behavior will squelch the feminist or womanist from leading or directing programs or ideas. She may even do what she could to have one woman serve as a spy upon another woman in the building. This causes distrust among the workers and eventually causes emotional abuse. Other times, women appeared to be invisible. Several instances in my career, while attending meetings with seminary faculty when the keynote speaker addresses those in the room as “my brothers.” It was as though the dozens of women were not even there. This simple oversight reeks of institutional blindness. If this happens in seminaries, how are the clergy prepared to minister to women if those preparing the men do not recognize women professors in the room?

Lay ministry formation programs using the comprehensive document, *‘Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord’* as a guideline may not be followed in lay ministry formation programs. When a diocesan lay ministry formation program relies on a university education system to provide the spiritual, pastoral, human, and intellectual dimensions of formation, the system has a breakdown in standards. The university may be equipped to provide one dimension of formation, the intellectual dimension. When the question was asked to a university administrator “Where

are the other three dimensions of formation being offered”, his response was “at the diocese.” When the bishop was asked “Where are the lay people in XYZ University receiving their lay ministry formation? His response was “At the university.” When the bishop partners with a university to provide the lay ministry formation, it appears there is an unspoken expectation that the university is providing all four dimensions of formation which may not be the case in some universities that promote lay ministry formation programs. As a result of this grievous oversight, the four dimensions of formation may not be offered as a comprehensive lay ministry formation program at the institutions. Could this be a cause for some women being unprepared for what transpires in the ministerial workplace?

Pope Francis wrote in a letter to the Grand Chancellor of the Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina in 2015,

“Even good theologians, like good shepherds, have the odor of the people and the street and, by their reflection, pour oil and wine onto the wounds of mankind. Theology is an expression of a Church which is a 'field hospital', which lives her mission of salvation and healing in the world. Mercy is not just a pastoral attitude, but it is the very substance of the Gospel of Jesus. I encourage you to study how the various disciplines — dogma, morality, spirituality, law, and so on — may reflect the centrality of mercy.”¹⁰⁴

If women earn advanced degrees in theology through a lay ministry formation program endorsed by the diocesan bishop or parish pastor and attend classes believing she is being formed fully in all four dimensions of formation, they may not know that they are not receiving the full package of formation. Therefore, she may enter the workplace ill-prepared for her role in the parish or diocesan center. It would make sense that these same women when confronted with

¹⁰⁴ Massimo Faggioli, “How Pope Francis has Changed the Mission of Catholic Colleges and Universities,” *National Catholic Reporter* (2024). <https://www.ncronline.org/opinion/guest-voices/how-pope-francis-has-changed-mission-catholic-colleges-and-universities>.

tension or poor communication skills would find themselves feeling unheard or emotionally abused. She would walk around the workplace as if she was walking on eggshells all the time trying not to disrupt someone who may have anger issues or emotional outbursts. She works in a field hospital without any regard for the care of themselves or the patients they serve.

Missing dimensions of Lay Ministry Formation

Four dimensions of formation; *spiritual, pastoral, human, and intellectual*, are used in forming men and women for lay ministry. These same four dimensions of formation used in seminaries and lay ministry formation programs since the 1980's. Not much has changed with the course offerings and the naming of the dimensions of formation. Through the research, I uncovered some lay ministry formation centers are only providing one dimension of formation which is the intellectual dimension. According to the CARA report, "the top three academic centers with the most students in lay ministry formation were Augustine Institute, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, and Franciscan University."¹⁰⁵ In two of these three schools, the formation is relegated to "information" and not a comprehensive four dimensions of formation. With most universities providing the knowledge of theology, these women become "desk-bound theologians"¹⁰⁶ as Pope Francis calls them. If this is true, then a woman can regurgitate the church's teachings on moral matters but are unable to apply these matters in the workplace when a person comes into the office with a moral dilemma.

From the unprompted conversations during the research component of this paper, several women stated that at first, they did not believe earning a degree in theology was a calling from

¹⁰⁵ "Catholic Ministry Programs" 235.

¹⁰⁶ Jonathan Liedl, "Pope Francis Calls "Paradigm Shift" In Theology for the World of Today" *Catholic News Agency* (Nov 1, 2023).

God. They also mentioned that several of their female colleagues felt the same way because of how vocations are seen in the Church. For someone who attends mass each Sunday, it is rare for a petition to be read from the pulpit including lay ministers as individuals who need prayers. The woman can serve as minister of communion or lector, but rarely would you see her on the altar standing next to the priest ready to wash his hands as an adult acolyte. Most are given the responsibilities of “sowing” the faith as a catechist but not as someone prepared to deliver a homily. There was also an undertone that education and experience are not needed several of the women stated in the unprompted conversations, that when they left the parish ministry, their position at the parish was replaced by a volunteer who now will earn a small stipend to perform the same responsibilities. Others shared how their spiritual life was questioned. A pastor asked one lay minister, how often does she pray and if she had a spiritual director. She found this question odd but did share how she relies heavily on Jesus and a spiritual director to nourish her calling in the church. With the complexities of people with mental health issues and neurodiversity, there appears to be an even greater need for trained and formed women to serve in the parishes and diocesan centers. Women are being asked to lead ministries that were once led by priests. This is “driven largely by a 35% decline in diocesan priests over the past twenty-five years.”¹⁰⁷ The women are needed in the parishes, but they need to be trained and formed by programs equipped to give the women the tools needed. With the complexities of spiritual, pastoral, and human issues being brought into the field hospital, lay women need all four dimensions of formation either in their formation classes or after graduation as ongoing formation. Women brought together to share stories of their upbringing continue to be important as vocation stories are shared. Each brought their experience of workplace emotional abuse not

¹⁰⁷ William Cahoy, ed “*In the Name of the Church*,” (Collegeville: MN, Liturgical Press, 2012), 12.

because of their ethnicity but because of their gender. Each of the people who were surveyed shared faith stories about how they were taught the Catholic faith. Some wanted to become a woman religious but there were other options such as becoming a youth minister without having to live a celibate life with other women. Others shared how they engaged in the ministries of the church because their parents were involved so they fell in love with the Church. Some stories gave me a feeling the Holy Spirit brought them to the Church by their testimony. The survey conducted through the narrative research were stories of women who felt no one would listen to their story of the trauma they received in the workplace. These stories were not stories of slavery or of being taken away and made to live in a boarding school but stories of hope, love, and concern. In the revealing of their trauma, several women shared how concerned they were for other women who remained in the workplace. “What will happen to them?” Throughout listening to the stories, the commonality was this pressing issue about protection and power. The same held with someone named Mother McAuley who saw a need for a housing project and took the initiative to build one without asking anyone’s permission.¹⁰⁸ Women felt they did not have any power with their voice or with the hierarchy. Who would believe that was a concern mentioned? Women lived among men who held power over them not only in the 1800s but in the 21st century. The topic of power and persuasion was also captured in the revealing of the stories. Power by itself can be useful but when it is used to place someone in their place, it is wrong. Women surveyed were not taught one course or weekend seminar on the use or abuse of power.

How power was used to place over women for centuries was evident in the stories of the Indigenous women, yet they overcame their power struggles because the men honored women

¹⁰⁸ Mary Agatha Smith, “Beyond Catherine: Stories of Mercy Foundress,” (2011), <https://www.mercyworld.org/bibliography/?keywords=Beyond%20Catherine:%20Stories%20of%20Mercy%20Foundresses.%20%20Ed.%20Ethel%20Bignell,%20RSM.%20%2011-13>.

for birthing new life. They also saw Mother Earth as the lifeblood of their community. In the Catholic Church, calling the Church, *Mother*, continues to not honor women in the same way. It is admirable that Pope Francis is including women in the Curia, especially with the choosing of new bishops, but is this only a small attempt to pacify women by naming them to the Dicastery for Bishops? There were few surprises among several of my colleagues to see who was named as delegates for the synod on the synodality. “With the writing of “*Praedicate Evangelium* (Preach the Gospel), is this enough to help promote women in the Roman Curia? The barriers to incorporating women into positions of Church governance and jurisdiction are both historical and canonical. Each supports the increasing infection of clericalism choking the Church.”¹⁰⁹ This calling of women by titles instead of who they are continues to this day. Cardinal Francis George once said, “Instead of focusing on the important role the woman plays in the home, workplace, or church, the title appears to be more important than the person who is serving.”¹¹⁰ The power differential was used in the word regarding the term *Lay Ecclesial Minister* with “some bishops when the woman could not be called a Lay Ecclesial Minister in his diocese because the bishop understood the title under the “*Ecclesiae de Mysterio*”, which is a document stressing that ordained can only be *called* by a bishop to minister in the Catholic Church. This definition gives a narrow sense of ministry reserved only for priests connecting it with the sacrament of holy orders.”¹¹¹ As a result, many bishops ordained under Benedict XVI followed this teaching and refused to call anyone lay ecclesial ministers because the calling forth was reserved only for priests. It also contradicts that men and women by the virtue of their baptism can serve the Catholic church and are called by God, not the bishop. This also is a part of a major

¹⁰⁹ Phillis Zagano, *Just Church* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2023), 64.

¹¹⁰ William J. Cahoy, ed, *In the Name of the Church*, 141.

¹¹¹ William J. Cahoy, ed, *In the Name of the Church*, 122.

roadblock that bishops can use in their dioceses preventing lay ministers from ever using their degree in lay ministry formation or title of lay ecclesial minister. Having two definitions of the word *Ecclesiae de Mysterio* can confuse especially if the memo was never distributed to the bishops regarding the term not to be used anymore. “The *Ecclesiae de Mysterio* term recalled the instruction of this term stating “the application of ‘ministry’ to the laity is not something to be confused with ordained ministry nor in any way construed to compromise the specific nature of ordained ministry.”¹¹² The bishop, by exercising his power “*sacra potestas*”, and under his ordination as in effect by the sacred power that he has which “configures the recipient to Christ the *Head* and brings about a particular relationship to service” on behalf of the community.”¹¹³ Using the power to undermine someone’s vocation and disallow an educated and experienced woman to be called a lay ecclesial minister could be perceived as another form of emotional abuse. Who can stand in the way of a person’s vocation? According to the power, granting him the authority to determine if a woman can be called, let alone employed as a lay ecclesial woman is wrong. This may not be the only roadblock that can be set forth by bishops especially if they are given the authority to “allow” women to serve in a parish or diocese regardless of what God may be telling her. It appears the women who completed the survey understood resilience, determination, and trust in the Catholic church by remaining a part of it despite the power struggle between the hierarchy and the holy spirit. “My voice and dreams were silenced. I had a chance to make a difference in the world while also being seen, recognized, acknowledged, and heard.”¹¹⁴ This statement was in reflection of the author who felt that her voice was being

¹¹² William Cahoy, ed, *In the Name of the Church*, 123.

¹¹³ Marti Jewell and Theodore James Whapham. *Transforming Ministry Formation*, (New York, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2021) 61.

¹¹⁴ Angela Swain, *Mama Knew*, (Orlando: self-published, 2022), 29.

silenced while she was in school, but it can also be a statement for other women who feel this way as a member of the Catholic Church.

Evidence of Decline in Lay Ecclesial Ministers

The intellectual path of formation appears to be working well with the number of people entering universities and obtaining a theology degree. “According to the 2022 CARA study, there are 6,809 enrolled in formation programs in 2022. Since 1994 when the statistics were collected, the number of enrolled candidates in lay ministry formation has declined each year since 2002.”¹¹⁵ Even if the women had earned their graduate degree or received a certificate would they be happy in their ministry position? The degree may not even be used if the bishop does not give her the authority to minister in his diocese even if she has the correct credentials or education.

In the survey “*Mainstreaming Women’s Ministries in the Roman Catholic Church*, the question, “Do you feel you were prepared by your lay ministry formation program to serve the church?” For the women who completed the surveys for this project, the answer would be no. “*The Mainstreaming Women’s Ministries in the Roman Catholic Church*” The survey was completed by 224 women, 68% held a graduate degree in theology and 32% were currently attending classes to earn a degree in theology, overwhelming the survey proved that 80% were not satisfied with the ministerial opportunities available to them as women lay ecclesial ministers. Yet, with 73% of the women held Catholic identity and affiliation to the Roman

¹¹⁵ “*Catholic Ministry Programs*”, 212.

Catholic Church as important factors for their pursuing a degree in theology. “¹¹⁶ Why is there such dissatisfaction among the lay ecclesial women holding positions in the Catholic Church? The National Association of Lay Ministers (NALM) offers meetings each month as round table discussions on the issues surrounding lay ministry. Many of the women attending the meetings, shared how they were dissatisfied because of the “isms”, sexism, racism, clericalism, and more. In reviewing the spiritual, pastoral, and human dimensions of formation, it became clear there were missing elements that would have fostered a subtle but important piece of employee alliance with the institutional church. Without an understanding of what was asked in the “*Mainstreaming Women’s Ministries in the Roman Catholic Church*” survey, it was clear that there is a decline in the number of women pursuing advanced degrees to work in the church. The first place would be to examine how are women formed in ministry.

The examination of course offerings at three institutions, Augustine Institute, Franciscan University, and Boston College, which according to the CARA study have the largest numbers of students attending their lay ministry formation programs will be explored. Insight into the subjects taught and formation offerings will be examined. as programs typical of any theology department. Also, what will be explored are three lay ministry formation programs recommended by the United Conference of Catholic Bishops, (USCCB) as “Lay Ecclesial Ministry formation programs that follow the standards set forth by the USCCB. The three formation programs are the University of St. Mary of the Lake, the Archdiocese of Galveston/Houston, and the Diocese of San Bernadino, CA. If the USCCB sets the standards and allows a team to examine the course offerings in the lay ministry formation program to verify the courses are indeed following the

¹¹⁶ Kate McElwee and Katie Lacz,” *Mainstreaming women ministries in the Roman Catholic Church: A survey of Young Catholic Women in Formation and Ministry in the United States,*” a pastoral study project sponsored by the Louisville Institute, 2019), 6.

standards. If these three institutions of higher learning are seen as the gold standard of lay ministry formation programs, how is this standard determined and by whom? Looking at the core competencies of 2005, written in the “*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*” document, how has the systemic shift in ministerial approaches before the sexual abuse expose of 2002 and current approaches differ? This crisis which was brought to public awareness has caused many adults socially cautious around priests.¹¹⁷ If this is not addressed by adding an addendum to the lay minister’s handbook, there may not be changes in attitudes and behaviors among women preparing for lay minister and men preparing for priesthood.

Shift in Formation after the Dallas Charter

There were changes made in the American Catholic church since the Dallas Charter was documented and enforced, yet it appears there may be a need for more changes with the theology departments and lay ministry formation. If men and women are being taught and formed under the same regime of “*pray, pay, and obey*” style of church participation, how can these men and women serve a church that may have become suspicious of clergy and those who minister alongside them? Also, the appearance of priests after this one watershed crisis has been seen as a stain on the American Catholic church. If the formation programs and theology departments do not address these issues, there will continue to be tensions arising between the two genders regardless of education and experience. The crisis caused many men to reconsider their vocation on the basis of identity. Many friends and colleagues who once felt called to the priesthood

¹¹⁷ “Americans See Catholic Clergy Sex Abuse as an Ongoing Problem,” *Pew Research Center* (2019), <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2019/06/11/americans-see-catholic-clergy-sex-abuse-as-an-ongoing-problem/>

shared with me that they did not want to be associated with a profession that caused so much pain in the church.

Vocation Discernment

The term vocation will be explored before and after the sexual abuse awareness. Were men and women called by God to serve the church or did they enter the profession of being a lay minister because they wanted to save the church from any more crisis happening? There is one university that offers their bachelor's in religious studies an opportunity to remain a student, forgo paying student loans for an additional year, by attending theology classes and earning a degree.¹¹⁸ Will offering a free graduate theology degree by the same university be reason enough for a student to continue with their graduate degree if this means that they do not need to return home and find a job or begin paying their student loan? How are parishes and diocesan centers equipped to handle employees who find themselves with these advanced degrees earned to possibly escape from getting a job instead of being called by God to serve the church? Vocational discernment continues throughout one's life. Life experiences change and many people may have felt called to serve in a ministerial profession but had a change of heart. Perhaps they were desiring to become a priest until God may have sent them a partner to share their life with as a non-celibate? The leaving of the vocation does not mean something happened professionally, but someone changed spiritually. This could also be the case for women who felt called to serve the church as a lay ecclesial minister but now feels called in a different direction.

¹¹⁸ Department of Theology Admissions, Franciscan University.org

Evidence of Lack of Formation of L.E.M Programs.

In reviewing the three academic centers that provide theology degrees, all provide the standard courses for a theology degree but only one college, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, was among the three that provides spiritual formation by offering classes and formation weekend retreats which contribute to the spiritual dimension of formation. The program also offers extensive opportunities to participate in the pastoral dimension by having the students participate in practicums, theological reflection, field education out in the ministerial field, and capstone projects that integrate all areas of learning. It was not clear by researching the ministry school if they offer many classes or opportunities for formation in the human dimension of lay ministry formation.

The human dimension of formation can be offered by one one-on-one interaction with the students, staff, and professors. The lay minister in formation can seek outside opportunities by participating in workshops on mental and physical wellness or listening to podcasts on emotional intelligence or workplace dysfunction. Another possibility could be by having a friend group or a “God Squad” comprised of women and men who are supportive and enriching as one’s ministerial life unfolds.

Evaluation of the Lay Minister

Over the years of participating in the lay ministry formation program, the lay person can be evaluated through her academic courses, and received feedback from her teachers, but how does one evaluate a person on the virtue of Christian discipleship if the lay minister is never in any direct contact with anyone from the formation team.

In *Program for Priestly Formation in the United States of America, Sixth Edition*, produced by the USCCB, it states “So that the seminarian might act with interior freedom rather than simply demonstrating a ‘veneer of virtuous habits,’ human formation seeks to help the seminarian grow in interior maturity.”¹¹⁹ The document continues to explain all that is necessary for the seminarian to achieve behaviors, morals, and values becoming of a man who is worthy of being ordained a priest. The seminarian also is evaluated occasionally by the rector of the seminary, his peers, and the faculty. He is not evaluated by outsiders who may have a different opinion of the seminarian.

Why is there not an evaluation process designated for lay ministers located in the “*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*” document? This oversight may lead to a lay minister never recognizing the mistakes she may have made in ministry or interactions with the staff. If it were in the “*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*” document, it would be in the sessions mentioning evaluation, but it does not appear to have any method regarding how she would be evaluated.

Inadequate Formation Programs

There appears to be a breakdown of how she is being formed to serve by not including any sources that may help her navigate through many challenges and obstacles that will surface when she works as a paid staff member or as a volunteer. There cannot be adequate education given in thirty-six credit hours in the graduate program if the focus is to acquire all the “knowledge” about theology instead of “experience” about serving the church. The knowledge

¹¹⁹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc. “*Program of Priestly Formation in the United States of America, 6th ed.*,” (Washington DC, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2022), 77.

piece appears to be covered by the subjects of scripture, sacraments, moral theology, church history, and the catechism. There appears to be some fundamental courses that would be great to have in formation programs such as *Emotional Intelligence* and *Eggshell Leadership*, but they appear to be lacking in the schools examined. The fault is not with the institution or the person learning but with the lives of the people who are being served in the parishes. If women are still being prepared for ministry the same way as in the 1980s, then the problem is more complicated. Even lay ministers formed in the 1990s without any continuing education are outdated in their theology and ministerial approaches.

Since the 2002 Dallas Charter and the formation of the Office for Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults, great strides have been taken to ensure that men and women receive the proper training and education regarding protecting children and vulnerable adults from pedophiles. What has been required regarding training for women with other subjects such as ministering to people with mental health issues, the LGBTQ community, the neurodiverse community, the elderly, people on the move communities such as migrants, and other marginalized communities? If she is relying on what was taught to her in the early stages of lay ministry formation where she was included in classes with men studying for the priesthood, how has her understanding of the pastoral application of the Church teachings been updated without any requirement for ongoing formation? Many may feel comfortable in remaining in the old school of thought since learning new methods of coping, learning, and praying may be too much to consider.

Intervention Explained

In a study conducted in 1997 by CARA, 82% of lay ecclesial ministers serving 949 parishes, were women with an average age of 50. In one diocese in which I was once employed, which was established as a diocese in 1984, there were 60 parishes each with one full-time youth minister. In the same diocese in 2023, there are now 60 parishes and only four of those parishes have a youth minister. Three out of the four parishes have the youth minister working only part-time. Many parishes in the same diocese operate youth ministry with volunteers who lack advanced theology degrees. If the parishes are fortunate enough to hire a full-time lay minister for religious education or youth ministry, perhaps it would be better to help the lay minister through her first few years of ministry by assigning a seasoned mentor. Who are the new lay ministers being formed to serve the church?

If the lay ministers are graduating from Augustine Institute or Franciscan University, by reviewing their schools of formation, the graduates will not have formation in the spiritual, pastoral, or human dimension of formation. These two schools of formation offer graduate degrees in pastoral studies, theology, practical theology, or theological studies. There are fifteen graduate credits designated for theology courses, six elective credits (all on theological foundations), three credits on catechesis, and three credit field placement courses. Unless the formation is being offered under the topic of theological foundations, there are zero credits offered in spiritual, pastoral, or human dimensions of formation. Yet, Augustine Institute has 563 students in their graduate school earning degrees in theology, and Franciscan University has 335 students.¹²⁰ These men and women are leaving these institutions with only 25% of the formation

¹²⁰ “*Catholic Ministry Programs*”, 237.

completed and are set to enter the workplace. What can be done to provide these students and others who are not ministerially formed to address many issues that they may encounter in the parish or diocese? In specific, how are they prepared to prevent being emotionally abused by clergy?

Current Models of Ongoing Formation

Introduction

Ongoing formation has been offered for decades to many who are in religious communities and lay ministry movements. There are courses, sabbaticals, and extended retreats that many lay ministers need continuing education or a spiritual refresh. These sabbaticals are often extremely costly but if a person is in a religious community, the cost is covered as part of the formation. Priests and bishops can participate in a sabbatical that may be cost prohibited by lay people. These sabbaticals are often provided by a grant, donor, or part of their educational allowance. If a lay person is a full professor, they may be able to apply for a sabbatical in which they may use the time to complete academic research or write a book on a subject in their field of expertise. Here are a few models of ongoing formation that are provided to those in the Society of Jesus, Catholic school teachers, lay ecclesial ministry, and priesthood.

Tertianship

The Society of Jesus has a model of the formation known as Tertianship. This model of formation is offered to Jesuits after several years of being a priest in the field. Men who have served in retreat houses, universities, hospitals, and other avenues can request some time off as they discern their final vows. The tagline for Jesuits desiring to complete tertianship is

“formation as a Jesuit does not stop at ordination.”¹²¹ The same is true for men studying to become Jesuit priests. As explained to me by my spiritual director, a Jesuit priest, formation can be a ten-year process or more. A man enters the Jesuit community as a novice. Being accepted into the Jesuits is the first step in a very long process towards priesthood and final vows. Even being accepted as a novice for many men, this process to getting accepted as a novice may have started decades earlier when God planted a seed in his soul. After being a novice for two years where the man prays, works, and learns, the brother Jesuit may decide to participate in some form of menial labor such as ministry at a parish, or hospital, or working among the poor. Once he enters this phase of the process, he may take his first vows. Taking the first vows is a powerful step in accepting that he is on the path toward either brotherhood or priesthood. It is usually after his first vows that he continues his education by attending a Jesuit college or university to learn theology. It is during this time he is called a scholastic and completes his regency. As a scholastic, his regency looks like taking classes, studying, and doing some ministry work near the university. They also commit to spiritual direction and retreats/formation during this time. Once he completes his studies, he can look at becoming a priest. His ordination is set, but his work is only starting. As an ordained priest, he is known as a Tertian, and he must complete a tertianship (year-long sabbatical) to further his skills and studies in becoming a better priest. Once he completes this tertianship, he professes his final vows, which are a reinforcement of his first vows accepted years before when he was a novice. Over this entire period, the Jesuit is active in the world, as a priest or brother but always being evaluated by his community and by

¹²¹ Jesuit Formation Tertianship “*Jesuit formation does not stop at ordination,*” (2020), <https://beajesuit.org/jesuit-formation/tertianship>.

God. Jesuits are asked to live in a community where they come together with other Jesuits to pray and worship together.

As a lay ecclesial minister, this model would serve her well after she is in the ministerial working environment for at least five years. There would be a sabbatical offered to her to continue her education and re-tool her ministerial practices. Having time away for a yearly retreat is good practice but this would even serve her better by providing opportunities for her to write, pray, and learn how to serve the church in a better way.

These are a few examples of how people are prepared to serve as teachers, doctors, and Jesuit priests after their education is completed. Offerings for some Catholic employees appear to be working well. Here are other models that could be offered to lay ecclesial ministers.

Catholic school teachers

The National Catholic Education Association holds an annual conference throughout the country. At this conference, Catholic school teachers, principals, superintendents, and higher education personnel learn new methods and materials that can be used in the classroom and the boardroom. There are hundreds of educators from around the country who gather to address some areas of concern in their pedagogy as well as with the mental health issues impacting their students. In addition to this conference, professional development courses are offered online consisting of classroom management, classroom bullies, and gender identity. Even their mission states *“In the service of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, NCEA strengthens Catholic school communities by convening all stakeholders and providing professional development, data, public*

policy, and resources to support faith and intellectual formation."¹²² The classes are located on their website with on-demand easy access for educators to complete their continuing education credit requirements set forth by the State licensing agencies. This process, appears to be working among the teachers, is not a difficult task for those who want to retain their teaching certificate. Having continuing education classes online and providing a substitute teacher for those who wish to attend a workshop during class time makes completing the requirement easier. Overall, the accountability regarding the renewal of their state certificate seems to be a motivating factor in attending the classes. This accountability model for continuing education has worked for decades with schoolteachers because of the certification process. Having the renewed license and perhaps a pay increase works for the school system and the teacher. If lay ecclesial ministers had such a method as a certification renewal requirement for them, there would be more women attending the ongoing formation classes. How exciting it would be if lay ecclesial ministers have these types of opportunities where they can learn from others who are serving in different communities. The model for Catholic school teachers could easily be amended for lay ministers without much change.

Lay Ecclesial Minister (USCCB)

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2022, provided a summary of one lay ministry formation program that completed an endorsement process as a lay ministry formation program. The University of St. Mary of the Lake through the Archdiocese of Chicago

¹²² National Catholic Education Association "Professional Development: Spring Professional Development," https://ncea.org/NCEA/NCEA/How_We_Serve/Resources/Professional_Development/Professional_Development.aspx.

completed this process. The same institution underwent a review in 2015 and passed the process.

Here are the requirements for a lay ecclesial minister to retain her certification.

Pastoral Associate:

- Graduate degree in pastoral studies or equivalent
- Completion of certification application and submission of pastor's recommendation letter Compliant with Protecting God's Children program
- Completion of additional formation days specific to certification through the Institute –
- One hundred hours of supervised practical ministry (professional or volunteer)

Director of Religious Education:

- Graduate degree in pastoral studies or equivalent -
- Collaboration with Universities of Notre Dame and Dayton for specific ministerial role formation online
- Completion of certification application and submission of pastor's recommendation letter Completion of Protecting God's Children program
- Three years' work experience in role (professional or volunteer)
- One hundred hours of supervised practical ministry (professional or volunteer)

By reviewing the website, it was not clear who was on the reviewing board or what standards other than the above mentioned were used in the process.¹²³ The one sentence that stood out as a possibility for ongoing formation was this line. "Completion of additional formation days specific to certification through the Institute. One hundred hours of supervised

¹²³ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc. "Institute of Pastoral Leadership, University of St. Mary of the Lake, Summary of Lay Ministry Certification and Standards," (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2022). <https://www.usccb.org/catholic-education/certification/approved-standards/www.usccb.org/resources/Summary-of-Lay-Ministry-Formation-Certification-Standards-IPL-Chicago-2022.pdf/>

practical ministry (professional or volunteer).” The one hundred hours of supervised ministry was eye-opening because it did not share what these one hundred hours entailed.

Priests/USCCB

In the new document, *Guide to Ongoing Formation for Priests*,

“The committee of priests and bishops at the USCCB developed a fundamentally different ongoing formation document based on the gaps in the priest formation. While the men were studying in seminaries, preparing for the priesthood, there was a great emphasis on the teachings of the church. As a result, the opinion of many older priests in the field were newly ordained priests serving as theologians and not as priests. Due to the limited hours of formation, the priests were sent to parishes ordained to serve but without much of the formation needed to address the concerns of the parishioners. They lacked human, pastoral, and spiritual dimensions of formation.”¹²⁴

It was my observation that many of the priests in parishes in the Archdiocese of Chicago appeared to lack social skills when they interacted with the parishioners. Others mentioned at meetings that they would rather sit in a library than talk with people about their problems. These examples are stories from priests who were part of a program in the Archdiocese of Chicago called “Renew My Church.” How are they able to renew a church if they have not renewed themselves as priests? “*The Guide to Ongoing Formation of Priests*” addresses the missing dimensions of formation. In the opening letter from Fr. Michael Fuller, he acknowledges there were gaps in the formation offered at seminaries in the past decades. Appearing intentionally in his letter was the acknowledgment that more needed to be done in preparing men to minister in parishes with the lay faithful. Also, under the same realm of the USCCB and the priest receiving faculties from their bishop or superior, there still is the accountability factor. Who will oversee if

¹²⁴ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc. “*Guide to Ongoing Formation for Priests*” (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2023), 6.

the priest attends workshops and courses to better his pastoral approach? How will this oversight be provided and by whom? Yes, the document provides a wonderful apology for the years of spiritual, human, and pastoral dimensions of formation, which was not provided at the seminary level, but what can be done to make up for the deficiency that some priests have when they come to the parish? In the document, there are three levels of ongoing formation: Fraternal, Personal, and Episcopal that may have replaced the three levels of formation: spiritual, pastoral, and human. “These divisions are wonderful guides to have a priest see himself with his priest brothers (fraternal), his identity as a person who is ordained a priest (personal), and how he is in union with the bishop who supports him (episcopal).”¹²⁵ The Fraternal/human, Episcopal/pastoral, and Personal/spiritual dimensions of formation are responsible for seeking continuing education credits. Courses on how to deepen one's spiritual life or even a requirement by the bishop for each priest to attend a silent retreat would help in ongoing formation in the spiritual dimension. A course in emotional intelligence or how to address workplace discrimination could help the pastor or bishop deal with conflict among his staff. This could help address some mental health issues taking place when a woman feels threatened by a male co-worker. If there were courses offered in the pastoral dimension of ongoing formation, the priest would learn how to be a better listener or a leader of staff meetings by learning the skills in small group dynamics. These and many more examples are ideas on how the ongoing formation document could be of better use. It is written, that “a priest is responsible for his ongoing formation”¹²⁶ By stating on page twenty-seven, that the priest is responsible for his ongoing formation, it appears from the beginning unless there is a method of accountability such as the

¹²⁵ *Guide to Ongoing Formation for Priests*, § 8.

¹²⁶ *Guide to Ongoing Formation for Priest*, § 27.

level teachers are held accountable, then the document may never be read past page twenty-seven.

Ongoing Formation in Other Professions

The question of how a lay ecclesial minister sustains work-life balance could be examined during her first year of employment. A support group would also go a long way for her as she navigates through the ministerial workplace especially if she encounters a “queen bee” or experiences the need to “walk on eggshells” around certain staff members. Another factor to explore would be her spiritual life. Using the tools of St. Ignatius of Loyola, especially the rules for discernment, she can learn the fourteen rules of discernment, and be able to recognize the false and good spirits in her life. How a woman is formed as a disciple is imperative if she is going to remain an employee in the field hospital. Who she is gives her the power to overcome the evil she may encounter in the workplace. Spirituality cannot be taught like a class in church history, it must be experienced. Much like Jesus on the road to Emmaus, Jesus encountered others along the way, she will need to have supportive colleagues and friends who can help her with establishing workplace boundaries.

When I heard some of the women lay ecclesial minister share their stories with me for this project, I kept recalling the statement, “I did not think anyone would believe me.” There was pain in the story sharing but there was also it appeared there was mistrust. Trust is one virtue that is very important in being a minister in the church. How could she continue to serve the people of God with mistrust in her wounded heart? While being employed in the metaphoric field hospital, there are opportunities to learn new skills and techniques. These ongoing formation models will provide the woman lay minister with the skills to be the minister called by God to

serve others. She will learn that she is not alone, and others are willing to accompany her along the walk with Jesus by her side.

Some ideas that I believe would work in creating an ongoing formation model for lay ministers are a beginning ministers, residency and tertianship program. These three models are adapted from other models of ongoing formation being used in the United States in the 21st century. The adaptations were made as examples for women lay ecclesial ministers in the ministerial workplace.

A Beginning Teacher's Program

One model that could be used is a beginning youth minister or religious educator program. The model would resemble one used in the State of Florida for beginning schoolteachers. This is a program required by all new schoolteachers, public and private, when they are hired and must be completed before the teacher's first year of teaching. It will not take inventing something new for Lay ecclesial ministers but taking from each of these models to create something that would work for the women ministering to parishes. While learning how to be a teacher, my education as an elementary school teacher was not enough to receive a certificate as a teacher in the State of Florida. It was required that I participate in a "beginning teacher's program". While in college, classes in education increased in pedagogy which prepared me for full-time employment as a teacher. However, there were elements from the four-year degree in education that were provided in the beginning teacher's program. During the first year of employment at a Catholic high school, it was a requirement to meet with a supervisor, academic advisor, and principal. It is through these conversations that I was formed as a teacher. Using this model for lay ecclesial ministers may be a great way to understand the deficiencies in

the formation of lay ecclesial ministers. The woman desiring to become a lay ecclesial minister may be employed by the Catholic church, but she would still need support as she is being formed as a minister in the church. What could be missing is theology and knowing how to respond to situations from a pastoral perspective. She could also miss out on learning how to communicate her concerns or conflicts she is having with the volunteers. If she received the proper education and training, she would now feel confident knowing she has a supportive community such as a seasoned lay ecclesial minister as a mentor, a spiritual director, and a colleague who could pray with her as well as offer support and assistance in areas of formation missing from her educational experience from the lay ministry formation program.

Residency Program for Medical Students

A medical student once she has completed “medical school” is not sent out to the hospital to work immediately after graduation. The medical student has graduated as a doctor but is sent to a hospital to complete a residency program. As a resident in the hospital, the doctor now learns more about a specialization that she may consider practicing after her residency. There are many areas of specialization such as emergency room, obstetrics, or pediatrics. She may continue in her residency programs for a few years at the same hospital learning and trying new areas of medicine which may pique her interest. After completing her residency, she leaves the hospital to train as a specialist. She does not leave the practice finished with her residency but leaves with a formed specialized field that she may pursue on her own. Often, the resident physician leaves the residency program with an awareness that she does not want to be a specialist but a generalist, practicing medicine as an internal physician. She could decide this is enough training and is ready to work in practice as an internal medicine doctor or continue studying as an internist

learning more medicine to enhance her skills as a physician. She is also required to stay on top of new inventions to treat diseases or participate in clinical trials for her specialized field. She could also decide to go into research and be a part of finding cures for illnesses and never practice medicine in a doctor's office. Her office becomes a laboratory, and she never sees patients but only a microscope. Her education may last for more than a decade dependent on her field of study and the outcome of her residency. In the same way, women who were educated as lay ministers could serve a year internship either during the final year of formation in college or during the first year of employment. If she graduated with a degree in theology, the courses may have given her the knowledge in theology, but did it provide her with the formation to teach? Placing her in a year-long internship as a teacher by having her lead prayer services, Order of Christian Initiation for Adults sessions, or directing a parish religious education program would be helpful. If she has a degree in pastoral studies, she may need additional time developing her listening skills or leading small groups.

It would be wonderful to go to the nearly “200 lay ministry schools of formation”¹²⁷ and ask each school to redo their formation programs to include courses enhancing the spiritual, pastoral, and human dimensions of formation.¹²⁸ It does not seem practical nor an effective use of time. This is a task that could be relegated to the USCCB. Knowing this concept would take years to develop, it was important to develop something that can be used now to apply “medicine” to help wounds in the healing process. The purpose of finding a solution is important because it could prevent a woman from being emotionally abused or at least help her recognize what is emotional abuse. Ongoing formation courses could be a resource given to women who

¹²⁷ *“Catholic Ministry Programs”*, 235.

¹²⁸ *“Catholic Ministry Programs”*, 214.

are hired by the parish or a diocese as a pre-requisite for employment. This follows the principles of the beginning teacher program as mentioned above. Like the residency program of a doctor interning at a hospital in a specific field of study, the lay ecclesial minister would also have an internship/residency program to complete. The lay minister would be hired under a provisional certificate with the criteria to complete these courses and participate in the rituals over three years. The ongoing formation website covers the spiritual, pastoral, human, and intellectual dimensions of formation: *The Women of Witness: Lay Ecclesial Minister's Ongoing Formation Program* will also have a website dedicated to webinars, blogs, and other forms of outreach for women serving in ministry and those who have left ministry because of workplace emotional abuse. Studying the various additional opportunities for ongoing formation, it became essential these models could be a new tool for women lay ecclesial ministers who felt cheated by the gaps in their formation process. This “**prototype**” model of an ongoing formation program for women lay ecclesial ministers was created for this thesis project. Through the research conducted, the gaps identified from the six lay ministry formation programs, a model of ongoing formation was created to address the reasons why women were unprepared for the emotional abuse some experienced by clergy. It is essential there is a program established that provides the necessary tools for the 21st century lay ecclesial minister. Based on the research conducted, and the stories heard, the women who participated in the research for this thesis project may not have been adequately formed nor prepared for the emotional abuse that for some became a part of their experiences in the ministerial workplace. Therefore, this new model of Ongoing Formation for Women Lay Ecclesial Ministers will serve as a one possible solution to the issues from not receiving the four dimensions of lay ministry formation. The women who recognize there is a need to be better equipped spiritually, emotionally, pastorally, and intellectually continually

throughout their ministerial careers. This model provides the method and materials for a retreat, and three years of ongoing formation. This is only the first step in assisting the women lay ecclesial ministers regain their lost dimensions of formation. It will serve the women who deserve all dimensions of lay ministry formation but most importantly it will serve those in the field hospital who need medical assistance from women who are not victims themselves but along with Jesus Christ, are the healers.

Conclusion

As models of ongoing formation are being offered and used by many lay ministers, there are still some elements of the four dimensions of formation that are missing in those mentioned in previous paragraphs. There is still a strong accountability factor that is not being addressed. This is an important element in any formation. If the lay minister does not have the support from the leadership or the financial means from a grant or tenure position at a university, why would she pursue ongoing formation? The only idea that would make sense is if the woman who desires to be well enough that she may go to any length to receive help. This person would have to put aside the fact that she wasn't getting a week off with pay, or time away to write a book, or time to take a course but that she needs help in healing her brokenness. She would have to know in her heart that there was enough darkness that required repair. Of course, this will only happen if there was something in her life that caused her to want to stop ministering out of her wounds and start ministering out of love. The limitations are still very present as this project unfolds. It does not address the men who chose to emotionally abuse women in any place. This fact is deeply concerning since the problem still exists for many women. It is important to note this fact. The hope by creating a program for women who need more formation, is to at least try

and give them knowledge, skills, and prayer that can one day help them identify that it is not okay for anyone to abuse any person regardless of gender.

Chapter Five: A Solution

Introduction

A New Model of Ongoing Formation for Women Lay Ecclesial Ministers

Creating a new model of ongoing formation program that provides women who are lay ecclesial ministers an opportunity to attend virtual classes, participate in support groups, and receive resources may help address some of the obstacles that could be in the ministerial workplace. This model developed is in response to the research that has been gathered for this paper. Through the unprompted conversations, women expressed their wounded hearts. The same women after participating in this new model of ongoing formation, may still have wounded hearts but at least they will have the opportunity to recognize it, have opportunities to ask Jesus for his healing power, and help to prevent others from being wounded. This is how they will become women of witness. This new model of ongoing formation may not conquer the emotionally abusive clergy that may be still working in the ministerial workplace, but it will provide women lay ecclesial ministers prayer sessions, courses, resources, and support as a means in learning how to identify emotional abuse and receive knowledge on how to avoid it.

The following is the prototype of Women of Witness: A new model of Ongoing Formation for Women Lay Ecclesial Ministers.

Women of Witness: Model of Ongoing Formation for Women Lay Ecclesial Ministers

Criteria

1. The woman must choose ongoing formation for herself. Unlike the criteria for continuing education and formation, if the woman does not choose to participate in ongoing formation, she will only complete the courses and formation days to fulfill a work requirement. Is ongoing formation necessary for a lay ecclesial minister, absolutely, but until she recognizes and acknowledges she needs help, it will not be completed with earnest sincerity and integrity. The opening retreat sets the tone for personal reflection on the missing pieces of the spiritual dimension of lay ministry formation by creating a prayer space for women to reflect on areas in one's life that need spiritual renewal.
2. There are many women lay ecclesial ministers who are busy being busy. This is a term used to also mean that women are doers and perhaps not "BE" ing. As part of the human dimension of formation, women will learn steps in creating a healthy work-life balance by learning about boundaries, emotional health, and physical wellness.
3. Many women lay ecclesial ministers are married, single, or consecrated virgins. They have outside commitments to family or religious communities. Ministry in the parish is only part of her day. When she leaves the workplace, she may enter another full-time ministry environment, namely her children and spouse. Negating these responsibilities in the ministry workplace is not a viable option. Eventually, one or both commitments will be out of balance. These elements will be covered in the pastoral dimension of formation. How does one take care of her personal life and professional life with the high demands of both? The pastoral dimension of ongoing formation will address management styles and personality traits as well as developing shepherd leadership attributes.

4. As part of the pastoral dimension, support is a very important part of formation. When she was in classes with other women pursuing a theology or pastoral studies degree, she may have been in a personal reflection or theological reflection group. Maintaining friendships after completing her degree is essential in keeping the fire burning within. She may consider developing a “God Squad” comprised of women who meet once a month for conversation and support.
5. Seeing that many parishes are understaffed, there may be a tendency to over-gift one’s talents and time. It is important for the lay ecclesial minister to not be “all things to all people.” She is to know her limitations on time and exercise personal boundaries regarding time and talent. Knowing one’s true self is essential when sharing personal time. This area of formation applies to all dimensions and will be addressed throughout the three years of this new model of ongoing formation.
6. For the intellectual dimension of formation, the lay ecclesial minister may find herself in ministry for the first time as a second career, giving herself some time to learn is important. Courses online for time management, emotional intelligence, and spirituality are great courses for a second career person. The time and age of a person need to be taken into consideration. Even though this may be a new career and may be their first time stepping into employment outside of a secular job, she should be able to rely on some lifelong experiences that would be beneficial. Courses such as time management, work-life balance, and communication skills may not be important for her to pursue at the beginning of her employment but spirituality, working with clergy, and leadership of prayer may be important especially if she is serving in a role where she must provide retreats or prayer services.

7. Women need to pay attention to their physical health as well. As daughters, mothers, wives, and single women, there may be a tendency to put our lives on hold while tending to others who appear to be more important and demanding of our time. This is critical to examine how our health is being looked at by doctors, spiritual directors, family, and friends.
8. In the spirit of giving back to the community, if time allows, the lay ecclesial minister may choose to serve as a mentor in the residency program for new lay ministers who are serving in a parish or diocesan center. Not only could the “seasoned” lay minister have the knowledge, experience, and fortitude, but she could assist the new lay minister from her Catholic identity as a shepherd leader. She could also provide monthly meetings that could serve as feedback or evaluation on what appears to be working in the ministry environment and what may need some tweaking.

Curriculum for Ongoing Formation

Full curriculum can be found in Appendix A

Course title and brief description for each dimension of formation

Spiritual Dimension (Resurrection)

Through this dimension of formation, the women will learn how to enhance their spiritual life through reading, praying, and experiencing one on one spiritual direction.

Discernment of Spirits

Lesson Focus and Goals: To teach the importance of St. Ignatius Rules for Discernment. To help the students become aware of the differences between good spirits and false spirits.

Learning Objectives: Foster an awareness of the three rules for discernment regarding Good Spirits. Enable students to learn the eleven rules of discernment regarding false spirits.

Spiritual Direction

Lesson Focus and Goals: To Introduce the topic of Spiritual Direction and methods of Spiritual Direction. Explore various models of Ignatian Retreats: 8-Day, 19th Annotation, and 30-Day Retreats.

Learning Objectives: Learn about the four weeks of Ignatian Retreats for 30-day retreatants as they read *Ignatian Adventure*.

Return to the Catholic Church Ministry

Lesson Focus and Goals: Return Faith Ministries: Discover the ways the foundation be used to bring non-practicing Catholics back to the Church.

Learning Objectives: Learn the skills of listening, inviting, and accompanying someone back to the Church.

Women as Evangelists

Lesson Focus and Goals: Review Biblical examples of Women Evangelists who are named and unnamed in the Old Testament and New Testament.

Learning Objectives: To introduce the concept of faith sharing, and invitation to strangers who may want to learn about the Catholic Faith.

Pastoral Dimension (Reawakening)

The women participating in this pastoral dimension of ongoing formation will learn to recognize issues surrounding dysfunctional leadership and how to lead like Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

Workplace Dysfunctional Behavior

Lesson Focus and Goals: To teach the fundamentals of the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and its application to boundaries and dysfunctional behavior. Learn about Adult Children of Alcoholics and their impact on the workplace.

Learning Objectives: Learn the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Learn how to establish boundaries in personal life and the workplace.

Everyone has a story!

Lesson Focus and Goals: Share wisdom literature from the bible and wisdom stories from one's past by being a part of a story circle.

Learning Objectives: Describe the impact of the story on one's vocational discernment Explain the wisdom of women leaders in one's ministry Learn about wisdom figures in the bible and in the Church.

Shepherd Leadership

Lesson Focus and Goals: Explain how shepherd leadership is an effective method of leadership in pastoral centers. Describe the difference between shepherd leadership and servant leadership.

Learning Objectives: Explain the difference between shepherd leadership and servant leadership. Describe effective shepherd leaders in the Catholic church. What are their traits?

Vision versus Mission

Lesson Focus and Goals: Learn the guidelines for establishing a vision and mission statement. What are the similarities and differences? Establish a personal mission statement and a vision statement by creating a vision board. Develop a parish mission statement for each ministry that one is the director or coordinator.

Learning Objectives: Create a personal mission and a personal vision statement in collaboration with others on staff, develop a mission or vision statement for your ministry.

Human Dimension (Restoration)

The ongoing element of formation will examine one's priorities and boundaries. How to establish them and honor them as a means for self-care.

Work-life balance

Lesson Focus and Goals: Offer time management techniques to simplify pastoral tasks.

Learning Objectives: To explain time management skills by using five-minute manager techniques. Using the discernment process, teach how to set priorities. Review pages 8-20 in the *Body Keeps the Score* workbook.

Mental Health and Wellness

Lesson Focus and Goals: Guest Speaker: Christian pastoral counselor who will explain how the body takes the impact of stress.

Learning Objectives: Teach the responses to stress by examining the five elements of stress response to emotional abuse.

Accompanying lay women as ministers

Lesson Focus and Goals: By examining the principles of accompaniment, the student will learn the fundamentals of creating a *God Squad* of colleagues.

Learning Objectives: Acquire the skills in accompaniment ministry Learn the difference between girlfriend circle, story circle, and drum circles.

Personal and Professional Boundaries

Lesson Focus and Goals: To describe the importance of personal and professional boundaries. To hear from a clinical social worker how to establish boundaries to protect oneself.

Learning Objectives: To create a testimony of personal or professional boundaries. To teach why boundaries are important and how to teach others about it Learn the concept of queen bee syndrome.

Intellectual Dimension (Renewal)

This element of formation will consist of courses that are new education or revised leadership development that could assist a person with updated resources for ministry.

Emotional Intelligence for Religious Leaders

Lesson Focus and Goals: Introduce the work of John West and his colleagues on the topic of *Emotional Intelligence for Religious Leaders*.

Learning Objectives: Learn how to be an effective leader by becoming aware of one's emotional intelligence and how to leverage it in the ministerial workplace.

Redeeming Power

Lesson Focus and Goals: Using the Genesis story, describe how power can be used as a tool for the good or a means for emotional abuse.

Learning Objectives: Learn the 12 lessons in "*Redeeming Power*" by Ann Garrido.

Clericalism: causes and concerns

Lesson Focus and Goals: To help foster an understanding of clericalism, its causes, and the prevention of clericalism among the laity.

Learning Objectives: Examine the causes of clericalism Looking through the lenses of clericalism, learn how this perpetuated clergy emotional abuse.

Catholic Social Teaching: Dignity of the Human Person

Lesson Focus and Goals: Teach the seven elements of Catholic Social Teachings. Describe the importance of these teachings for the laity.

Learning Objectives: Learn how Catholic Social Teaching is a living document needed in our church and world now.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

Lay ministry formation is not reserved only for women but for everyone. This thesis project specifically focused on women who participated in a lay ministry formation program that prepared them for ministry as paid or volunteer. In examining the academic centers that prepared these women for lay ministry formation, and in the research reviewing six lay ministry formation programs, women were prepared academically by learning information about the Catholic faith, but many may not have received the full four dimensions of lay ministry formation. From my experience, formation is a lifelong process that equips a person with opportunities to share faith (spiritual), seek out the goodness in a person (human), and provide places where being Catholic is lived by word and deed (pastoral). Due to the inconsistencies in lay ministry formation throughout the United States, it was important to not only focus what was lost with formation but on what can be gained in ongoing formation. It became apparent early in the conversations with lay ecclesial ministers who were victims of clergy emotional abuse to focus on prevention and not on healing. At first, the conversations drew anger towards the priest who caused the emotional abuse and why he felt this was okay. After some prayer and discernment, the focus drew more to the reasons why women stayed in the ministerial workplace after they were emotionally abused by priests. The question, “Did they not learn that this was not okay?” “Why do they keep going back to the same type of behavior?” Obviously, this was a paper focusing on theology and ministry and not psychology. As a minister, the question kept coming to the

surface: What can be done to prevent the women from experiencing emotional abuse in the ministerial workplace?

If a lay ecclesial minister can examine her call from God, as a person and not as a title, she may be able to have interior knowledge of her place and purpose in life as a daughter of God. It would not matter if she were formed by the proper lay ministry formation program. Having the interior disposition as a servant of God regardless of her certificate should be enough for the Catholic church, yet it is not enough. Her employment depends on a certificate or degree and while she does what she can to earn one, this still does not prepare her for the ministerial workplace. Hours of classes, and months of writing papers, were not enough for her to possibly combat the emotional abuse that she may encounter once she started working for the clergy. If she had the skills, education, and interior life formed by the colleges or programs that stated they were preparing women for lay ministry, she may not have as many wounds on her heart as shared by many women for this paper. Recognizing the woundedness was only the beginning of this thesis project. Going further into the causes of the wounds became the mission of this paper. Looking at the root source of emotional abuse through the lenses of formation, and not the person causing the abuse, gave life inside of me again. Having knowledge about the gaps in formation provides the vessel to fill up with living water. Having the lay ministers not acknowledged as ministers but as educators was cumbersome but acceptable. As a lay minister called by God, I am also an educator. Learning and teaching are in my core. Looking at educational institutions was interesting but finding the gaps was exciting. It was the discovery of these gaps that provided the “who dun it” answer for me. The women going back to the same building and receiving the same abuse repeatedly, needed education on how to prevent, recognize, and avoid instances of emotional abuse as it was being hurled her way. Finally, it

became evident that the need to fix lay ministry programs throughout the country was not going to be something I would be able to do for this project. What I chose to do was not to fix what appeared to be a broken lay formation system or patriarchal culture but to offer my sisters in Christ a bandage to cover their wounds. It will be the lay ecclesial minister herself and Jesus Christ to provide the healing of these wounds. My hope that this new model of ongoing formation called “*Women of Witness*” will allow women to witness to other women the power they received by participating in a new model ongoing formation program, one that focuses not only on the intellectual dimension but on all four dimensions of formation. She can see the spaces that need to be filled in her life so when she decides to return to the ministerial workplace and face another day of emotional abuse by clergy, she is smarter, more prepared, and better equipped to do her job. The miracle of the healing process is possible if the women desire to serve as witness in the field hospital. There was no one better to express this sediment than Fr. Richard Rohr, a Franciscan priest who has written several books about his personal wounds by serving in the Catholic church. This is a summary of what could happen by being a witness to a new resurrection within oneself/

“The resurrection is not a miracle story to prove the divinity of Christ, something that makes him the winner. It’s a storyline that allows us all to be winners. ALL! No exceptions! There’s no eternal death for anybody: All are invited to draw upon this infinite Source, this infinite Mystery, this infinite Love, this infinite Possibility. Spiritually speaking, we live in a world of abundance, of infinity. But most of us walk around as if it is not true, operating in a world of scarcity where there’s never enough. There’s enough for me, there’s not enough for you, there’s not enough for everybody.

And so we hoard it-Spirit-Love-Life – to ourselves, We hoard grace, we hoard mercy, We don’t allow ourselves to be conduits through which it pours into the world. Truly, the only way we can hold onto grace, mercy, love, joy-any spiritual gift-is to give them away consciously and intentionally. Once we stop acting as a conduit, we love them ourselves. That’s why there are so many sad, bitter, and angry people. Disconnected from God, we choose death.”¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Richard Rohr, “What is Resurrection? A New Story Line.” Homily, April 5, 2015.

Perhaps by the witness of women who are healing from clergy emotional abuse, they can serve as conduits in the ministry field and tell others. This is how the wounded will no longer be in the field hospital as patients but as witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As women of witness in the field hospital, their new learnings and skills can assist them by helping others gain the strength and healing needed to continue serving in the Catholic church. The wounds the women may have received by losing Jesus at the cross gave them the gift of witnessing the resurrection. Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James told the apostles how to spread the Good News. Jesus appeared to them first to spread the good news regardless of the sermon given by the priest. They were wounded by the death of Jesus, and Jesus gave them knowledge about how he will continue being in their lives. First, they had to acknowledge their loss and remain open to the healing to take place.

It was through this thesis project experience of praying and writing that my woundedness from clergy emotional abuse was healed. Now, I am ready to offer this new model of ongoing formation for women lay ecclesial ministers who are witnesses and not patients in the field hospital.”

Appendix A

Opening Retreat for Women of Witness

Model of Curriculum for Ongoing Formation of Women Lay Ecclesial Ministers

WOMEN OF WITNESS

LAY ECCLESIAL
MINISTRY ONGOING
FORMATION
RETREAT



By Anne Leblanc Chrzan



Contents

INTRODUCTION

Ministerial wellness includes paying attention to your mind, body, and soul.

CHAPTER 01

Ministerial wellness explores patterns or behaviors that may prevent opportunities to care for the mind, body, and soul.

CHAPTER 02

Ministerial Wellness provides a fresh perspective on how to identify barriers and unhealthy habits that may cause the soul to be restless.

CHAPTER 03

Ministerial Wellness provides opportunities for soul rejuvenation.

CHAPTER 04

Ministerial Wellness training model for creating a wellness support team.



INTRODUCTION

Are you ready for a change? You chose this workbook for a reason. Perhaps it is a way to say to yourself, I deserve to be healthy, happy, and whole. When you enter into lay ecclesial ministry as a woman, you entered into a place where you believed it was a vocation. A place where God and you were going to be “doing” great things. You brought your servant heart and mind, and soul to the ministry. You still have a desire to be a minister but need a refresh.

Now is a time to re-examine this vocation this desire to serve God’s people and be refreshed. Learn how and why your desire to serve God’s people gave you a tired feeling at times. Learn how to let go of people, places, and things which you cannot control. Learn how to revive that inner calling to serve once again but now in a way which nourishes you and not depletes you. Come along for an amazing adventure inside your soul.

*Is this true?
why or why not?*

You are made with
purpose.

Endon



CHAPTER ONE

What does it mean to need a refresh?

What in your ministerial life needs to be re-examine? Your planner? Your emails? Your responses to those emails? Take this time to pause, reflect, and re-examine what are some blocks to your ministerial wellness?

Here are some journal prompts:

- What brought you to this space?
- When have you felt that you can not keep up with the demands of the job? What has been your response?
- What do you enjoy doing that brings a happy feeling? When was the last time you did one of these things?
- Spend time journaling about your thoughts.

W E L L N E S S P A G E

Lined writing area for notes.



8 FACTORS OF HAPPINESS

Source: Duke University Study on Happiness

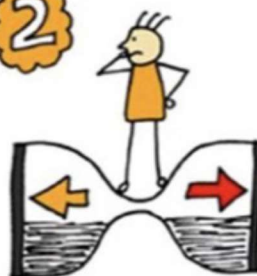
1



LACK OF SUSPICION and RESENTMENT

nursing a grudge was a major factor in UNHAPPINESS

2



NOT LIVING IN THE PAST

pre-occupation with past mistakes and failures lead to depression

3



NOT WASTING TIME & ENERGY FIGHTING THINGS YOU CANNOT CHANGE

"co-operate with life"

4



STAY INVOLVED WITH THE LIVING WORLD

resist withdrawal & become reclusive during stress

5



REFUSE TO INDULGE IN SELF-PITY WHEN LIFE HANDS YOU A RAW DEAL

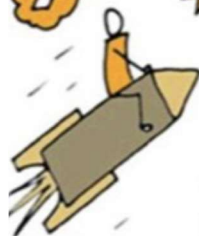
"no one gets through life without some sorrow and misfortune"

6



CULTIVATE OLD FASHIONED VIRTUES
LOVE
COMPASSION
HUMOR
LOYALTY

7



DONT EXPECT TOO MUCH FROM YOURSELF

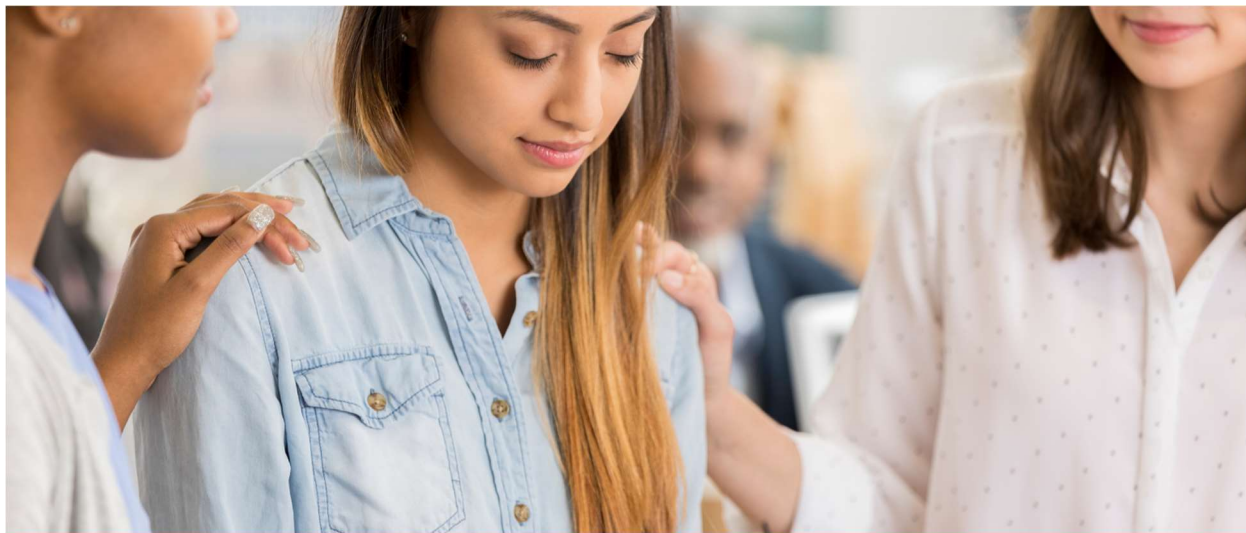
gap between expectation and ability = feeling of inadequacy

8



FIND SOMETHING BIGGER THAN YOURSELF TO BELIEVE IN

self centered egotistical people score lowest in any test measuring



CHAPTER TWO

Barriers and Blocks may prevent you from fully experiencing God's unconditional love.

How often have you felt unheard? Maybe you were not invited to an event? Perhaps there was a misunderstanding at a meeting, and your boss felt the need to correct you in public. Did you miss a significant event of a close relative because of a ministry commitment? Were there inclinations of jealousy when someone received praise for something you did?

These are all moments of deep hurt you may or may not have felt. These incidents may appear insignificant on the surface, but inside, there may be a small dent in your heart and soul. Over time, these dents could cause your heart to be covered up. It is time to open up the heart and soul by having God, the great technician, examine those small or big dents. It's time to repair those dents with the mercy of God's love. God sees the dents; God was there when they happened. Let God begin the repair work.



CHAPTER THREE MINISTERIAL WELLNESS

This course will explore yourself as a human being Called by God to serve the Catholic Church. We will explore what it means to be a human “being” and not a human “doer”, along with other soul saving tips for as a missionary disciple.

CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Heart and Soul rejuvenation

Find a sacred space in your home, office, or church.

Bring a bible, journal, writing instrument, canvas, art supplies, or music.

You are setting in a comfortable pose on the ground or in a comfy chair.

Please don't practice using your bed.

Calm your inner voices by repeating these words:

Be still and know I am God.

Be still and know

Be still.

Repeat as often as you need until you have a sense of calm.

Listen- God wants to tell you something.



What did you hear?

Self Surrender

Elsa from the movie Frozen is not the only one who has to “let it go”! It’s a tough place, especially if you are a human “doer.” If your job is dependent upon things going well. Suppose you need to know when, where, how, and who for your ministry responsibilities to thrive. What IF you gave some of your worries, anxieties, fears, and frustrations over to God and let God handle them?

Discernment of Good and Evil Spirits:

Good spirits bring a feeling of joy, happiness, and contentment.

Evil spirits bring a feeling of fear, panic, unrest and chaos.

What goes on inside of you matters!

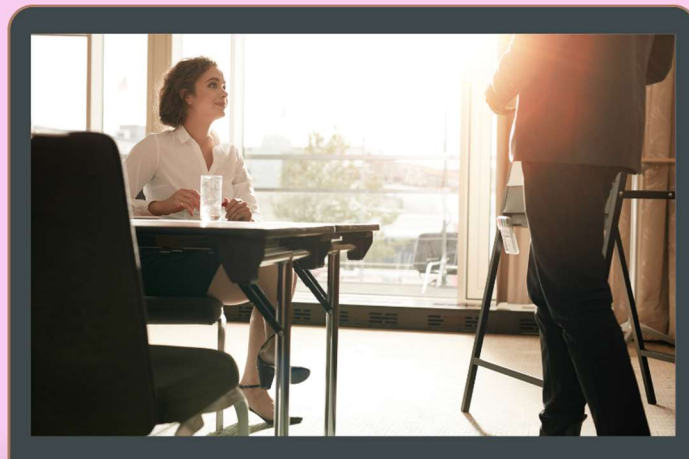
Tell God what you need.

W E L L N E S S P A G E

A large rectangular box containing 25 horizontal lines for writing.

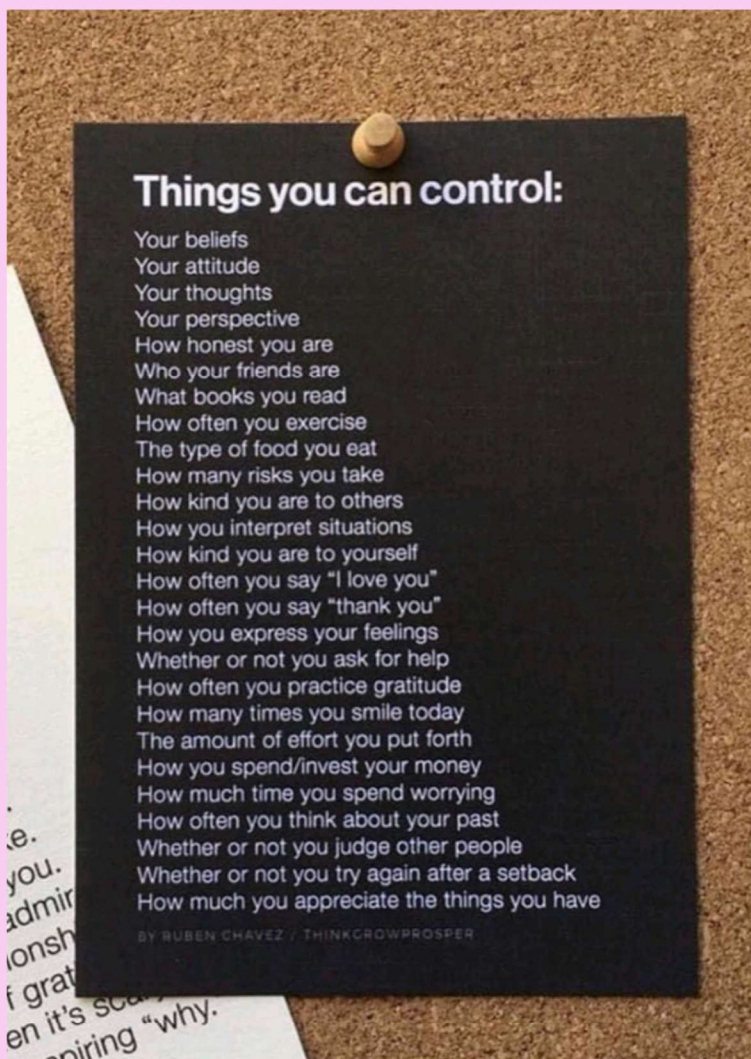
CHAPTER FOUR

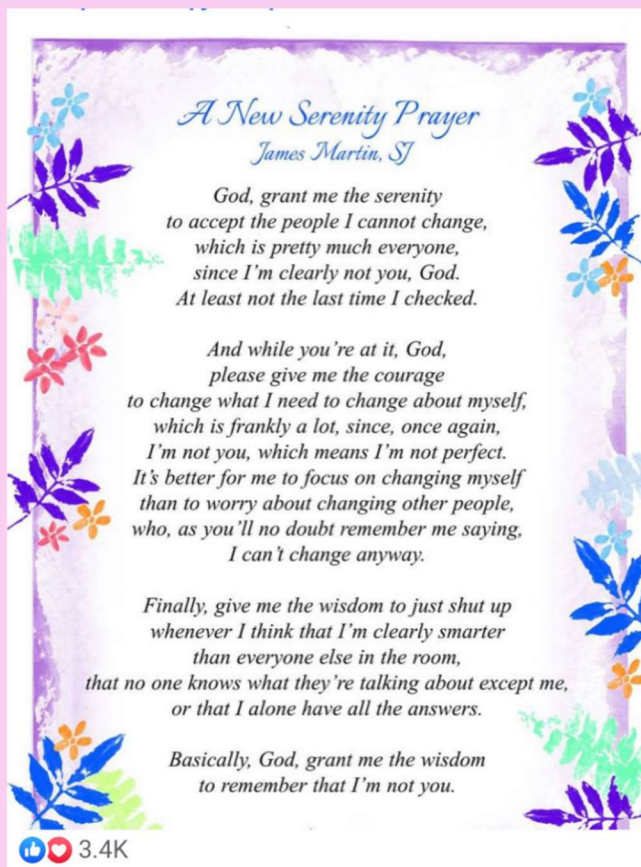
JOIN OUR CLASS



Marketing is the process of intentionally stimulating demand for and purchases of goods and services; potentially including a selection of a target audience; selection of certain attributes or themes to emphasize in advertising

www.reallygreatsite.com





Nobody escapes being wounded.

We are all wounded people, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. The main question is not, 'How can we hide our wounds?' so we don't have to be embarrassed, but 'How can we put our woundedness in the service of others?' When our wounds cease to be a source of shame, and become a source of healing, we have become wounded healers.

Henri Nouwen



Spiritual Dimension

Lesson Three



Date:

Topic: Non -Practicing Catholics:
How to Invite them back to the
Church.

Lesson #

Lesson Focus and Goals:

Return Faith Ministries: Discover the ways this process can be used to bring non-practicing Catholics back to the Church.

Materials Needed:

Seven Videos of Return Faith Ministries
Handouts from Return Faith Ministries Workbook

Learning Objectives:

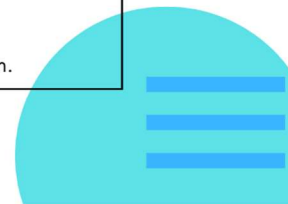
Learn the skills of listening, inviting, and accompanying someone back to the Church.

Structure / Activity:

Week One; Introduce Return Faith Ministries: What is it and how is it used
Week Two: Share Story of a loved one who has left the Catholic Church.
Week Three: Role Play Inviting and Evangelization
Week Four: Prayer Service for those who have loved one lost to other denominations.
Week Five: Parish Approach to Welcoming and Hospitality
Week Six: Invitation Practices
Week Seven: Send Out on Mission Experience

Assessment:

10 hours for the course
Attendance taken
Weekly video presentation 7 videos x 30 minutes each
Workbook assignment
Weekly Group Discussion via small group discussion virtual or in parish classroom.





Spiritual Dimension



Lesson Two



Date:

Topic: Spiritual direction and
Ignatian Retreat Models

Lesson #

Lesson Focus and Goals:

To Introduce the topic of Spiritual Direction and methods of Spiritual Direction.
Explore various models of Ignatian Retreats: 8 Day, 19th Annotation, and 30 Day
Retreats

Materials Needed:

Creighton University Center
for Spiritual Formation Website
Ignatian Adventure by Fr. Kevin
O'Brien

Learning Objectives:

Learn about the four weeks of Ignatian
Retreats for 30-day retreatants as they
read *Ignatian Adventure*

Structure / Activity:

Guest Speaker: Spiritual Direction explains the purpose of Spiritual Direction.

Read Ignatian Adventure as a guide if a student desires to begin 19th Annotation
Retreat beginning in September.

Explore Ignatius Retreat Houses and other retreat houses on various websites.

Hear from three retreat directors via Zoom why they are serving in the role of Retreat
Director and hear what to expect on a directed and self-directed retreat.

Plan and Implement a six hour day long retreat or three 2 hour retreat evenings.

Assessment:

10 hours for the course

Attendance taken

Attend three video presentations

Workbook assignment in Ignatian Adventure

Plan a day-long or three two hour evening retreat for catechists, or parish staff members

Weekly Group Discussion via small group or online chat



Spiritual Dimension

Lesson One



Date:

Topic: Discernment of Spirits

Lesson #

Lesson Focus and Goals:

To teach the importance of St. Ignatius Rules for Discernment.

To help the students become aware of the differences between good spirits and false spirits.

Materials Needed:

Fr. Timothy Gallagher, *OMV Rules for Discernment Text and Workbook*.
Discerning Hearts Weekly Video

Learning Objectives:

Foster an awareness of the three rules for discernment regarding Good Spirits.
Enable students to learn the eleven rules of discernment regarding false spirits.

Structure / Activity:


- Watch eleven episodes of Discerning Heart Videos of Discernment by Fr. Tim Gallagher, OMV. on YouTube.
- After Each Episode, answer the questions on the handout located in the Rules for Discernment Workbook that references the video.
- Once a week, meet in small groups online or as a written chat to discuss what was learned in the episode regarding the discernment of spirits.

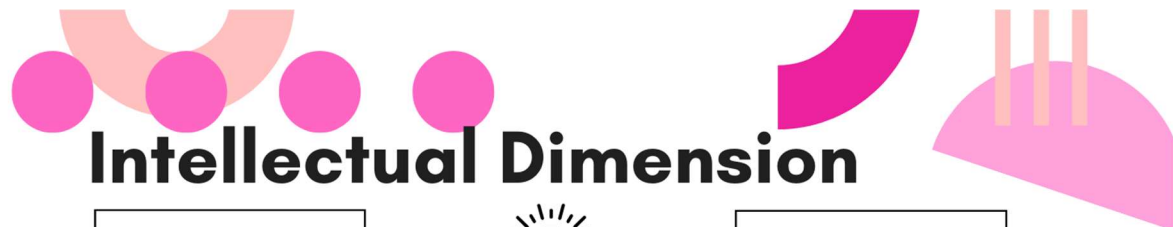
Assessment:

10 hours for course

Attendance taken

Weekly video presentation 11 videos x 30 mins each
Workbook assignment
Weekly Group Discussion via small group or online chat





Intellectual Dimension

Lesson Four



Date:

Topic: Catholic Social Teaching:
Dignity of the Human Person

Lesson #

Lesson Focus and Goals:

Teach the seven elements of Catholic Social teachings. Describe the importance of these teachings for the laity.

Materials Needed:

Catholic Social Teaching Handout
<https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/upload/catholic-social-teaching-handout-adults-digital.pdf>

Learning Objectives:

Review the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching with class.
 Learn how CST is a living document needed in our church and world now.

Structure / Activity:

using the presentation on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website presents the seven themes of Catholic Social Teachings
<https://www.usccb.org/offices/justice-peace-human-development/catholic-social-teaching>

REVIEW THE SEVEN THEMES:

1. LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON
2. CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND PARTICIPATION
3. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
4. OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE
5. THE DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS
6. SOLIDARITY
7. CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

Focus particular attention on Human Dignity and the Rights of Workers: Describe how these two themes impact the lives of Lay Ecclesial Ministers.

Assessment:

10 hours for the course
 Develop a pamphlet explaining Catholic Social Teachings for a parish bulletin.





Intellectual Dimension

Lesson Three



Date:

Topic: Clericalism: causes and concerns

Lesson #

Lesson Focus and Goals:

To help foster an understanding of clericalism, its causes, and the prevention of clericalism among the laity.

Materials Needed:

Sexuality and Authority in the Catholic Church
The Meaning of Male Ecclesial Authority- p76-114

Learning Objectives:

Examine the causes of clericalism
Looking through the lenses of clericalism, learn how this perpetuated clergy emotional abuse.

Structure / Activity:

Watch the documentary on Clericalism featuring Pope Francis

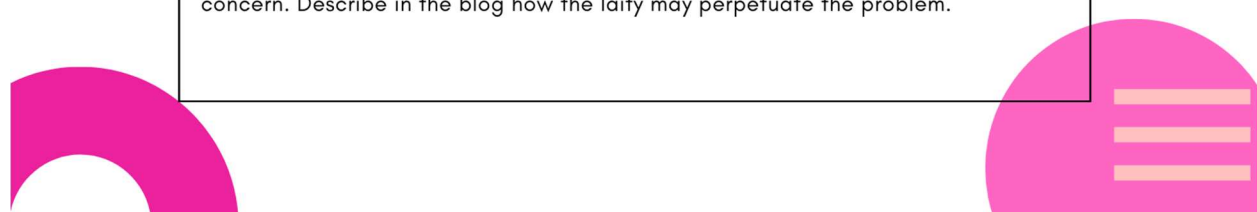
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPjhA63Pmg>


Discuss in small groups: Do you agree or disagree with what was said in the video?

Assessment:

10 hours for this course

Create a blog on the perils of clericalism explaining the causes and areas of concern. Describe in the blog how the laity may perpetuate the problem.





Intellectual Dimension

Lesson Two



Date:

Topic: Redeeming Power

Lesson #

Lesson Focus and Goals:

Using the Genesis story, describe how power can be used as a tool for the good or a means for emotional abuse.

Materials Needed:

Redeeming Power by Ann Garrido

Learning Objectives:

Learn the 12 lessons in the *Redeeming Power* book


Structure / Activity: In a presentation explain these 12 lessons:

1. Exercising the Power to work with our Hands
2. Exercising the Power to speak
3. Exercise the Power to order
4. Exercise the Power to convene
5. Exercise the Power to bless
6. Exercise the Power to draw boundaries (review)
7. Exercise the Power to remain firm
8. Exercise the Power to ask questions
9. Exercise the Power to judge
10. Exercise the Power to clothe
11. Exercise the Power to start anew
12. Exercise the Power to lay down one's power

Assessment:

10 hours for the Course

Complete the reflections after each chapter of the *Redeeming Power* book except chapter six.





Intellectual Dimension

Lesson One



Date:

Topic: Emotional intelligence for Religious Leaders

Lesson #

Lesson Focus and Goals:

Introduce the work of John West and colleague with the topic of Emotional Intelligence for Religious Leaders

Materials Needed:

Myers Brigg inventory
Emotional Intelligence for Religious Leaders Book by West, Oswald, and Guzman

Learning Objectives:

Learn how to be an effective leader by becoming aware of one's emotional intelligence and how to leverage it in the ministerial workplace.

Structure / Activity:

Explain Emotional self-awareness - emotional intelligence

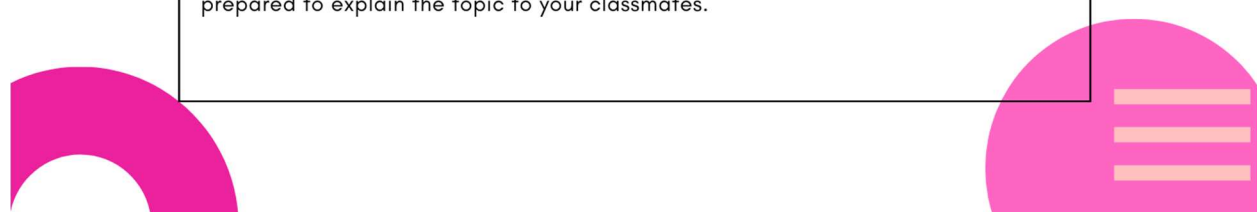
Teach organization awareness (pages 65-73)

Teach Conflict Management (pages 85-95)

Assessment:

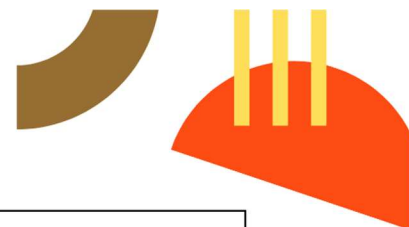
10 hours for this course

Develop a PowerPoint explaining Emotional Intelligence for Religious Leaders. Be prepared to explain the topic to your classmates.





Human Dimension



Lesson Four



Date:

Topic: Personal and Professional Boundaries

Lesson #

Lesson Focus and Goals:

To describe the importance of personal and professional boundaries.
To hear from a clinical social worker how to establish boundaries to protect oneself.

Materials Needed:

Guest Speaker: Clinical Social Worker.
Worksheet on developing personal and professional boundaries
Ann Garrido Redeeming Power (p 103-116)

Learning Objectives:

To create a testimony of personal or professional boundaries.
To teach why boundaries are important and how to teach others about it
Learn the concept of Queen Bee Syndrome

Structure / Activity:

Hire a Clinical Social Worker for a one-hour presentation

Share the PowerPoint of the presentation with the class

Describe the role of the Queen Bee in the Workplace and how establishing boundaries can prevent emotional abuse from the Queen Bee.

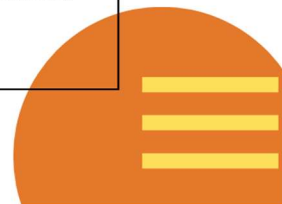
Teach pages 103-118 of Redeeming Power and share reflection questions on page 120

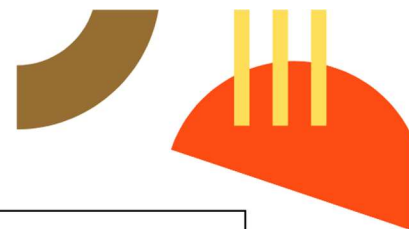
Have the students create a personal or professional boundary testimony

Assessment:

10 hours for this course

Create a Personal or Professional boundary testimony. Describe what you learned and why boundaries are important.





Human Dimension

Lesson Three



Date:

Topic: Accompanying women lay ministers

Lesson #

Lesson Focus and Goals:

By examining the principles of accompaniment, the student will recognize the elements needed for creating a God Squad of colleagues.

Materials Needed:

Shasta Nelson, author of *Frientimacy*,
How to Deepen Friendships for Lifelong
Health and Happiness
Girlfriend Circle Article
<https://www.girlfriendcircles.com/>

Learning Objectives:

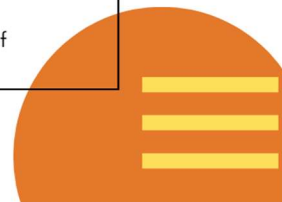
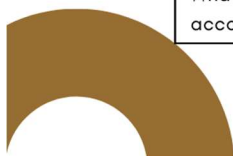
Acquire the skills in accompaniment
ministry
Learn the difference between girlfriend
circle, story circle, and drum circles.

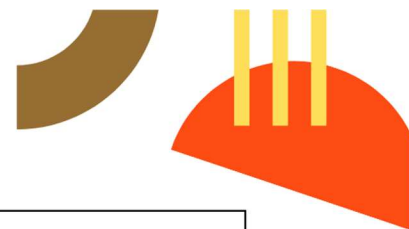
Structure / Activity:

Walk through the girlfriend circle technique from the *Frientimacy*.
Power point presentation Accompaniment ministry: What is it and what is involved.,

Assessment: 10 hours for this course
Type a Two page paper answering the following questions.

Explain the difference between story circle, girlfriend circle, and drum circle. Which circle describes the place in your life?
What is accompaniment? Why it is important in ministry? What is the significance of accompaniment in your life?





Human Dimension

Lesson Two



Date:

Topic: Mental Health and Wellness

Lesson #

Lesson Focus and Goals:

Guest Speaker: Christian Pastoral Counselor who will explain how the body takes the impact from stress.

Materials Needed:

Body Keeps the Score
Fight, Flight, Fright, Freeze, Fawn
Worksheet.
CALM App and insight Timer

Learning Objectives:

Teach the responses to stress by
examining the five elements of stress
response to emotional abuse.

Structure / Activity:

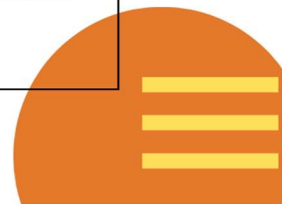
After listening to the guest speaker, write down the words that the student is currently feeling.

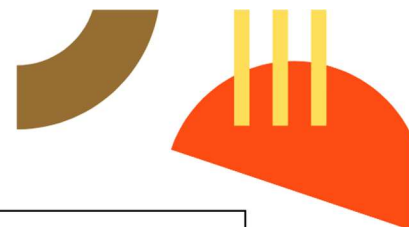
Write down the words from the 5 response worksheet to how a person feels after emotional abuse.

Watch the video from Insight Timer on muscle relaxation.

Assessment:

10 hours for the course
Participate in one Calm exercise with a partner. Log your experience of relaxation and your response to the activity.





Human Dimension

Lesson One



Date:

Topic: Work-life balance

Lesson #

Lesson Focus and Goals:

Offer time management techniques to simplify pastoral tasks.

Materials Needed:

Five Minute Manager Model
Body Keeps the Score Workbook
 pages

Learning Objectives:

To explain time management skills by using five-minute manager techniques.
 Using the discernment process, teach how to set priorities.
 Review pages 8-20 in the "Body Keeps the Score" workbook

Structure / Activity: <https://www.russellfletcher.com/new-blog/2022/10/18/the-5-minute-manager-what-makes-a-great-manager>

Review Five-Minute Manager

Review Organization Awareness
 People Skills

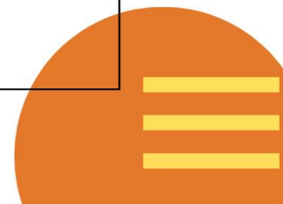
Management styles: Look at the five types of managers

How to manage more than one team.

How to make plans that meet objectives and expectations.

Assessment: 10 hours for the course

Create a week-long calendar with daily activities for work, play, and prayer.





Pastoral Dimension

Lesson Four



Date:

Topic: Vision verses Mission

Lesson #

Lesson Focus and Goals:

Learn the guidelines for establishing a vision and mission statement. What are the similarities and differences?

Establish a personal mission statement and a vision statement by creating a vision board.

Develop a parish mission statement for each ministry that one is the director or coordinator

Materials Needed:

Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey

Learning Objectives:

Create a personal mission and a personal vision statement

In collaboration with others on staff, develop a mission or vision statement for your ministry.

Structure / Activity:

Learn the five step method of wrting a vision statement:<https://getlucidity.com/strategy-resources/introduction-to-strategy-vision-statements/>

Create a Mission Statement using the Seven Habits of Hghly Effective People by Stephen Covey.

Work in a group with three other students creating a work mission or vision statement

Teach the three step method in creating a vision board.

Assessment: 10 hours for the course

Create a vision board and share it with the class.





Pastoral Dimension

Lesson Three



Date:

Topic: Shepherd Leadership

Lesson #

Lesson Focus and Goals:

Explain how shepherd leadership is an effective method of leadership in pastoral centers.

Describe the difference between Shepherd Leadership and Servant Leadership

Materials Needed:

The Shepherd Leader by Timothy Witmer and Workbook

Learning Objectives:

Explain the difference between Shepherd Leadership and Servant Leadership
Describe effective shepherd leaders in the Catholic Church. What are their traits?

Structure / Activity:

Read Chapters 5-9 of Shepherd Leadership

Explain the four-step method of Shepherd Leadership:

Know, Feed, Lead, and Protect.

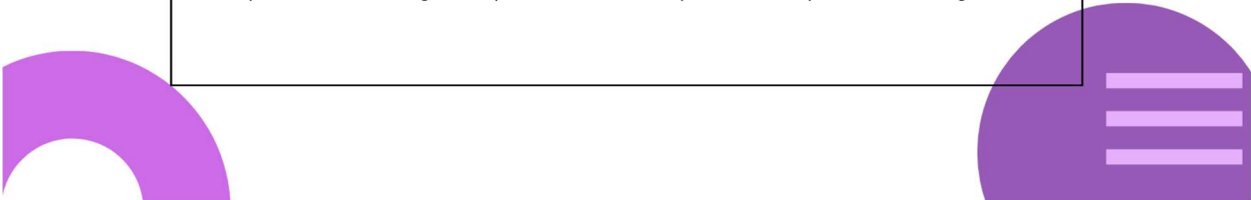
Share the seven elements of Shepherd Leadership through a powerpoint presentation.

Ask Students to explain how Shepherd Leadership can be used in their pastoral settings.

Assessment:

10 hours for the course

Develop a presentation on the meaning and purpose of Shepherd Leadership with examples of how being a shepherd leader is important in a pastoral setting.





Pastoral Dimension

Lesson Two



Date:

Topic: Everyone has a story!

Lesson #

Lesson Focus and Goals:

Share wisdom literature from the bible and wisdom stories from one's past by being a part of a story circle.

Materials Needed:

Five Chapters of Wisdom Literature
Documentary of Sr. Thea Bowman

Learning Objectives:

Describe the impact of the story on one's vocational discernment
Explain the wisdom of women leaders in one's ministry and the Catholic Church

Structure / Activity:

Elements of a story circle: What is it, what does it include, and how are they used?
Using the elements of a story circle, run a meeting using them.
Establish a God Squad of women who will encourage pray, support, and learn with you.
Using the principles of a God Squad, describe the importance of having a network support system.

Assessment:

10 hours for the course

Share various models of story circles from the Indigenous African-American, and women religious videos.

Describe a drumming circle, the significance, and spiritual experiences for cultivating peace.





Pastoral Dimension

Lesson One



Date:

Topic: Workplace Dysfunctional Behavior

Lesson #

Lesson Focus and Goals:

To teach the fundamentals of the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and its application to boundaries and dysfunctional behavior.

Learn about Adult Children of Alcoholics and the impact on the workplace

Materials Needed:

Co-dependent No More by Melody Beattie
Church Steps by Fr. Bill Stenzel
Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous

Learning Objectives:

Learn the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.
Learn how to establish boundaries in personal life and in the workplace

Structure / Activity:

Guest Speaker explaining Dysfunctional Leadership

Examining the 12 steps of Alcoholics and their application to Church ministry

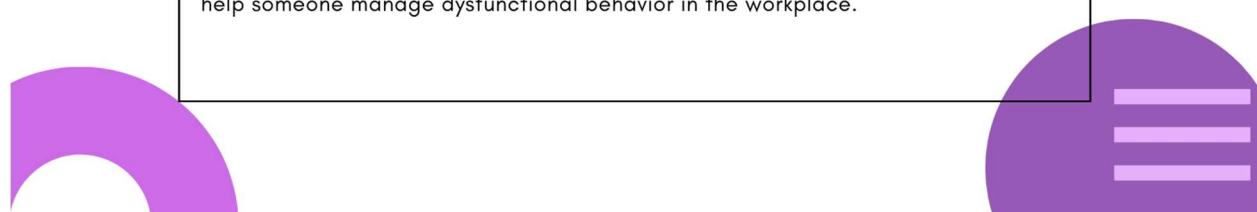
Role Play in establishing boundaries in the home and workplace

Triangle Conversation: One speaks, one listens, one prays

Difficult conversations regarding working with someone drinking at work.

Assessment: 10 hours for the course

Write a three page paper on how the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous can help someone manage dysfunctional behavior in the workplace.





Spiritual Dimension



Lesson Four



Date:

Topic: Women as Evangelists

Lesson #

Lesson Focus and Goals:

Review Biblical examples of Women Evangelists who are named and unnamed in the Old Testament and New Testament.

Materials Needed:

Bible
Chosen Season Three Episodes 5
and 7
Alpha Series: Episode 1-3

Learning Objectives:

To introduce the concept of faith sharing,
and invitation to strangers who may want
to learn about the Catholic Faith

Structure / Activity:

1. Review Three stories in the bible where women served as Evangelist. Miriam in Old Testament, Women at the Well, and Mother of Man Born Blind.
2. What did they see and what did they say?
3. Learn the role of an Evangelist in today's secular society.
4. Hear from four guest speakers who were practicing other religions and entered the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults. Who played the role of Evangelist in their life?
5. Practice the skills of listening, inviting, and accompaniment.
6. Review pages 97-101 of Emotional Intelligence of Religious Leaders

Assessment:

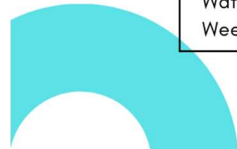
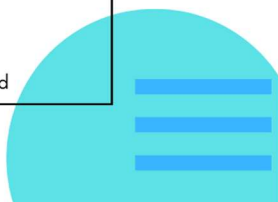
10 hours for the course

Attendance taken

Weekly video presentation with guest speakers

Watch three episodes of the Alpha series and complete handouts after each session

Weekly Group Discussion via small group or online chat regarding the material learned

Appendix B

Archdiocese of Galveston/Houston Model of Ongoing Formation

SELF-ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT INSTRUCTIONS: *(Galveston/Houston criteria for LEM certification Renewal)*

This self-assessment is based upon the National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers and is designed to assist candidates for certification to assess their competencies relative to these standards. This self-assessment is comprehensive and will take some time to complete. Candidates are encouraged to give it the time it demands. Once completed, it will highlight strengths as well as areas in need of further development.

A “Ministerial Development Planning Worksheet”

is provided to assist candidates in developing specific plans for ongoing growth in their ministry. The format of the self-assessment is as follows: There are five sections: the first four are common competencies shared in Lay Ministry (Human, Spiritual, Intellectual/Theological, and Pastoral) and the fifth section examines competencies related to the ministry of Parish Catechetical Leader. Under each section are listed the competencies at the heart of each standard. Prayerfully reflect upon each statement and assess yourself on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 indicating a strong competence in this standard. Please note your strengths and growth needs as

perceived under each standard. At the end of each standard section is an opportunity to summarize your responses to these standards.

Fulfilling Ongoing Requirements for Renewing Certification A minimum of 30 clock hours of ongoing formation is required for renewal of initial certification, and 50 clock hours for subsequent renewals. Use the Education/Formation Report Form of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston to document ongoing formation since the initial or subsequent certification Form—Include the name of the event, description of the event, date(s), and number of hours. Ongoing formation should foster growth within the standards of human, spiritual, intellectual, and/or pastoral competencies described in the National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers found in Appendix “B”. Include attendance in ongoing formation events sponsored by the OEC, annual retreat days, days of reflection, professional growth days, catechetical courses and/or workshops.

HUMAN 1.0 Standard One Lay ecclesial ministers demonstrate the qualities of human maturity needed for fruitful ministry with the people of God. Vision Statement Lay ecclesial ministers, as all ecclesial ministers, develop their human character and relational abilities so that they can be “a bridge and not an obstacle” for people in their encounter with Jesus Christ. This development entails the twofold dynamic of strengthening positive traits that foster ministerial effectiveness and lessening negative traits that hinder it. Accordingly, lay ecclesial ministers strive to deepen their knowledge of self and others, grow from experiences of suffering and challenge, maintain a balanced lifestyle and positive relationships, appreciate, and value diversity, and demonstrate basic human virtues. Cultivating such traits and skills within a Christ-centered community contributes to the development of “a healthy and well-balanced personality, for the sake of both personal growth and ministerial service” (Co-Workers, p. 36).

Core Competencies A lay ecclesial minister will:

1.1 Appreciate and affirm the dignity of the human person and the positive values of diverse cultures, races, and socioeconomic groups within their respective self-understandings. a.

Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

1.2 Identify personal gifts and limitations through self-reflection, collaboration with others, peer feedback, supervisory assessment processes, and/or spiritual companionship. a. Strengths: b.

Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

1.3 Engage in programs or practices of continuing ministerial formation and lifelong personal growth. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

1.4 Recognize both the reality of sin with its personal and social consequences and the power of forgiveness and reconciliation to heal persons and relationships. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs:

c. Rating _____

1.5 Maintain a healthy lifestyle and a reasonable balance among the legitimate claims of family, community, personal relationships, and ministry. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

1.6 Manifest "psychological health, marked by integrity, appropriate interpersonal boundaries, and the ability to honor and safeguard the trust that people place in them as Church ministers"

(Co-Workers. 36). a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

1.7 Understand the power inherent in positions of pastoral leadership and be diligent in the responsible exercise of such power regarding, for example, sexuality, confidentiality, supervision

of others, and decision-making. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

Section One Summary Reflections and Conclusions

Describe the strength that most empowers/enables you in your ministry: What need/s do you feel the most determined to meet/respond to/obtain education on/knowledge about for your ministry: To assist you in planning for future growth, please use the "Ministerial Development Planning" worksheet attached (duplicating the sheet as necessary). Add your ratings and record it here:

SPIRITUAL 2.0 Standard

Sharing in the common priesthood of all the baptized, a lay ecclesial minister demonstrates Christian spirituality as foundational to ministry, integrated in service with the people of God, and possessing a sacramental view of the world that recognizes the world can be a vessel of God's presence and God's transforming grace. Vision Statement Having encountered the person and message of Jesus Christ, the hunger of the lay ecclesial minister for union with the Triune God is constant. The result of this hunger is the call to holiness, built on the Word of God, experienced in the liturgy and sacraments, formed through suffering, nurtured in joy, and sustained in community with all the baptized and through the Church as Mystical Body. The minister gives witness to a well-formed spirituality through a rich and diversified prayer life, theological reflection, and action rooted in Catholic social teaching. Spiritual formation is grounded in the understanding that "if the ministry does not flow from a personal encounter and ongoing relationship with the Lord, then no matter how 'accomplished' it may be in its methods and activities, that ministry will lack the vital soul and source needed to bear lasting fruit" (Co-Workers, p.38). Therefore, open to the mystery of God's love and in touch with the world's realities, all actions of the lay ecclesial minister flow from "that fundamental conversion that places God, and not oneself, at the center of one's life" (Co-Workers, p. 38).

Section Two / Standard Two: Spiritual Core Competencies A lay ecclesial minister will:

2.1 Give witness to an integrated spirituality formed by Scripture, theological reflection, sacramental celebration, communal worship, and active participation in parish life. a. Strengths:

b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

2.2 Live a life of private and communal prayer that is both formed by and reflective of the breadth and depth of the Catholic spiritual tradition. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating

2.3 Bear witness to the profound significance of the Eucharist in one's own life in the life of one's parish, and in the life of the whole Catholic community. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating

2.4 Demonstrate sensitivity to the spirituality of the sacred arts, i.e., art, music, and architecture, and the value of their expression in liturgical and communal prayer. a. Strengths: b. Growth

Needs: c. Rating _____

2.5 Honor the call to ministry that is rooted in one's baptism by developing ministerial goals that flow from one's spirituality and reflect an integration of Gospel values. a. Strengths: b. Growth

Needs: c. Rating _____

2.6 Demonstrate an ability to discern the "signs of the times" and address current realities in the Church and the world in light of the Gospel. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

2.7 Accept and articulate one's ministerial vocation as coming from God and confirmed by the ecclesial community. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

2.8 Display openness to ecumenical prayer, work, and practices that promote Christian unity and acknowledge the gifts afforded to the human community from the various world religions. a.

Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

2.9 Model the spirit of Jesus in one's life and identify with and promote the universal Church and its global mission so that all prayer and ministerial activity flow from that mission. a. Strengths:

b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

2.10 Develop spirituality sensitive to diverse cultural expressions based on conversion, communion, mission, and solidarity. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

Section Two Summary Reflections and Conclusions Describe your strength which most empowers/enables you in your ministry: What need/s do you feel the most determined to meet/respond to/obtain education on/knowledge about for your ministry: To assist you in planning for future growth, please use the "Ministerial Development Planning" worksheet attached (duplicating the sheet as necessary). Add your ratings and record it here: _____

Intellectual 3.0 Standard Three A lay ecclesial minister demonstrates an understanding of the breadth of Catholic theological and pastoral studies as well as the intellectual skill to use that knowledge in ministry with God's people from diverse populations and cultures. Vision Statement "Formation for lay ecclesial ministry is a journey beyond catechesis into theological study" (Co-Workers, p. 43). A lay ecclesial minister's faith and ministry is formed by the study of the Catholic theological tradition focusing on the following core elements: Scripture and its interpretation, dogmatic theology, Church history, liturgical and sacramental theology, moral theology and Catholic social teaching, pastoral theology, spirituality, canon law, ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, the social sciences, humanities, and culture and language studies. Based

on this study, a theologically competent minister can articulate and interpret this Catholic theological tradition with disciples from diverse communities. A key dynamic of effective lay ecclesial ministry is the integration into ministry practices of the key documents and principal theories of pastoral ministry.

Core Competencies

A lay ecclesial minister will:

3.1 Scripture and revelation. Know and integrate into ministerial practice a theology of revelation as embodied in Scripture, tradition, and creation. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

3.2 Dogmatic theology. Know and integrate into ministerial practice Trinitarian theology, Christology, pneumatology, missiology, Christian anthropology, and ecclesiology. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

3.3 Church history. Know and integrate into ministerial practice a foundational understanding of the major events in the history of the Church, with special attention to the Second Vatican Council, and the perspective those events provide on the life of the Church today. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

3.4 Liturgical and sacramental theology. Know and integrate into ministerial practice theologies of liturgy, worship, and sacraments. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

3.5 Moral theology and Catholic social teaching. Know and integrate into ministerial practice a theology of the moral life, including Catholic social teaching for the transformation of Church and society. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

3.6 Pastoral theology. Know and integrate into ministerial practice a theology of pastoral ministry as well as guiding principles for the practice of ministry in a given context. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

3.7 Spirituality. Know and integrate the history and theology of Catholic spirituality into prayer and ministerial practice. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

3.8 Canon law. Know and integrate into ministerial practice a foundational understanding of canon law. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

3.9 Ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. Know and integrate into ministerial practice a respect for other Christian communities and other religious traditions. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

3.10 Social sciences and humanities. Know and integrate into ministerial practice a foundational understanding of the social sciences and humanities. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

3.11 Culture and language studies. Know and integrate into ministerial practice knowledge of intercultural communication and linguistic/cultural skills. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

Section Three Summary Reflections and Conclusions

Describe your strength which most empowers/enables you in your ministry: What need/s do you feel the most determined to meet/respond to/obtain education on/knowledge about for your ministry:

PASTORAL 4.0 Standard Four A lay ecclesial minister demonstrates a range of leadership and pastoral skills needed for functioning effectively in ministry. Vision Statement As a response to their baptismal call, lay ecclesial ministers accept the grace of leadership and manifest a range of skills and pastoral gifts that allow them to function effectively in ministry. In their role as evangelizers, they operate in a parochial setting which has various dimensions—faith formation, worship, cultural diversity, community life, social justice, and apostolic service. They are effective listeners who foster respect and offer compassionate care within varied family, community, and cultural settings. In the spirit of the Gospel, they serve others as companions on the journey of faith. These ministers demonstrate good stewardship, work collaboratively with other lay and ordained ministers, and exhibit human resource and management skills. They can discern and nurture the gifts of all the baptized to build the Kingdom of God. Lastly, these ministers embrace a professional code of ethics worthy of Catholic ministry and abide by civil and Church law.

“Pastoral formation cultivates the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that directly pertain to effective functioning in the ministry setting and that also pertain to pastoral administration that supports direct ministry” (Co-Workers, page 47).

Core Competencies A lay ecclesial minister will:

4.1 Exercise sound practices of compassionate pastoral care.

a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

4.2 Foster a pastoral ministry that empowers people to enculturate the Gospel in their own culture and to foster unity in diversity in the Catholic Church by utilizing human, spiritual,

theological, and pastoral approaches proper to each culture. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c.

Rating _____

4.3 *Implement the principles and processes of evangelization and faith formation as outlined in national and universal Church documents.* a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

4.4 *Employs the use of modern means of communication technology to proclaim the Gospel.* a.

Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

4.5 *Work effectively with others through utilizing leadership skills of collaboration, visioning, planning, communication, decision-making, delegation, and conflict management.*

a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

4.6 *Exercise effective supervision of employees (part-time or full-time) and volunteers.* a.

Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

4.7 *Continually seek opportunities to improve skills.* a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating

4.8 *Develop and nurture the prayer life of the community in which one serves.* a. Strengths: b.

Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

Section Four Summary Reflections and Conclusions

Describe your strength which most empowers/enables you in your ministry: What need/s do you feel the most determined to meet/respond to/obtain education on/knowledge about for your ministry: To assist you in planning for future growth, please use the "Ministerial Development Planning" worksheet attached (duplicating the sheet as necessary).

Add your ratings and record it here: _____

SECTION FIVE/SPECIALIZED COMPETENCIES

Catechetical Leader (CL) Specialized Competencies

By baptism every Christian is called to proclaim the Good News. The Spirit singles out individuals and invites them to the specialized role of Catechetical Leader within their faith community, and many respond in faith to this invitation. As competent Catechetical Leaders, they collaborate with others in creating a culture of formation within their faith communities that enables each committed Christian to nurture and grow in relationship with God. As such, the Catechetical Leader will be well-formed in the study of Catechesis – its theology, its history, and its right praxis.

A Parish Catechetical Leader will:

CL 1 Direct the parish catechetical program through the design, implementation, and evaluation of parish catechetical processes. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

CL 2 Implement three Catechumenate models as inspiration for catechesis in age-appropriate ways. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

CL 3 Develop a comprehensive lifelong vision and plan for parish catechesis based on ecclesial catechetical documents. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

CL 4 Insure the centrality of catechesis in the development of the parish as an evangelizing and catechizing community. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

CL 5 Develop and implement parish catechetical policies following Archdiocesan policies and guidelines. a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

CL 6 *Provide orientation and in-servicing of catechetical committee members and formation teams in their areas of responsibility.* a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

CL 7 *Exercise effective supervision of catechetical employees and volunteers which fosters leadership abilities.* a. Strengths: b. Growth Needs: c. Rating _____

SECTION FIVE SUMMARY REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Describe your strength which most empowers/enables you in your ministry: What need/s do you feel the most determined to meet/respond to/obtain education on/knowledge about for your ministry: :¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Archdiocese of Galveston/Houston, 2023. <https://www.archgh.org/offices-ministries/pastoral-educational-ministries/office-of-adolescent-catechesis-and-evangelization/pace-formation-paths/>



OFFICE of ADOLESCENT
CATECHESIS and EVANGELIZATION

FORMATION ROADMAP

1 COMPLETE THE HEART FORMATION PATH

- These three course are available on demand and can be done in any order.
- This path is required before you can take courses in the other learning paths.

3 TAKE COURSE AS NEEDED/ON DEMAND

- After the HEART learning path there is no set order you must take courses in.
- Each formation area will provide unique knowledge and skills in a specific area.
- Equivalencies can be request for past formation or education courses taken.

2 DETERMINE YOUR FORMATION NEEDS

- Identify formation areas you need to develop to best serve in your ministry role.
- Make a personalized plan to work through the various formation areas/learning paths.

4 EARN LEARNING PATH RECOGNITION

- Completing each Learning Path will earn you a training certificate.
- Completing all four Learning Paths will make you eligible to apply for certification.

GETTING YOUR TEAM ON BOARD

1 COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR TEAM

Share the overview & road-map with your team and let them know the HEART training is FREE and can be done on demand.

2 SEND TEAM INFO TO OACE STAFF

Gather first/last name, email, phone, and address for your team and send them to OACE staff to create Capernaum accounts.

3 SEND LOGIN INFO TO YOUR TEAM

OACE staff will send you instructions, usernames, and temporary passwords for you to send to your team members.

4 HOST A FOLLOW UP SEMINAR SESSION

Utilize the outlines and resources from OACE to host a follow-up in-person session to review content and practice skills.



Register at: www.MyCapernaum.org
Capernaum User Account Required



Contact: bhenritze@archgh.org
www.ArchGH.org/OACE

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