

**Session 13: Lay Leadership and Formation**

**Proposition Definition:** Lay Leadership and Formation includes efforts to encourage and empower laity to work collaboratively with clergy in parish leadership.

- Provide formation for clergy and parish staff that enables them “to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry.” (Eph. 4:12)
- Provide formation for parish staff and lay leaders that includes an encounter with Jesus, conversion and discipleship, so that they may serve the parish community faithfully and effectively.

**Other Key Points:**

- The diversity of gifts and experiences contributed to a richer experience for all.
- Consider the passage from I Corinthians, where Saint Paul says that we are all one body, but with many parts, with many gifts and roles. Paul defines what this might look like in the fourth chapter of Ephesians: “I urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace ... But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. [...] And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”
- We can also look to the saints as examples not just of holiness. Consider Carlo Acutis, who grew up with a passion for both Christ and computers. He remains an inspiring example of someone who used the media to evangelize and proclaim the gospel. He will be our first millennial saint.
- The missionary Church that Christ founded requires a true partnership between clergy and laity that is often described as co-responsibility.
- The Vatican II document on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, says this about how bishops and priests are called to encourage and empower the laity: “Let the spiritual shepherds recognize and promote the dignity, as well as the responsibility, of the laity in the Church. Let them willingly employ their prudent advice. Let them confidently assign duties to them in the service of the Church, allowing them freedom and room for action. (LG 37)
- Just as clergy have a responsibility to foster lay involvement, the laity have a responsibility to be engaged and seek out formation opportunities.
- *Lumen gentium* states: “A great many wonderful things are to be hoped for from this familiar dialogue between the laity and their spiritual leaders: in the laity a strengthened sense of personal responsibility; a renewed enthusiasm; a more ready application of their talents to the projects of their spiritual leaders. The latter, on the other hand, aided by the experience of the laity, can more clearly and more incisively come to decisions regarding both spiritual and temporal matters. In this way, the whole Church, strengthened by each one of its members, may more effectively fulfill its mission for the life of the world.” (LG 37)

**Reflection Questions:**

1. Have you ever considered your co-responsibility in the Church, your part as “priest, prophet, king”? What comes to your mind today?
2. When have you been invited to collaborate with your pastor to more effectively fulfill the Church’s mission for the life of the world? What might you offer or propose?