

Diocese of Syracuse

Pastoral Leadership – Role Definitions

Lay Ecclesial Ministers*

Lay ecclesial ministers are women and men whose ecclesial service (lay ecclesial ministry) is characterized by: authorization to serve publicly in the local church leadership in a particular area of ministry, close mutual collaboration with the pastoral ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons; preparation and formation appropriate to the level of responsibilities that are assigned to them. The following understandings should be kept in mind: The term "lay ecclesial minister" is generic. "Lay ecclesial minister" is not itself a specific position title. It is not used in order to establish a new rank or order among the laity. It is the responsibility of the bishop, or his delegate, in accord with the norms of canon law, to identify the roles that most clearly exemplify lay ecclesial ministry.

The term lay ecclesial ministry reflects certain key realities. Lay ecclesial ministry is: "Lay" because it is service done by lay persons. The sacramental basis is the Sacraments of Initiation, not the Sacrament of Ordination. "Ecclesial" because it has a place within the community of the Church, whose communion and mission it serves, and because it is submitted to the discernment, authorization, and supervision of the hierarchy. "Ministry" because it is the work by which Christians participate in the three-fold ministry of Christ, who is priest, prophet, and king and continue his mission and ministry in the world.

In parish life, the pastoral associate, parish catechetical leader, youth ministry leader, school principal, and director of liturgy or pastoral music are examples. Lay ecclesial ministers may also be found in hospitals and health care settings, on college and university campuses, and in prisons, seaports, and airports. Because it is the responsibility of the bishop to identify the roles that most clearly exemplify lay ecclesial ministry, application of the term may vary from diocese to diocese.

*See *Co-Workers in the Vineyard* - pgs. 10-11, 13

Parish Pastoral Associate*

A pastoral associate is a professional minister who shares with the pastor, the parish life director or on-site pastoral team in the overall care of the parish. S/he is a member of the parish staff and is accountable to the pastor or parish life director. The ministry of the pastoral associate is comprehensive, relating to all aspects of parish life, with designated responsibilities, i.e., liturgy, faith formation, RCIA, spiritual direction, administration, pastoral care, social justice or other. The designated responsibilities of the pastoral associate are based on the needs of the parish and the gifts of the pastoral associate, as well as the gifts of the other members of the parish staff. This role is an application of Canon 519. A pastoral associate may be a deacon, religious or lay person. The diocesan bishop must approve the placement of a permanent deacon as a pastoral associate.

* See *Diocese of Syracuse: Guidelines Concerning the Ministry of Parish Pastoral Associate* - pg. 1.

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Parish Life Director* (PLD)

A Parish Life Director (PLD) is professionally qualified, spiritually, academically and by experience, to serve as a minister. A PLD may be a deacon, religious or lay person and is appointed by the diocesan bishop in accordance with Canon 517.2 to lead and officially administer a parish. The PLD is responsible for the growth and development of a particular parish (single parish, linked parish or parish cluster) in response to the mandate of the bishop and the call of the community. The PLD serves in conjunction and collaboration with assisting priests, a pastoral staff and a canonically appointed pastor, usually the regional vicar.

See **Diocese of Syracuse: Parish Life Director (Role Description Summary) – p. 1.*

Pastoral Coordinator*

A pastoral coordinator is a lay ecclesial minister who serves in a parish whose care is entrusted to the regional vicar due to a vacancy in the role of pastor/administrator. The pastoral coordinator is designated by the regional vicar with the authorization of the diocesan bishop or his delegate and is responsible for the daily oversight and leadership of the parish. Because his/her responsibilities are beyond those found in the role of parish business manager, supervision and training are provided for guiding the programs and ministries of the parish. In these circumstances, the role specification for the pastoral coordinator is designed to fit the particular needs of the parish.

**Office of Pastoral Planning: Operational definition*