

***Pastoral Initiative IV***  
***Ministry and Leadership: Lay, Consecrated Life, Ordained***

***Origins of the Report***

At its January 26, 2008 meeting, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC) considered a proposal to offer Cardinal Mahony six reports, one on each of the Initiatives of the 2003 Synod. The six reports would outline the work being done throughout the archdiocese in implementing the six initiatives. An ad hoc committee studied the APC's ability and willingness to do these reports. In May, 2008, the APC heard the report and endorsed the proposal. Synod Initiative IV is the fourth report to be prepared.

***Scope of the Report***

A committee<sup>1</sup> was established by the APC to develop the report on Initiative IV. The group met at Holy Family Church, South Pasadena, for its initial meeting. The first point of business, after introductions, was a clarification of the goals and processes for reporting on this Initiative.

The heart of Synod Initiative IV is centered on developing strong, effective collaboration between the clergy and laity. Desiring to ground its work in the spirit of the Synod experience of 2003, the Committee re-visited the Synod documents, reflecting on Cardinal Roger Mahony's clear leadership, as expressed through his Pastoral Letters and the DVD *Panel Discussion on Emerging Leadership Models* presented by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles at Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center in 2008. The Committee also reviewed the work of the Synod itself and the remarkable participation of the laity whose dynamic, spirit-filled response to claiming their baptismal responsibility for the mission of the Church in Los Angeles through active, appropriate leadership was clear and strong. The Committee also noted that Synod Initiative IV is bound closely to Synod Initiative II. Both Initiatives call for strengthened relationships of collaboration and decision-making so that the laity can more effectively assume their rightful role in their individual parish life. It is encouraging that a strong foundation already exists to initiate these strategies. The on-going work of implementing them will require education, encouragement and effective, courageous collaboration at the local level to produce the changes needed to implement them.

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Synod Pastoral Initiative IV states:

***On the archdiocesan level, processes are to be established to ensure better collaboration and cooperation among the laity, religious and clergy so that the laity can more effectively assume their baptismal responsibility in the mission of the Church.***

The focus of this initiative is the establishment of processes that will create collaboration and cooperation between the laity, religious and clergy in order to strengthen lay leadership for active participation within the church of Los Angeles. While this priority touches the entire archdiocese at many different levels, there are limited financial resources available at this time to implement educational programs and/or processes. However, a strong archdiocesan commitment as expressed by Cardinal Mahony offers a hopeful future for this Initiative.

### ***Development of the Report***

The committee felt that requesting a survey to be completed by the Regional Pastoral Councils would not be helpful as many were yet grappling with how to interpret and approach this initiative given its breadth and scope. Other means of gathering data as to the development of Initiative IV throughout the Regions must be initiated.

Questions have been raised regarding the clarification of Initiative IV's Pastoral Priority, "processes are to be established to ensure better collaboration and cooperation among the laity, religious and clergy so that the laity can more effectively assume their baptismal responsibility in the mission of the Church." Basic distinctions between lay and clerical leadership as well as ideas about using existing lay formation programs to promote an understanding of collaboration are dimensions of this question that need to be further explored and will be included in the recommendations for the on-going work of Initiative IV.

Ultimately, this Synod Initiative deals with the question of how can we better serve the People of God and engage them in all the work of the Church which is not otherwise restricted to the ordained. Speaking of the emergence of lay leadership in the parish, Cardinal Mahony stated in his Pastoral Statement "As One Who Serves", "...perhaps nothing is more important than cultivating, nurturing, and sustaining collaboration between and among priests, deacons, vowed Religious and lay leaders", a collaboration which is made easier by "recognizing the importance of bringing different gifts to bear in the common mission of the Church." The root of this collaborative enterprise lies in understanding the rich diversity of gifts that all the People of God can contribute in direct service to the Church as she strives to bring about the reign of God on earth. As the Church fully utilizes the richness of these gifts, the fruits of the Spirit are unleashed and parish life flourishes.

### **Synod Initiative IV: Strategy 1**

***A plan for the joint training of ordained and lay leaders, especially in the process of collaboration and shared decision making is to be implemented.***

According to Canon Law, ordained ministers (pastors) are legally responsible for their parishes. Pastors can invite laity to participate in their apostolates; however, they are not required to do so. In the spirit of Synod Initiative IV, the Committee recommends that pastors, deacons and

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PLDs come together and actively participate in training programs aimed at strengthening consultation and delegation skills for pastoral ministry. The following reflect work being done in the various Regions at this time:

- San Fernando Region is actively working toward an educational plan for their Region in a focused and timely manner. They have been studying the U.S. Bishops' document, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard*.
- It is important to note the work of the San Gabriel Region with regard to this strategy. The Regional Council has convened a very successful joint formation gathering of deaneries entitled "Parish Leadership: A Shared Responsibility." The development and dialogue session addressed the issue of collaboration among lay and ordained leaders, including a series of vignettes intended to help resolve issues for pastoral planning together. On-going development of this strategy is in place for the coming months.
- Our Lady of the Angels Region is involved in a process of discernment regarding key issues identified by the parishes. The goal is to have a vocation committee at each parish and to survey the parishes in 2012 to determine effective successes and share best practices.
- Santa Barbara Region is working through their Deaneries and is using their Deacons for educational efforts in the parishes.
- San Pedro Region Mission is to 1) Promote and increase religious and ordained vocations; to encourage all parishes to compose and implement a written Parish Vocation Plan, and 2) Explore lay leadership: empower laity to assume their baptismal responsibility in the mission of the Church. Increase the number of lay presiders and lay ministers in the Region. The current strategy is to identify all the parishes in the region with and without a written Parish Vocation Plan. To help identify these parishes, we are at various stages of dialogue with each Deanery Vocational Director. Accomplishments in 2011 include Bereavement Training in English and Spanish, a bus trip to St. John's Seminary for interested men, and a Workshop about Religious life for young adults, catechists, catholic educators and young adult/youth ministers. Goals in 2012 include a Vocation Night for teens, Vocation Week at parishes, additional Bereavement Training programs in English and Spanish and the writing and implementation of Vocation Plans at all parishes.

**Synod Initiative IV: Strategy 2**

***A "School of Ministry for Laity" or its equivalent is to be established in each pastoral region to train parishioners for participation in a variety of parochial ministries.***

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The lay apostolate celebrates the joy of being active Christians in the world. Regional efforts to promote this strategy include the following:

- San Fernando Region is encouraging the development of a Ministerial Formation Plan for the parishes in this region.
- San Gabriel Region is encouraging a program that blends the Santa Barbara and San Fernando Region's plans with a strong focus on pastoral education. Working with Sisters Edith Prendergast and Mary Elizabeth Galt, the Regional Pastoral Council launched its School of Ministry pilot in October 2010, including a two year certificate program inclusive of classes in Ecclesiology, Scripture, Leadership Development and Liturgy/ Sacraments, using the Master Catechist model as the instructional vehicle. A third year option will provide specialization in a pastoral ministry. The School of Ministry classes are in Spanish and English. The Spanish track will be offered at two parishes in the Region. There is a willingness to open up the program to participants from other deaneries.
- Our Lady of the Angels Region is supporting a ministerial formation program that is task specific, functional and practical.
- Santa Barbara Region is supporting and encouraging catechetical formation for all parishioners. The growing number of Deacons in this Region allow for this formation to occur throughout the parishes where the Deacons are assigned.
- One of the Deaneries in the San Pedro Region has a successful GIFT (Growing In Faith Together) program. Each parish takes a turn in sponsoring a topic or a series of topics. Instructors are recruited from local Catholic universities, St. John's Seminary and local parishes.

Four Regions are encouraging the RENEW program which has proven to be a successful parish faith formation program. The fifth Region is using a variety of evangelization programs which are proving effective. Parish Social Justice Programs offer opportunities for parishioners to come together for education and action on issues of social justice concerns. Regional pastoral councils provide leadership and ministry training as well as opportunities for ongoing formation for parish pastoral and finance councils.

Ultimately, the responsibility for training parishioners for pastoral ministry rests in the hands of the pastors/parish life directors in consultation with their parish councils.

A comprehensive archdiocesan plan to address the formation of parishioners for participation in parochial ministries needs to be formulated and implemented. Limited resources impact the ability to address this need.

Finally, in a hopeful spirit of affirmation and support, the Synod IV Committee recommends that parishes seek ways to promote and officially honor lay Christians who are currently doing exemplary work both within and outside of their parishes in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

### **Synod Initiative IV: Strategy 3**

***Women are to be included on an equal basis in all aspects of Church leadership, administration and ministry not otherwise restricted by Church doctrine.***

There has been improvement in the commitment to be inclusive of women, both religious and lay, over the past twenty five years. The Archdiocese of Los Angeles has not only recognized but also demonstrated that the charism of leadership within the Church is not intrinsically connected to ordained ministry. This has allowed laywomen as well as laymen increased access to leadership responsibility within the parish as well as Archdiocesan structures. Women hold key leadership positions in the Archdiocese, both professional and volunteer, and include: the Chancellor, the Director of the Office of Religious Education, the Director of the Office of Worship, the Vicar for Women Religious, the Director of the Office of Parish Life, the General Counsel, the Moderator of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, and Moderators of several of the Regional Pastoral Councils. Increasing numbers of lay ecclesial ministers (LEMs), including Parish Life Directors and Pastoral Associates, are responding to the call of the Holy Spirit: the majority of these LEMs are women. In selecting their regional council members, the Bishops seek gender balance. That said, this strategy continues to need attention and implementation. There is no qualitative data on how this strategy is being implemented at the parish level.

### ***Conclusions***

1. This Synod Initiative is unique in itself. Its primary focus is the development of lay pastoral leadership for the Church of Los Angeles and its many and varied ministries. How that development will take place is the work of the Church's leadership: the Archbishop, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, the Regional Pastoral Councils, the Deaneries and the individual parishes/pastors/Parish Life Directors.
2. The success of this initiative, the enterprise of collaboration, is to be found in the "fruits of the Spirit" which have emerged in parish life. Parishes which have successfully engaged the laity, ordained and religious in healthy collaboration are places where, in the words of Peter Maurin, "It is easy to be good". They are places where a wide range of vibrant ministries, the majority lay-led, flourish. They are places where parishioners are excited to be involved in their parish. They are places where the faithful grow in number because their faith is deepened and enriched and they feel welcomed. They are places of growth and creativity in the Holy Spirit. These parishes model for us the dynamic, faith-filled possibilities that collaborative leadership holds for the People of God.
3. Each Region is currently engaged in a variety of projects for Synod Initiative IV in a manner that seems most appropriate for their regions. More research must be done to update and clarify these projects.
4. It is important to note that significant progress has been made as a result of the work of the 2003 Archdiocesan Synod:
  - The Archdiocesan Pastoral Council is in place, strategically representing the Archdiocese of Los Angeles' five Regions, as well as its religious,

priests, deacons, brothers and Parish Life Directors, and Pastoral Associates.

- Each of the five Regions has a Regional Pastoral Council who, working with their Regional Bishop, is seeking to implement the six initiatives of the 2003 Synod.
- These Regional Pastoral Councils are working with the local parishes to strengthen Parish Councils. Additionally, the development of a strategy calling for the creation of a Stewardship Council in each parish is underway.
- New emerging models of parish leadership are being implemented; there are growing numbers of parishes that are “twinning” or “clustering”, and a number of new Parish Life Directors have been appointed. The number of Pastoral Associates continues to grow.

### ***Recommendations***

1. The committee recommends on-going study and familiarity across the Archdiocese of Los Angeles through the APC, RPC, Priests Council and Parish Councils with the following documents:
  - ***Christifidelis Laici: Post-Synodal Exhortation on the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World***, Pope John Paul II, December 1988
  - ***Co-Workers In the Vineyard: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry***, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005
  - Pastoral Letters of Cardinal Roger Mahony
    - ***As I Have Done For You, A Pastoral Letter on Ministry***, 2000
    - ***Gathered and Sent, Documents of the Synod, Archdiocese of L.A.***
    - ***As One Who Serves, Pastoral Letter on Lay Leadership In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles***, 2005
    - ***Serving Shoulder to Shoulder: Parish Life Directors in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles***, November 2006
2. The committee urges that implementation of processes of collaboration and shared decision making be required in existing formation programs: seminary, diaconate, Parish Life Director/Pastoral Associate, and college and secondary levels, thus strengthening the initiative and strategy.
3. The committee recommends that the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council consider the feasibility of convening an archdiocesan-wide Re-visioning Day that is rooted in the six Pastoral Initiatives.
4. The committee suggests that a more cohesive, integrated strategy be developed to assist in better leveraging educational resources across the regions to support formation and education of the laity, in preparation for ministry in the parishes.

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5. While the roles for women in leadership have expanded significantly in recent years, this topic needs to be addressed on an ongoing basis and should continue to be an area of growth for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The critical role that women play in the Church must continue to be promoted at all levels.
6. The committee encourages the use of technology, coordinating the efforts to establish Schools of Ministry, so that all Regions may have access to develop a unified ministerial formation program that is accessible to all.
7. By virtue of our Baptism, we are all called to Ecclesial Ministry. Therefore, it is imperative, from the parish level up; that accountability be required at all levels for collaborative leadership.
8. The committee requests the reappointment of a Woman Religious in the Archdiocesan Office of Vocations to facilitate the process for women who are interested in consecrated religious life.