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## **Rediscovering the Theology of Lay Ministry and Presenting a Pastoral Plan: “The Integral Christian Formation Of Lay Leaders” for the Catholic Church in Tamil Nadu, India**

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**REDISCOVERING THE THEOLOGY OF LAY MINISTRY**  
**AND PRESENTING A PASTORAL PLAN:**  
**“THE INTEGRAL CHRISTIAN FORMATION OF LAY LEADERS”**  
**FOR THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN TAMIL NADU, INDIA**

by

Fr. Bernard Joseph Viagappan

A Pastoral Synthesis Project presented to the

Faculty of the department of

Theological Studies

Loyola Marymount University

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

April 26, 2018

## ABSTRACT

Loyola Marymount University

**Title: REDISCOVERING THE THEOLOGY OF LAY MINISTRY  
AND PRESENTING A PASTORAL PLAN:  
“THE INTEGRAL CHRISTIAN FORMATION OF LAY LEADERS”  
FOR THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN TAMIL NADU, INDIA**

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Date completed: 26 April 2018

Even after the Vatican II has categorically revealed the role and the place of the laity in the Church, there is so much of resistance and cynicism prevailing among the clergy and the people in the Indian Church about this clarion call of the Council. Around 90% of Catholics keep themselves passive in their faith practice. As we delay the promotion of active and full use of the lay potential, the greater the chance and number of the lay faithful losing their faith. A strong feeling of insecurity in the clergy leads to distrust of lay talents and charisms and it also leads to blocking the gifts of the Lord and limiting the participatory Church in India. As a result, the ministry of the laity has become totally dependent on the clergy, which is totally against the vision of the communion ecclesiology of Vatican II. Therefore, the creation of awareness among the lay people on their singular role in carrying out the mission of the Church in our world is essential today. To achieve this goal, this pastoral synthesis project is prepared. In an effort to understand the context of the project, first, a case is described; second, basic background of Indian socio-religious-cultural background is elaborated; third, some of the most significant biblical and traditional theological resources and reflections on laity and ministry are discussed, especially exploring teachings of Vatican II and Pope Francis; and finally, in order to help alleviate the problem, a pastoral plan of “Integral Christian Growth Formation of Lay Leaders” is presented in detail. The members of Parish Pastoral Councils, leaders of Small Christian Communities, and Catechism teachers are considered as a focus group for this formation. Though the renewal of the laity in their identity and nature is illustrated in general, the tentative project plan, in particular, is presented for the Tamil Nadu region of India. On the whole, collaborative shared ministry of laity and clergy is proposed not as a concession by the clergy, but as a norm. Thus, through this project, some thousands of committed lay leaders will be identified, trained, empowered, commissioned and followed up, which will bring great revival in the life of the Church in Tamil Nadu, India.

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## I. THE CASE COMPONENT

St. Francis Xavier Church is a hundred year old parish in the diocese of Salem, Tamil Nadu, India. I was a pastor of this parish for two years, from 2012 through 2014, before coming to the United States for graduate studies. After studying the socio-religious context of the parish and life of the people for one year, I formed a Parish Pastoral Council (hereafter it is referred as PC) through Small/Basic Christian Communities (SCCs). Since it was the centenary year of the parish, we planned to celebrate it in a grand way by developing many projects for the revival of the parish. One among those important projects was the renovation of the Church building inside and outside because it was in a dilapidated condition. Parishioners understood the crucial need for this project and welcomed it wholeheartedly.

During the renovation process, I suggested one important change inside the Church. The Church had a big statue of St. Francis Xavier behind the altar at the center of the Church and there was no crucifix. Hence, I proposed to the PC that St. Francis Xavier's statue be shifted to the side of the altar so that a new and big crucifix could be fixed in the place of the statue. The crucifix would become the central focus of the Church. In reaction to my suggestion, some elders of the PC started grumbling and objected strongly to the idea. Even though I had explained the purpose and meaning of placing the Crucifix at the center of any Church, they did not accept it. They believed that they had been receiving blessings for more than a hundred years from St. Francis Xavier for the good of the whole village. Having understood their sentimental devotion to St. Xavier, I explained to them the distinction between God and saints, and the difference between worship/adoration and veneration. During that discussion, to my surprise, I noticed that many members had not raised their voices at all except for three teachers who continued to try to

persuade the elders to go with my idea. After a long discussion with confused quarrelling, the elders reluctantly accepted my plan.

This meeting, nonetheless, led me to think deeply about laity and their participation in the life of the Church. Although there were around thirty members present at the PC meeting, less than ten people shared their points and views openly and concretely. After the meeting, I asked some of the members why they did not speak or share any of their desires in the meeting. Their responses shocked me. One member said, “Father, I came to the meeting just because you called us. When our village elders say something, I cannot question them or talk against them in any way, because I belong to other-caste (which is considered as low caste in the society).” Another member said: “Father, we do not know anything. Whatever the priest says, we just obey and do. That’s how we have been taught. We believe that priests know everything, for they studied the bible and other things in the seminary. That’s why, when you explained the distinction between Jesus and saints, we simply said ok to your point.” Above all, I was dumbfounded by the reply of one person: “Father, you are the head of this parish and we are under you. You can decide anything whatever you want. We just follow what the parish priest says, because each priest wants to bring change in different things, and we, the people, nod our head to everything and obey.”

There was another traditional parish that faced a communal rivalry between different castes of the faithful. Though they have an active PC and SCCs, during their annual feast time, a serious community based problem occurred. The sad part of the story was that the parish lay leaders of SCCs and PC were also involved in that commotion supporting their own castes rather than bringing peace and harmony beyond caste differences within the Church. Consequently, some of them even engaged in physical attacks and conflict. Even though they had regularly

attended mass together in the past, they were not able to live the Christian life by overcoming the social evil of the caste system. It is one of the devastating aspects of the Church in India.

The above two cases demonstrate the following contemporary pastoral issues and dilemmas in the life of the Church in Tamil Nadu, India: (i) clericalism has been a dominating element in the history of Church; hence, people, naturally, tend to depend on the ordained for their faith and spirituality; (ii) though lay leaders have been recognized recently through SCCs in Tamil Nadu, India since 2000 and have started to play a vital role in decision makings of parishes, they have not been formed or trained in depth regarding their Christian faith and the parish life; (iii) on one side, blind obedience is practiced; on the other side, stubbornness, without proper reasoning is found especially in following traditional things; (iv) the caste system of the Indian society negatively affects the life of the Church. Unequal participation among the laity and powerlessness and a lack of voice of minority or low-caste people exist in the Church; even priests and lay leaders become victims of it; (v) advanced and regular formation or training programs on Christian life are not widely available to lay leaders.

In order to describe the purpose of my case component, I draw upon another triggering incident that happened in another parish which suggests hope for this project. In commemoration of a parish golden jubilee, this parish renovated the altar and its background. After the blessing ceremony of the altar, the pastor announced to the parishioners that the laity are discouraged from entering into the place of altar, except altar servers and lectors, because of its holiness. Immediately, the lay secretary of the PC whispered to the pastor: “Father, please, do not take us back to the pre-Vatican Church.” When I asked the secretary how he was able to approach the pastor so boldly, and where he learned, he replied that since he had studied some basics of Scripture, Theology, and Vatican II through different sources and trainings, he was able to



convey his opinion and belief concretely. This response supports my previous reflections and brings forth a great hope for this project that if laity are really empowered and guided properly in the spirit of Church teachings especially of the Second Vatican Council, the laity will profoundly be enriched in faith and knowledge, and their role and collaborative participation with the ordained will increase. Therefore, this project explores and illustrates the revival and renewal of the laity in their identity, nature and participation in the Church in India, specifically in Tamil Nadu, as follows:

First, I will discuss the context component, explaining the socio-religious-cultural background by elaborating on the caste system in the Indian Church and society, the gender division, religious fundamentalism, and clericalism and lay participation in the Church.

Next, I will consider the theological component, addressing the Scriptural basis of ‘ministry,’ the history of clericalized and sacralized ‘ministry,’ the theology of the laity emphasizing the unity and equality of the laity and the clergy, the theology of ‘ministry,’ the importance of formation for lay ministers, the pastoral significance of the Indian Church, the role of PCs, and the life of SCCs.

Finally, on the basis of what I discuss in the context and theological components, I will present a pastoral plan in the project component, unpacking the mechanism of the tentative plan by describing the target group, the reasons to choose PCs, SCCs, and Catechism Teachers (CTs) as the focus group, the need for the ‘Integral Christian Growth Formation for the Lay Leaders,’ the target region: Tamil Nadu - India, Diocese of Salem as a sample, courses/subjects of formation programs, extra resources, coordinating team, venue and schedule, registration, certification and commissioning, overcoming difficulties and challenges, formation for clergy, and hopeful outcomes.

## II. THE CONTEXT COMPONENT

St. Thomas, St. Bartholomew, St. Francis Xavier, St. John de Britto, St. Gonsalo Garcia, St. Alphonsa, St. Joseph Vaz, St. Mother Teresa, Blessed Kuriakose Chavara, Blessed Devasahayam Pillai and many other men and women were the key people who sacrificed their lives to spread the Catholic faith in depth in various parts of India.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, for Elizabeth Koeppling, caste, gender, and ethnicity, local and foreign missions, contested contextualization, inter-and intra-religious pluralism, colonialism, politics, poverty, and nationalism, to name a few are some facets of the complexity of Christianity in India.<sup>2</sup> Sam Matthew states that massive poverty, pluri-form religiosity, and India's oppressive, all-pervasive caste system constitute the social reality in India, and the three factors of poverty, religion, and caste are very closely interrelated.<sup>3</sup> This segment of the paper will attempt a cursory glance at some of the prominent sociocultural realities in the Indian Church and society that will facilitate the reader's understanding of the nature and purpose of the project.

### 1. Caste System in the Indian Church and Society

Historically, the origin of the Indian caste system, according to Dyron B. Daughrity and Jesudas M. Athyal, is connected with the invasion of the Aryan people from Persia or Central Asia into northwest India around 1500 BCE. These invaders started dominating the native agricultural people from about 800 BCE, either by conquering or intermarrying. The *Rig Veda* is the Aryan text which described the indigenous people as *lower* in social status because of their dark color. We can see how color plays a vital role not only in a racial system, but also in a caste system. The word *varna*, in the Aryans' divine language Sanskrit, means "caste" – which meant color.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the Aryans divided humankind into a four-fold people: Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (professionals), and Shudras (laborers). The *Rig Veda* explains

that “when the archetypal human was created, the Brahmin was the mouth, the Kshatriya was the two arms, the Vaishya was the two thighs, and the Shudra was the feet.”<sup>5</sup>

Among the four-fold people, Shudras were considered to be impure or polluted. This is the basis on which they were not allowed to participate in Vedic religious rituals and were kept away from the areas of upper-caste people. All the more, the *Dalits* were not even considered equal to Shudras, but were “cast out” of the whole system. Politically, Indians are identified even at this modern time as high castes, intermediate castes, low castes, and Dalits (“untouchables”). There are thousands of sub-castes within each division.<sup>6</sup> Legally, all citizens are guaranteed dignity and freedom in the Constitution of India, but in practice, religion and society have not included the Dalits in any decision-making process, for they were not counted as legitimate members of the society.<sup>7</sup> Another social evil that has been affecting Dalit Christians is that they are ineligible for government welfare schemes and jobs that are meant for Dalits.<sup>8</sup>

From this sociocultural background, when we look at the caste system in Christianity, the Indian Christians are not exceptional from the caste mentality. Jesus gave preference to the poor and he challenged the religious elite, the rich, and the powerful, St. Paul emphasized that “There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). Nevertheless, to Daughrity and Athyal, the Church in India, on the one hand, opposes any kind of caste discrimination among the faithful; but on the other hand, most Christians admit the influence of caste system within the Indian Church life and say they find it hard to escape from it.<sup>9</sup> Actually, some Dalits left Hinduism and joined Christianity believing that there would be equality without any discrimination based on caste, but to their discouragement, according to V. V. Thomas, “in many places there was open oppression of the Dalit Christians by the upper caste Christians.”<sup>10</sup> That’s why V. Devasahayam said: the “Caste

system is Satan and the original sin that stands in contradiction to the kingdom Jesus proclaimed.”<sup>11</sup>

In Indian Christian history, there have been two realities that existed within the Church from the arrival of Christianity in India. On the one side, some adopted and incorporated the caste system within the Church; for example, St. Thomas Christians, who were present largely from the early centuries, were identified with the upper-caste group.<sup>12</sup> Roberto De Nobili, the Italian Jesuit missionary who reached India in 1606, followed the principle of *accommodation* by incorporating the local culture of high caste Brahmins. He portrayed himself as a *sannyasi* from Rome, a Christian Brahmin, and he learned Sanskrit, lived the ascetic and vegetarian life, motivated Brahmins to add an extra “sacred thread” of the Trinity, and encouraged them to follow the rules of purity and separation. As a result, many Brahmins joined Christianity having the same caste-based notion that they were not the equals of others.<sup>13</sup> Brahmabandhab Upadhyay promoted the notion that Christianity is “not a destroyer of Hinduism but as its fulfilment.”<sup>14</sup> On the other side, missionaries from the West (both Catholic and Protestant) such as Portuguese missionaries and Jesuit missionaries after de Nobili, focused the mission of Christ towards low-caste people who were oppressed and marginalized. That is how Dalit and tribal theologies emerged. Tamil Nadu has become a heartland for Dalit theology. During a disastrous famine, which happened in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many Dalits converted to Christianity. This explains how historically, missionaries worked exclusively among either the lower caste or among Brahmin converts.

However, though Dalits are the majority in Indian Christianity, the upper class-caste people, according to Daugherty and Athyal, have taken the Church leadership roles.<sup>15</sup> I too witnessed the presence of caste discrimination during my pastoral ministry, such as: (i) the

reality of different cemetery places for Dalits and other castes; (ii) distinct seating places allotted to Dalits and non-Dalits inside Churches; (iii) domination by high caste people over low caste people in the PCs and other Church organizations; (iv) non-Dalits refusing to enter into Dalits' houses including for prayer or SCCs meetings; (v) caste-based appointments in Church administration, with no regard given for talent, gift, or quality. Thus, the caste system has been diffused in the life of Christians beyond their religious beliefs because of its immutable social order followed by religious traditions.<sup>16</sup>

## **2. Gender Division**

Regarding the marginalization of women in Indian society, there is a contradiction. Female sexuality in India is often seen with ambivalence: on the one hand, it is often seen as cheap, cowardly, and shameful, and on the other hand, looked at as attractive, desirable, and even as worthy of worship as deities in the Hindu religion are often female. The patriarchy in India has long exploited and denigrated women and has influenced them to lose their rightful privileges and become puppets of male domination and hegemony. The Indian culture, according to Prema, exhibits numerous expressions of patriarchy such as: differentiated wage structure, unequal educational opportunities, child marriage, dowry system, and "marriage/divorce laws biased in favor of men."<sup>17</sup> Violence against women happens every day in different forms. India ranks fourth among the most dangerous nations for women.<sup>18</sup> With regard to Christianity, even though the Christian missions brought an end to the practices of *sati*, which is the burning of a widow when her husband dies, and child marriage, George Zachariah connects the patriarchal system with casteism in that both of them are "based on notions of purity and pollution that have influenced the doctrines and the ecclesial practices of the Indian Churches."<sup>19</sup> This is a key factor in discouraging women from entering into the sacred space of the altar. Realizing the exclusion

of women from the sacred space is not only against human dignity, but also the Christian faith, the Church in India invited the participation of women as lectors and altar servers in recent years. However, in comparison to most mainline Protestant Churches, where women's participation is more progressive, the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, according to Daugherty, still need to improve: leadership positions, segregation in seating arrangements, and the compelled covering the heads, to name a few.<sup>20</sup>

### **3. Religious Fundamentalism in India**

India's constitution states:

*"We, the people of India having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic, Republic and to secure to all its citizens; liberty of thought, expression, faith and worship; equality of status and opportunity; fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation."*<sup>21</sup>

Thus, while democracy and secularism are the pillars of the Indian state, nonetheless, according to Daugherty, religious fundamentalism and sectarianism have begun to grow to a mega level. Consequently, the Hindu fundamentalist group Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) gained power and its political organization Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) now rules India.<sup>22</sup> In practical life, the fundamental right of freedom to choose and live one's religion, which is article 15 and 25 of the Constitution of India, is at present in jeopardy. Many Churches have been burned, vandalized, and destroyed. A study done by a few historians of the Delhi University noted: "A sustained program of violent attack on Christian missionaries is a new element in the history and tradition of Indian life."<sup>23</sup> The anti-conversion bill was promulgated in order to curtail the freedom of conversion into any religion.<sup>24</sup> Hindu extremist sects, on the one side, claim that India is Hindu country (around 80% of Indians are Hindus) and that Muslims (around 12 %) and Christians (around 2.6 %) should be sent away from India;<sup>25</sup> on the other side, they try to win the converted Christians back to Hinduism by asking them to "return home." In spite of all these

dangers, the influence of Christian culture on Indian society is greater than its numerical statistics suggest and thus, Christianity in India has become, as Jesus said, a salt of the society.

#### **4. Clericalism and Lay Participation in the Indian Church**

Vatican II opened active participation of the lay faithful in the worldwide Catholic Church. Decentralization within the Church, according to Thomas Vijay, strengthened continental, national, and regional/state Bishops' conferences to uplift lay ministries in several ways of life. This resulted in the establishment of many formation centers and separate commissions or apostolates for laity, women, youth, and social services, which produced creative programs at the diocese, national, and continental levels.<sup>26</sup> In this scenario, lay involvement in the Indian Church, according to Vijay, has been grown specifically, through the Charismatic Movement and SCCs. While the Charismatic Movement has been developing lay preachers and counsellors, who have helped many to grow in faith, SCCs paved the path for the participation of large numbers of lay volunteers. After Pope John Paul II acclaimed that SCCs are "seedbeds for new ministries," and "an instrument of formation and evangelization,"<sup>27</sup> the Indian Church started to give priority to promote SCCs in all dioceses.<sup>28</sup> For example, more than 68,000 SCCs have been formed in over 140 dioceses since 1980.<sup>29</sup> In these SCCs, only lay leaders guide the gospel sharing and coordinate all activities.

Despite the scattered efforts that exist in the Indian Church for the promotion of laity, more is required to be done on "a war footing" because of dangerous challenges growing around the country in the present trends. In the Seventh Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops Council (FABC), Vijay listed some major contemporary contextual challenges for the Asian Church, to which I strongly agree in the Indian context:<sup>30</sup>

(i) Around 90% of Catholics are passive in their faith practice. Most Catholics in India give importance to Mother Mary; this can be also called “Novena Church.” By attending Sunday Mass, they feel that they fulfill their Christian obligation.<sup>31</sup> Hence, activating the huge majority of passive people in the Asian Church has become the most important task. Since the laity have not been formed in the depth of their faith, their passivity has given room to non-Catholic denominational sects to harvest our community. As a result, numerous Catholics leave the Catholic Church. According to Vijay: “The more the clergy delay the promotion of active and full use of the lay potential, the greater the chance and number of the lay faithful losing their faith.” This is the central focus of my study in this project.

(ii) The Asian Church is largely clericalized and institutionalized. This has led to some level of clerical domination over laity. In 1995, even the Catholic Bishops’ Council of India’s (CBCI) Evaluation Committee reported that the Church in India was clerically dominated.<sup>32</sup> The key factor for the marginalization of the laity’s leadership roles in the Church, for Augustine Kanjamala, is domination by the clergy. Moreover, power, money, status, and honor-seeking through higher positions in institutions play a vital role in the institutionalization process of the Indian Church.<sup>33</sup> A significant problem for the life of the Indian Church is that if only priests permit, these leaders minister as volunteers. Lay ministry is totally dependent on the approval of the local pastor. Lay people act according to the needs and purposes of the pastor, which is totally against the vision of the communion ecclesiology of Vatican II.<sup>34</sup> The activeness or passiveness of parishes always depends on the interests and priorities of each parish priest. Because of this, we experience instability in the continual life of parishes. This dynamic becomes more visible when a change of pastors takes place. Flourishing SCCs and active PCs that thrived under an enthusiastic pastor have been collapsed or neglected by the successor, where he is not



interested in their mission. A strong feeling of insecurity in the clergy leads to distrust of lay talents and charisms and it also leads to blocking the gifts of the Lord and limiting the participatory Church. For instance, some dioceses do not even assign a competent family lay person to be the director of the Family Apostolate, rather a priest or religious sister.

(iii) The hierarchical Church that existed prior to Vatican II still continues in India, by the holding of the decision-making process in the hands of clergy, religious, and bishops, excluding the laity. Another painful fact that is prevalent and common in the life of parishes is that those who raise practical questions that challenge the way the Church is going about something, those who have difference of opinion, and/or those who are critical of their pastors, usually are neglected. The pastors simply work with and promote those who please them. Even well-considered and meritorious criticisms are not welcomed.

(iv) Women are considered secondary in Asian and especially Indian culture. The Church is not an exception to this gender discrimination issue. The sample survey that I have taken (see Table 1) reveals that more than 90% of the participants agree that women are not included in PCs; the reason for this exclusion is that PCs involve decision-makings and leadership.

(v) Though the Asian bishops, at Bandung in 1990, proclaimed the vision of the Church of Asia as a communion of communities, this pronouncement has not yet fully become a pastoral priority. The single biggest reason behind why people leave the Church, according to Vijay, is that vast numbers of talented laity are not given a place to be involved, and are not allowed to share any responsibility for the mission of the Church.<sup>35</sup> If the lay faithful are given room to grow actively and potentially in each of their calls and charisms through different ecclesial ministries, they can handle and overcome the sociocultural challenges.

(vi) The Pastoral Plan for the Church in India insisted that while the Church has been made visible by rendering its service to the poor and the suffering irrespective of caste, creed or cult, it needs to facilitate the laity entering into business enterprises, governmental organizations, and political and social institutions in order to affirm spiritual and human values (Gospel values) on issues of social concern.<sup>36</sup> This will accomplish the call of Vatican II that “since the laity, in accordance with their state of life, live in the midst of the world and its concerns, they are called by God to exercise their apostolate in the world like leaven, with the ardor of the Spirit of Christ.”<sup>37</sup>

### *A Sample Survey*

In order to know and understand the present situation of laity in the Church in Tamil Nadu State, India, I have taken my Diocese of Salem as a sample and sent a questionnaire to 100 people in different parishes of the diocese to get their feedback (The questionnaire and consolidated responses are attached in appendixes).

TABLE 1. Participation of lay leaders in the Church

<i>Laity in Pastoral Leadership</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Not bad</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
1. Is the laity given participation in leadership roles?	36	34	23	7
2. Are the lay leaders aware of their responsibilities?	33	34	18	15
3. Are the lay leaders (PPC/SCC/CT) allowed in the planning and decision-makings of the parish?	35	32	22	11
4. Are women included in Parish Councils (PC)?	60	26	7	7

<i>5. What are all the challenges that exist with regard to the growth of the parish?</i>	
i. Lack of understanding of Catholicism – 53 ii. Secularism / Worldly mindedness – 49 iii. Lack of God experience – 48 iv. Caste division – 48 v. Lack of interest of lay leaders – 48	vi. Pastor’s non-involvement/lack of skill – 44 vii. Non-cooperation of the parishioners – 42 viii. Denominational Churches’ influences – 38 ix. Proudness and Selfishness – 30 x. Competitiveness among people – 27

Having discussed the various contexts that are interconnected and interrelated in the society and in the Church in India, I would now like to focus on the laity, lay leaders, and their ministries in the Church; hence, let us now move on to explore the theological component.

### **III. THE THEOLOGICAL COMPONENT**

God's revelation continues to be revealed in day-to-day life. Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council acknowledged that it is our duty to recognize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel.<sup>38</sup> Although much can be discussed and elaborated in the way of theological reflection on lay ministry and formation, the discussion here, by no means, is exhaustive. I draw upon some important theological reflections from different disciplines and areas such as: 1. Biblical basis of Lay Ministry; 2. Historical background of the clericalization of ministry; 3. Theology of laity; 4. Theology of ministry; 5. Importance of Formation for Lay Ministers; 6. Pastoral Significance of the Church in India; 7. Role of Parish Councils (PCs); and 8. Life of Small Christian Communities (SCCs).

#### **1. Biblical Basis of 'Lay Ministry'**

Scripturally, since the Father sent His Son, Jesus sent the twelve (Mt. 10:5) and the seventy-two (Lk. 10:1-7), the Jerusalem community commissioned the seven men (Acts 6:1-6), and the community at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1-4), ministry is not one's own choice, rather it is the Holy Spirit that works through the community and its leaders in the process of discernment of ministers for particular mission and need (Rom. 12:4-8). At the same time, every member in the community has a function that is indispensable; hence, all participate in shared ministry, where collaboration and support of each other become the root canal to build a spiritual house of God (1 Pet. 2:5).<sup>39</sup> God lives within us through our gifts and talents. His self-communication, for Richard M. Gula, is continuously taking place in the world through the

manifestations of charisms, which are the backbone of all ministries.<sup>40</sup> St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, Ch. 12, depicts the Holy Spirit pouring His charisms into different people for the common good, that are to be carried out with mutuality and co-responsibility for the whole Body of Christ. This is the image referenced in *Lumen Gentium* and also was reconfirmed by Pope John Paul II in *Christifideles Laici*.<sup>41</sup> The early Church is the best exemplary community, in which the community and its leaders together discerned the work of the Spirit within them and acted upon it without any division of clergy or laity (Acts 10:1-14).

On this basis, any ministry, according to Vijay, is "a free gift and does not carry with it any distinguishing characteristic of belonging exclusively to either the hierarchy or laity. The clergy and laity would in their own way respond to the call of the Spirit."<sup>42</sup> Everything is at the service of the Church and its mission. According to Cardinal Leo Josef Suenens, charisms in the Church without ecclesiastical ministries would be disorderly, and ecclesial ministries without charisms would be poor and sterile.<sup>43</sup> Thus, all ministries and services are based in charisms.

## **2. History of Clericalized and Sacralized 'Ministry'**

Some historians believe that the beginning of the monarchic pattern of episcopacy is from the time of St. Ignatius of Antioch (AD 50-110).<sup>44</sup> Since several heresies arose in the early Church, he wanted to guide the people with the help of strong leadership; hence, he advocated to them "to give heed to the bishop... do nothing without the bishop,"<sup>45</sup> and motivated them to obey the bishops, presbyters, and deacons, for the sake of unity in the Church. Ignatius was mentioned 13 times when Vatican II spoke about the teaching on episcopacy.<sup>46</sup> However, the documents collected by Hippolytus of Rome in 215 AD revealed that the faithful initially played some role in the appointment of the bishops. Then, St. Cyprian of Carthage (AD 220-258) changed his episcopacy as a civil leader of the city of Carthage, and from then the bishops and

presbyters became the ruling class. The sacrificial priesthood of the O.T. was identified with the priesthood by him. Thus, began the clericalization and sacralization of ministry. This distinction brought about the lower status of the laity in the Church. Moreover, bishops were appointed as civil and ecclesiastical rulers of civil districts by Emperor Constantine (AD 306-337).<sup>47</sup>

Another issue that added to the division between clergy and laity is celibacy. While the Eastern Church regard for the dignity of marriage and sexuality, the Western Church promulgated celibacy as the sign of purity. After many centuries of the practice of priestly celibacy, the Second Council of Latern in 1139 AD enforced celibacy on the clergy.<sup>48</sup> Pope Gregory VII (AD 1073-1085) brought forth a new theology that among the two realities of the world, spiritual and material, the pope must look after spiritual entities and the king ought to deal with material things. He announced that since the spiritual realm is divine, spiritual authority is superior to material authority in the world. Consequently, the Pope becomes the supreme power. Gregory's approach reduced the nature of ministry to the spiritual realm.<sup>49</sup> That explains how the monopoly of the clergy became attached to ministry and all ministries fell within the circle of liturgy. To some extent, the world outside was considered evil and Christians started avoiding ministering into professional fields such as: politics, industry, the marketplaces, etc.<sup>50</sup>

There has been an erroneous assumption about clerical celibacy that being celibate is holier than being married; this led to the notion that the clergy are more holy than the laity, which formed a dividing line.<sup>51</sup> Down the ages, the declarations of Pope Pius XI, who said that sex can be good and holy, and Pope John Paul II, who stated that fidelity in marriage is equal to virginity, place celibacy and matrimony on the same footing.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, it cannot be presumed that celibacy is holier than married life. This is consistent with Vatican II's teaching in *Lumen Gentium* that in Baptism, everyone is called to universal holiness.

*“The classes and duties of life are many, but holiness is one ... Every person must walk in holiness unhesitatingly according to his own personal gifts and duties.”*<sup>53</sup>

### **3. Theology of Laity**

#### **3.1. Every Christian is gifted by the Holy Spirit**

*Redemptoris Missio* states that the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of the whole of the Church’s mission.<sup>54</sup> In the life of the Church, the Holy Spirit was not given preference prior to the Second Vatican Council. That Council began to give renewed importance to the presence and works of the Holy Spirit. It acknowledged that Jesus laid the foundation and the Holy Spirit animates the pilgrim Church. In order to build the Body of Christ, the Spirit commissions each member of the Church according to His free will (1 Cor. 12:4-11). The biblical notion of charism that was reiterated in *Lumen Gentium* played an influential role in the understanding of the whole people of God’s participation in the life of the Church through works of the Holy Spirit:

*“The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful ... He guides the Church in the way of all truth and, uniting it in fellowship and ministry, bestows upon it different charismatic gifts ... Allotting his gifts “at will to each individual,” he makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks for the renewal and building up of the Church.”*<sup>55</sup>

This asserts fundamentally that everyone is given some charism and everything is *to and for* the Church *through* the individual believer (1 Cor. 12). Cecilia Anning comments that all the baptized are not simply members of the Church, rather practically, “ARE the Church.”<sup>56</sup>

More importantly, *Lumen Gentium* admitted that even though the magisterium is guided by the Holy Spirit, every Christian faithful is gifted by the Holy Spirit to discern God’s Will. There is “a universal participation in matters of faith and morals...from the bishops to the last of the faithful.”<sup>57</sup> *Dei Verbum* similarly points out that in collaboration with the magisterium, the Christian faithful contribute to the tradition by pondering and experiencing an intimate sense of spiritual realities.<sup>58</sup> Though Catholic doctrine notes that by the virtue of the apostolic office, the

bishops, including the bishop of Rome, are the guardians of the faith, Cardinal John Henry Newman observes that the testimony of the faithful also contribute to their reception of faith that has been passed on. That is why, Newman, in his vision of the Church, sees the whole Church as both teacher and learner and says that the tradition has been developed through the “breathing together of the faithful and the pastors.”<sup>59</sup>

### **3.2. All the Baptized participate in the Common Priesthood:**

Even though Pope Pius X (AD 1903-1914) began to realize that the Church was an “unequal society” clergy and the laity, the Second Vatican Council, as a catalyst for change, brought a great revival through renewed understanding of the Church.<sup>60</sup> The fundamental equality and dignity of all Christians was established in the Council especially by using the term *Christifideles*, the common priesthood of all believers in baptism.<sup>61</sup> *Lumen Gentium* describes:

*“The faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the People of God; they are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ; and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world.”*<sup>62</sup>

Thus, baptism is the basis of all Christian service, which invites the whole Church to assume responsibility in unity and with equality of everyone in the Church. In Baptism, all Christians become like Christ, so all can be identified as *in persona Christi*;<sup>63</sup> Avery Dulles refers to this as the “community of disciples.”<sup>64</sup> Pope John Paul II invoked that

*“There is so much need today for mature Christian personalities, conscious of their baptismal identity, of their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world!”*<sup>65</sup>

Pope Francis, in his *Evangelii Gaudium*, confirms that baptism and confirmation grounds the identity and mission of the laity in the Church.<sup>66</sup> He says:

*“The ministerial priesthood is one means employed by Jesus for the service of his people, yet our great dignity derives from baptism, which is accessible to all.”*<sup>67</sup>

Richard M. Gula says that instead of a hierarchical model, the communal model maintains the truth that even though there are various roles, responsibilities, and offices in the Church, we are fundamentally equal through baptism.<sup>68</sup>

### **3.3. Participation of Laity in the whole life of the Church to transform the World**

Since God exists as a communion of persons, God is basically relational. Human beings are created in the image of a relational God, so they are called into union with God. Naturally, communion with the Triune God is inseparable from communion among believers. The Church, as the people of God, participates in the Trinitarian life of God. According to *Lumen Gentium*, laity, religious, and clergy are considered equal by the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>69</sup> Edward Hahnenberg, however, points out that distinguishing the secular character of the laity and the sacred character of the ordained practically separates the Church.<sup>70</sup> Although *Lumen Gentium* states that “the Church is not first clergy and ecclesiastical structures, but is the *whole Church*: the people of God, the *Christifideles*, a priesthood of all believers,” the notion of ‘clergy are primarily responsible for the Church and laity are primarily responsible for the world’ is nevertheless insisted upon continuously by the Council.<sup>71</sup> The council’s most mature document, according to Richard Gaillardetz, *Gaudium et spes*, nonetheless, declares two aspects: The laity, not only to animate the world with the spirit of Christianity, but also are called to participate actively in the whole life of the Church,<sup>72</sup> and not only the laity, but the whole Church “is to be a leaven and the soul of human society in its renewal by Christ and transformation into the family of God.”<sup>73</sup> This eradicates the notion of distinguishing between a sacred clergy and a secular laity. Thus, the vital point of my contemporary theology of pastoral ministry, is to affirm the fundamental equality of all the baptized. In dignity, the laity are absolutely equal to those in



ordained and religious life, and that serving the reign of God in the Church and in the world is the responsibility of the whole Church (clergy and laity).

#### **4. Theology of Ministry**

##### **4.1. Christ and Spirit - the ultimate source of every ministry:**

Adopting Irenaeus's image of the Word and Spirit as the two hands of God, Yves Congar insisted that the unity of the two divine missions that Christ and the Spirit together institute the Church, and both of them fill it with life. Consequently, every ministry receives its ultimate source from Christ and the Spirit.<sup>74</sup> In a broader sense, in every pastoral ministry, I see the covenantal relationship between God and minister (clergy/laity), where God is the source and center of the ministry and the minister becomes the steward of God for the community. God calls us in love and we respond in freedom. He entrusts His ministry to us and we accept His trust and do His ministry. As Gula mentions, this covenantal relationship brings something more than just ourselves: we become the "symbolic representative of the holy," by representing God and the Church to others. There is some "sacred weight" in our being and doing, so people relate with us as if they were relating with God or God's ambassador. That is why people entrust their secrets, sins and fears to their ministers. Realizing this symbolic significance of sacred trust, every minister is called to be faithful to God, to others, and to the Church without abusing, betraying, or exploiting.<sup>75</sup> This is how I see the holiness, dignity and value of "ministry."

##### **4.2. Understanding of Ministry from Vatican II**

Ministry, according to Bishop Fritz Lobinger, was seen for many centuries as the work of the priest, and the work of lay people was regarded as "helping the priest" in his ministry. However, Vatican II downplayed the word 'help' and used the word 'ministry' including for the works of the laity.<sup>76</sup> Another fruit of the Vatican II is the new understanding of the material and

spiritual realms. It clarified that both are from the Lord. This holistic understanding uplifted the concept of ministry from merely sacramental service to all kinds of services led by the Spirit for the reign of God. As Jesus' life shows that He ministered in the streets and market places, feeding the poor, healing the sick, and proclaiming the Gospel, today's ministers need to attend to all kinds of needs of the people.<sup>77</sup>

### **4.3. Ecclesiology of Communion in Ministry**

God is a God of communion as the Triune God and communion means Love! As we participate in His life, we are called to live as a communion of communities. According to Pope Francis, the Lord's disciples living as a community become the salt of the earth and the light of the world (cf. Mt. 5:13-16); and every parish is considered "as community of communities and a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey."<sup>78</sup> This is the central point of the Second Vatican Council, for Bishop Fritz Lobinger, where a new ecclesiology has been realized i.e. 'Ecclesiology of communion.'<sup>79</sup> The Synod of 1985 reaffirmed it: "Because the Church is communion, there must be participation and co-responsibility at all of her levels."<sup>80</sup> During the talk on Ministries in SCCs, Bishop Fritz Lobinger spoke from the perspective of ecclesiology that many are afraid that the establishment of lay ministries could bring a parallel clergy that is considered as "clericalization of the laity," but in truth, both ordained and non-ordained are embedded in the vision of ecclesiology of community, rather than in an outdated ecclesiology of status. This is not parallel work, but community work where differences of role and ordination exist in an ecclesiology of community. Lobinger emphasized that the Church moves away from "thinking in categories" that is to say, "away from categories of laity and clergy, away from categories of shepherds and sheep," away from considering one group as giving ministry, the other as receiving it. He even objected to the notion that "the age of the laity

is coming,” because it leads to category-thinking, which will provoke an idea of shifting the importance from clergy to laity. Instead, “our ecclesiology is not a shift between categories, but it is a vision of community.”<sup>81</sup>

#### **4.4. Distinctiveness of Ministry**

The U.S. Catholic Bishops’ groundbreaking document: *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry* is the key resource for my project. As St. Paul describes Prisca and Aquilas “my co-workers in Christ Jesus,” the Bishops mention the laity as co-workers in God’s vineyard with the ordained.<sup>82</sup> According to *Co-Workers*, there is a distinction between discipleship and ministry. Though all are called to be disciples by baptism, ministry is something to which someone is called by community. For example, if one feeds the hungry by sharing food voluntarily, one is responding to the baptismal call as a disciple of Jesus feeding the hungry; if the parish is inviting someone to help a parish feeding organization to distribute food to the homeless, then he or she is called to ministry. The reason is that a person is called by the community and a person serves in the name of the Church community in a formal and public way and to which he is held accountable. In other cases, persons may identify their own charisms and may volunteer to join the parish ministry or in some cases, the parish community may identify a charism of a person and will invite him/ her to join a particular parish ministry. Hence, there is no ministry without the participation of community, through a process of discerning whether a person is called to a particular ministry, even if a person volunteers.<sup>83</sup> *Ad Gentes* also confirms that every ministry is an ecclesial task in the name of the whole community of faithful.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, *Co-Workers* lists distinct characteristics of lay ecclesial ministers such as: “(i) a personal call; (ii) ecclesial discernment and recognition of a

genuine charism; (iii) formation and education, appropriate to the demands of the ministry; (iv) ecclesial authorization; and (v) some liturgical ritualization of assuming this ministry.”<sup>85</sup>

#### **4.5. Model of concentric circles for ministry**

Thomas O’Meara developed Yves Congar’s theology of Church through a model of concentric circles. In the dividing-line model, there was a bipolar division between clergy and laity, but in the concentric model, the whole Church’s responsibility is facilitated by both the ordained and non-ordained.<sup>86</sup> In this model, the community is the context within which a multitude of ministries are present. According to Hahnenberg, ‘concentric circles’ is the fundamental model of ministry. Nevertheless, according to Vijay, the Indian Church has been following more of linear model where clergy takes the upper hand and the laity is expected to serve the clergy. If the concentric vision of ministries begins to flourish in India, then clergy-laity mutuality will increase and will bear more fruits in the life of the Church.<sup>87</sup>

Following Congar and O’Meara, Hahnenberg lists four levels of ministry:<sup>88</sup> (i) The center circle signifies ‘Leadership of Communities’ and includes the leaders who coordinate all the different ministries of the parish, such as Bishop, priest pastor, pastoral coordinator (deacon or lay minister); (ii) The next outward circle represents ‘Leadership of Areas of Ministry.’ This includes all full-time leaders of important fields of ministry in the community such as: religious education directors, youth ministers, music/liturgy ministers, to name a few. (iii) A third circle portrays ‘Occasional Public Ministries’ in which those who serve in part-time and occasional ministries are noted. (iv) The last but largest circle is ‘General Christian Ministry’ in which all the baptized who are called to serve through life witness and charity are present. These distinctions are not for dividing, but for affirming identity in order to appreciate diversity and to expand the variety of services. While comparing the different levels of ministries in the Indian

context, despite not having full time working ministers in the Indian parishes, I agree with Vijay that ministries of PCs, SCCs, Catechism, family apostolate, youth movement, care of the sick and aged, to name a few fall into in the second circle ‘Leadership of Areas of Ministry.’<sup>89</sup>

#### **4.6. Collaboration of Laity and Clergy in Ministry**

Pope Francis teaches that when the priesthood is configured to Christ the head, it “does not imply an exaltation which would set him above others,” and the “hierarchical” power is understood only in administering the sacrament of the Eucharist which intrinsically calls for service to God’s people not dominating them.<sup>90</sup> There is a reciprocal responsibility of ordained and non-ordained in the service of one mission through various ministries.<sup>91</sup> Since the contemporary Church needs a multitude of ministers and a multiplicity of ministries, there is an urgent need for clear development in our official theology and canon law to acknowledge and honor the professional character of ministry.<sup>92</sup> “Ministry” is no longer reserved for the ordained; rather many are invited. Some respond with commitment and get theological training and the forms of instruction and supervision necessary to their ministry, and they are commissioned by the bishop or his delegate to minister on behalf of the diocese or parish, and are called “lay ecclesial ministers.” The distinction between these ministers and other laity is illustrated by the U.S. bishops that the distinction is “not by reason of merit, but by reason of a call to service ..., by the response of the person, and by an act of authorizing by the proper ecclesiastical authority (cf. Luke 10:1).”<sup>93</sup>

In the 4<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of FABC in 2006, Asian Integral Pastoral Approach (AsIPA) stated as one of the challenges of the Asian Church that lay leaders are yet to be given their rightful place in decision making bodies at the parish and diocese levels.<sup>94</sup> Hahnenberg explains that the Church can change because it has changed in the past. The Clergy, hence, needs to shift

from being ‘THE minister’ to becoming ‘a ministerial coordinator of many ministries.’<sup>95</sup> When we bring theology into conversation with other fields, the ordained ministers can collaborate with lay expertise in different fields such as medicine, business, law, education, and therapy. This will bring to ministry the practical wisdom of the entire community.<sup>96</sup> The U.S. bishops expressed their great desire for “the fruitful collaboration of ordained and lay ministers who, in distinct but complementary ways, continue in the Church the saving mission of Christ for the world, his vineyard.”<sup>97</sup> Arulsamy observes that collaboration is not to be understood as “a concession from the clergy, or for the sake of efficiency,” but is the basic nature and constitution of the Church.<sup>98</sup> Thus, creativity, vision, and the commitment of pastors and lay ministers, for William E. Simon, join in collaboration to move “the mission of Jesus Christ forward in the Church.”<sup>99</sup>

#### **4.7. Pope Francis’ vision of Church and Shared Leadership**

*Evangelii Gaudium*, according to Gerard Mannion, provides Pope Francis’ vision and agenda for the Church. When I read this extensive document, I was renewed with great hope for the future Church. Pope Francis’ vision of ecclesiology focuses on openness, inclusivity, and dialogue which are very much pertaining to the Indian culture. Pope Francis’ vision, according to Mannion, excludes nobody, for the Church in its compassion always keeps open its doors:

*“Frequently, we act as arbiters of grace rather than its facilitators. But the Church is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems.”*<sup>100</sup>

According to Doyle, comparing Popes John Paul II and Benedict II to Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis gives stronger emphasis in understanding the Church as the People of God; he mentioned this at least twenty-five times in order to reinforce the truth that the Church is more than an organic and hierarchical institution, and the evangelizing mission of the Church is not just the clergy and religious, but everyone which includes laity.<sup>101</sup> According to Mannion,

Pope Francis embraces the ecclesiological legacy of Vatican II on the commitment to the vocation of the laity and breaks the hierarchical vision of the Church: “Lay people are, put simply, the vast majority of the people of God. The minority – ordained ministers – are at their service.”<sup>102</sup>

God calls us through us; hence the community is responsible for discerning vocations and inviting new people for ministry.<sup>103</sup> There should be ongoing mentorship of current leaders and the development of future leaders in this disciple-making ministry. Collaboration, delegation, and consultation, for Simon, play a vital role in shared leadership. The exceptionally enthusiastic leadership of Pope Francis is the greatest model for the collaborative shared leadership style.<sup>104</sup> Hahnenberg comments that ministry marks not dominance or authoritarianism, but collegiality in communion as the people of God. Ideally, leadership is not domination but direction; not power but service.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, on the one hand, for Gula, we need to actively affirm, support, and reward our ministerial colleagues, on the other hand, be courageous to challenge, correct, and even dismiss those who are not suitable for their ministries.<sup>106</sup> On the whole, Pope Francis calls for ministers to follow more a pastoral than administrative approach, because many give importance to administering the sacraments and parishes, rather than evangelizing and taking on the “smell of the sheep”<sup>107</sup> In our Indian context, the ministries in North India can be called ‘mission Churches,’ and the ministries in South India may be called ‘maintenance Churches.’

## **5. Importance of Formation for Lay Ministers**

Pope Francis underlines the truth, for Mannion, that the full responsibility of the laity is not always acknowledged.<sup>108</sup> While describing the present ecclesial challenges in *Evangelii Gaudium*, he gives two reasons why the awareness of the identity of the laity has not grown: (i) the laity “have not been given the formation needed to take on important responsibilities;” (ii)

laity have been kept “away from decision-making” “due to an excessive clericalism.” And he admits that “the formation of the laity ... and intellectual life represent a significant pastoral challenge.”<sup>109</sup> FABC’s AsIPA’s Final Statement of 4<sup>th</sup> Assembly emphasized that every Christian needs to be enlightened by the Gospel and empowered by the Sacraments, and that in order to achieve this, there should be “on-going formation and training for all sectors of the parish community.”<sup>110</sup> *Co-Workers* also emphasized formation, education, and preparation appropriate to the level of responsibility assigned to the lay leaders as one of the special requirements of lay ecclesial ministers.<sup>111</sup> They mainly insist not only the spiritual holiness, but more importantly the human dimension or “mature emotional balance,” intellectual and pastoral formation which are common in the formation for priesthood and diaconate.<sup>112</sup>

As Pope Francis, FABC, and USCCB have admonished, I totally agree with McCord that giving more importance to offering high-quality formation will make the lay ministry integral to the life of the Church.<sup>113</sup> Jewell and Ramey recognize that the emphasis on formation of lay ministers is not simply to fill the lack of priests, but it is “the Church’s full realization of its call.”<sup>114</sup> Wolfeich writes that ministers must continually increase their knowledge, practical wisdom, and the skills required for serving the Christian faith in society, through learning practical theology.<sup>115</sup> A 2002 survey revealed that there were 314 ministry formation programs across the United States in which over 34,000 laity were participating, preparing to involve in various ministries in the Church.<sup>116</sup> Among them, 9% are given an academic degree, 42% are given either a degree or a certificate, and the remaining 49% are certificate programs.<sup>117</sup> In order to sustain lay ministries, financial support to strengthen the formation programs is key. For example, the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (ACJU) has a consortium for



pastoral and theological education for the purpose of sharing training courses and programs for the laity in the U.S. This will foster excellence in lay ministry.<sup>118</sup>

In the present Indian Catholic Church, lay leadership is crucial and fundamental to the success of vibrant parishes. Many lay ministers are participating in ministries in the Church, for which they have not been trained formally and systematically, there is a great need to invite, train, and empower gifted and dedicated lay leaders to assume vital roles in parish leadership. Lobinger advocates for good training of lay ministers through which the attitude of being mere helpers will be changed and the notion of equality will be developed. Some of the key factors he identifies are: (i) training must be on-going and unending; (ii) it must be qualitative and confidence-giving; (iii) it should be available to many more people especially as teams; (iv) it needs to be given close to the local community; (v) not too expensive; (vi) spiritual formation must be included. When I read his points, I felt one with him and I included all his suggestions in my tentative pastoral plan that will be described in the next chapter.

## **6. Pastoral Significance of the Indian Church**

Realizing the significant necessity of ecclesiology of communion of communities, collaboration, co-operation, and co-ordination for the renewed mission of the Church in India as the continuation of the call of Vatican II, the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI), which represents 18 million Catholics of Latin Rite, from 129 Dioceses of India<sup>119</sup>, formulated the pastoral plan for the Church in India in 2013. Bishop Singaroyan Sebastianappan, bishop of my diocese of Salem, was one among the three bishops who, as a committee, prepared the final text of this pastoral plan.<sup>120</sup> The plan explained that Small Christian Communities (SCCs) that were formed successfully in various dioceses are perceived as a ‘new way of being Church.’ *Redemptoris Missio* stated:

*“These communities are a sign of vitality within the Church, an instrument of formation and evangelization, and a starting point for a new society: a ‘civilization of love.’”<sup>121</sup>*

The CCBI acknowledged the greater reality that bishops, priests, and religious need to focus more on pastoral work than administration in order to empower the evangelizing mission. Also, it emphasized practicing “transparency, accountability, and a participative process of decision-making and functioning.”<sup>122</sup> To promote a participatory Church in the spirit of Vatican II and the 1983 Code of Canon Law, the CCBI required the formation of PCs and Finance Committees in parishes and dioceses.

In this pastoral plan, the CCBI proclaimed that the Profession of the faith (in the Triune God), the Celebration of the faith (in Worship and Prayer), the Living out of the faith (in Service), and the Sharing of the faith (through Proclamation) are the key dimensions of the life and mission of the Church in India. It observed that Catholics struggle with “contemporary divergent thinking on sexuality, marriage, divorce, contraception, and abortion,” and family prayer is not practiced as it used be in the past.<sup>123</sup> In solidarity with the bishops of Asia, Pope Francis also pointed out that as globalization becomes the cultural challenge, traditional cultural values, especially “the sacredness of marriage and the stability of the family” are undermined by the media and entertainment industries.<sup>124</sup> The CCBI points out that non-Catholic sects pull Catholics away from the Church. The survey that I conducted confirms this point (see Table 1). All these facts, according to CCBI, call for urgent training of comprehensive catechesis for all (children, youth, adults) based on the CCC to nurture and deepen the faith and to attain a well-formed Catholic life.<sup>125</sup> Even after the Vatican II has categorically brought to light the all-important role and the place of the Laity in the Church there is so much of resistance and cynicism prevailing among the clergy and the people about this clarion call of the Council. Hence, according to my bishop Singaroyan Sebastianappan, the most important home work to be

done now is to conscientize the clergy and religious about the rightful role of the Lay people in the church and make them accept in practical terms. Additionally, the CCBI document affirms that various lay movements and associations may become instruments to make this faith formation process possible. This is precisely what I am driving at in this pastoral synthesis paper and I propose a tentative pastoral plan in the next chapter. Before exploring my plan, since PCs and SCCs are my focus group, I briefly consider theological notions about PCs and SCCs now.

### **7. Role of Parish Councils (PCs)**

While Cecilia Anning explores the need and function of PCs, she finds their foundation in the strong recommendation of Vatican II's *Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People*:

*In dioceses, as far as possible, councils should be set up to assist the Church's apostolic work, whether in the field of making the gospel known and people holy or in charitable, social or other spheres.*<sup>126</sup>

PCs proposed by Vatican II, for Anning, are considered as powerful vehicles to advocate “an enriched understanding and an active implementation of the role of the People of God” to continue God’s mission in and through Church. Since Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist bring forth the equality of dignity of all members (clergy and laity), PCs become outward signs of shared ministry in the Church.<sup>127</sup> Every PC consists of the Parish Priest and a group of parishioners chosen by the parish community.<sup>128</sup> Parish communities, for Jewell and Ramey, need to select more visionary and parishioners who can articulate and develop the parish mission.<sup>129</sup> Ideally, the members of PCs represent the whole parish, for each SCC chooses one representative for their PC, and thus, the PC covers, geographically, the whole parish. As Anning mentions, I also see that PCs have greater responsibilities and functions such as:<sup>130</sup> (i) to understand and respond to the hopes, needs, and concerns of parishioners; (ii) to facilitate parishioners to connect the faith that they believe and profess with their day-to-day life so that

they may be strengthened with hope to face the challenges and difficulties; (iii) Accordingly, they have to set long-term and short-term pastoral goals to grow, implement, and make better parish life. Thus, PCs can furnish different ways for parishioners to discover, or rediscover their baptismal call to God's mission in order to transform the world. They are the stewards for the good of the community. In short, PCs have great responsibility to raise the quality of Christian life through parish life.

### **8. Life of Small Christian Communities (SCCs)**

SCCs, according to Pope John Paul II, are “seedbeds for new ministries” and “an instrument of formation and evangelization.”<sup>131</sup> In 1992, the FABC illustrates that Laity, Religious, and Clergy each grow in the spirit of acknowledging and admitting each other as ‘a quasi-sacramental presence of the Risen Lord,’ and started forming SCCs through which the Church in Asia becomes communion of communities.<sup>132</sup> The Seventh Plenary Assembly of the FABC reiterated in 2000: “Fully rooted in the life of the Trinity, the Church in Asia has to be a communion of communities of authentic participation and co-responsibility.”<sup>133</sup> Every individual SCC is formed by joining together neighborhood Catholic families (between 20 through 40). They are relatively a small group and every parish has a number of SCCs according to their population. The purposes of SCCs are, as in the early Church, praying together, reading and sharing the Word of God, living it in their daily lives by serving and supporting each other in one mind and heart.<sup>134</sup>

Regarding the multiple functions of SCCs, Joo Hyun Ro, using different documents of FABC, enlisted twelve main characteristics of SCCs:<sup>135</sup> (i) Christ-centered-sharing the Word of God within their small communities; (ii) building up a community of communion; (iii) service and witness to faith in the world; (iv) participation and co-responsibility of the laity especially

women; (v) unity with the universal Church; (vi) integration of life and faith; (vii) ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue; (viii) a shared participatory and collaborative leadership; (ix) manifestation of spirituality and discernment; (x) evangelization through words and deeds; (xi) inculturation; (xii) the Eucharistic communities. Now, I will present a tentative pastoral plan for the Church in India, especially for the Tamil Nadu region, in the following chapter.

#### **IV. THE PROJECT COMPONENT**

My Graduate theological studies, thirteen years of priestly pastoral experiences (especially having had four years of experience in U.S.), and the voice of the laity in the sample survey have all influenced and complemented toward creating my tentative pastoral plan. This project component unpacks a framework for the whole plan. I emphasize that this plan does not, in any way, set limits, but can be the starting point for a more thorough study on what can be done for the empowerment of the laity in the Indian Church.

##### **1. Target Group for the tentative plan**

The CCBI reported in the Indian pastoral plan that the Church must identify and train gifted and interested laity to be evangelizers; however, the Church has been doing this for the past 30 years, and the result has not been satisfactory. First, the numbers of people who participate in various formations are few. Second, those who participate in formation programs, have often not been recognized or utilized in the parish ministries, and because of that some of them get involved in individual ministries rather than collaborating with parish life. Third, many of those who are in different leadership roles such as members of PCs and SCCs are not interested in formation programs; hence, unless they are required to do so, many of them will never get into any kind of formation by themselves.

Therefore, I would like to choose three kinds of lay ministers as a target group for my project. They are: (i) the members of Parish Councils (PCs); (ii) the leaders of Small Christian Communities (SCCs); and (iii) the Catechism Teachers (CTs). Through these three groups, more lay leaders will participate in trainings, and since they participate as official representatives of their parish communities, they will have a sense of belonging to their community and will get involved in parish life and implement what they learn.

## **2. Reasons to choose leaders of PCs, SCCs, and CTs as Target Group**

The contribution of members of PCs, SCCs, and CTs to the life of the Church in India has been highly appreciated. Nevertheless, some negative realities continue to exist such as: lay leaders of PCs and SCCs mostly depend upon clergy for faith matters, which leads to clericalism, where whatever the priest says they simply follow; some do not have deep conviction in the Catholic faith, rather they simply want to be leaders for the sake of honor; many priests get resistance from them to bringing renewal to parishes for the betterment of the faithful; some lay leaders are not able to encounter or confront the ideologies of other religious people; while youth and children come up with plenty of doubts and questions regarding faith and life of Church, lay leaders find it difficult to answer or guide them. In many places, leaders concentrate more on building construction and/or maintenance of their Church buildings, rather than caring for persons, they give preference neither to charitable works, nor spend for progressive evangelization programs. Ironically, in all these decisions, the lay leaders of PCs and SCCs play a vital role.

In fact, on the one hand, all the functions of PCs and features of SCCs that are mentioned above in theological component, reveal how important the members of PCs and SCCs are for the life of the Church, but on the other hand, negative realities prove that they have not been given

formation to accomplish their responsibilities. This raises a question: how can the leaders of SCCs and the members of PCs, who have been trained only on how to conduct their meetings, but not much about theological and Scriptural knowledge and faith, lead and guide people and parishes? I have been wondering whether their regular participation of mass and liturgy, their spiritually exemplary lives, and leadership talents are enough to fulfill the responsibilities of SCCs and PCs.

Regarding CTs, it was the lay leaders, who participated in the survey and video conference, who suggested to me that I include CTs in this target group. The reason is that since faith formation and catechism need to be taught in depth from the childhood and young age, those who teach Catechism in parishes and schools must be well-informed and experienced in the integral knowledge of the Catholic faith. It is true that most of them have not undergone any kind of systematic formation. Rather they are usually chosen as CTs by the parish priests either because they are already teachers in school (any subject teachers) or because of their voluntary interest. Having said the above, I want to make it clear that choosing these three group as the focus group is not to establish a new rank or order or hierarchy among the laity or other ministries. Instead, it is because of the nature of these ministries which involve dynamics of the whole parish.

### **3. Need for the ‘Integral Christian Growth Formation for the Lay Leaders’**

Precisely in order to accomplish all responsibilities and functions of PCs and SCCs, and to eradicate the above negatives drawbacks, I strongly believe that the members of PCs, SCCs and CTs must be enriched in their faith and Christian life. For that reason, they need to be provided an advanced foundational faith formation. Hence, I propose a tentative pastoral program: *“Integral Christian Growth Formation for Lay Leaders.”* If lay ministers are given a

qualitative formation, they will be well-prepared to better contribute to the ministry for the good of the community, the Church, and the society. The most profound reason for the formation of lay leaders is not simply the basic formation of catechism for the initiation of Sacraments and the preparation for the marriage, but is an *advanced* Christian formation of the Laity. It will achieve the characteristics of increase of involvement of laity as disciples in intentional parish planning and visioning. As Jewell and Ramey say, the lay engagement which will be accomplished through this progressive formation will not just be beneficial, but is “a question of call, vision, and the realization of a mature Church in the twenty-first century.”<sup>136</sup>

Indeed, in line with the Second Vatican Council, the FABC, and the CCBI, the Tamil Nadu Bishops Council (TNBC) also urge and insist on comprehensive formation programs for the laity to become a well-formed Catholics. When the TNBC published a regional pastoral plan of the Catholic Church in Tamil Nadu in 2008, two of the important plans proposed by the Laity Commission: laity have to be given theological training in order to be strengthened in their faith to face the present contextual challenges in Church and society, and laity need to be encouraged to participate and get benefits from certificate courses in theology and Scripture.<sup>137</sup> Thus, visible, tangible, and consistent emphasis on the formation of lay ministers as disciples is the indispensable ministry of the Church and this formation may also contribute to this vision in a systematic way.

#### **4. Target Region: Tamil Nadu State, India**

I concentrate on Tamil Nadu as the target region for my plan. As a Tamil priest, I received a great opportunity to gain some ecclesial knowledge and experience of the Church in Tamil Nadu while I was a director of pastoral ministries of my diocese of Salem. As a director for six years (2006-2012), I was involved in formation of SCCs, lay leaders trainings, youth



ministry, Charismatic ministry, and Communication and Media. I collaborated with all other dioceses of Tamil Nadu (20 dioceses). This rich experience has been an influence on me now to create a practical pastoral plan for the empowerment of laity. I then turn to the sample survey that I have developed in preparation of this project.

## 5. Sample Survey

In order to learn the present situation of the laity and their desires and needs, and to make sure I am on the same page as the lay ministers, I prepared a questionnaire and invited 100 lay leaders from 20 parishes of diocese of Salem to respond. They are members of either PCs and/or SCCs. To my surprise, their sharing confirmed the profound need for my plan. The answers to the survey are described in the table below:

TABLE 2. Formation of lay leaders and its benefits

Is there a decline in the number of candidates for the priesthood? Yes – 97. No – 3.

	No	Needed	Important	Must
Will formation facilitate laity to lead future Church?	8	29	39	24
Is continual formation necessary for twice a year?	3	29	30	38
Is growth formation necessary to lay leaders?	5	23	34	38

<i>On what subjects or topics lay leaders need to acquire basics of the Catholic Faith?</i>		
Scriptural	Theological	Pastoral
i. Scripture – 85 ii. Scriptural Theology – 67 iii. Sacraments – 77 iv. Liturgy – 82	v. Theology – 68 vi. Church/Ecclesiology – 69 vii. Moral Theology – 75 viii. Canon Law – 78	ix. Practical Theology – 75 x. Spirituality – 81 xi. Psychology – 71 xii. Leadership – 84

<i>Integral Formation for Lay Leaders is beneficial...</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Not bad</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
To individual & family life	10	34	31	25
To Parish ministry life	12	27	35	26
To Society and Communal life	13	35	26	26
To increase lay participation	8	27	38	27
When number of clergy declines, laity will be able to lead the Church in future	7	28	39	26

After the survey, I conducted a video conference with 12 lay leaders who participated in the survey to consolidate the results of the whole survey. After getting their feedback, I modified my plans accordingly. For example, since CTs train future generations, they proposed that they be included in the target group. I will now expand the mechanics of how this project works.

## **6. The Diocese of Salem as a Sample**

In the Tamil Nadu region, I take the diocese of Salem to which I belong, as a sample and explain how my pastoral plan could be executed: According to the diocesan statistics of 2017, there are around 86,000 Catholics living in the diocese of Salem, Tamil Nadu, India.<sup>138</sup> It has 60 parishes that are divided into five vicariates: Salem, Mettur, Tiruchengode, Namakkal, and Attur. According to the director of SCCs, nearly 750 SCCs exist throughout the diocese, which are guided by more than 2,200 lay leaders. There are approximately 700 lay leaders who actively participate in the leadership role as members of PCs. As we have seen earlier, many of them are chosen from SCCs. Hence, I take it for granted that 200 of them might have been chosen from outside SCCs such as leaders of various associations and movements including of socio/professional/political leaders. Around 600 Catechism teachers are involved in the formation of children and youth in parishes and Catholic schools. As a result, a total of 3,000 lay leaders (2,200 from SCCs, 200 from PCs, and 600 CTs) constitute the focus group. There will be a change of leaders in PCs and SCCs once in three or five years. The current 3,000 lay leaders are involved in different important ministries of parishes, take part in decision makings of parish growth activities, and participate in educating and forming present and future generations.

## **7. Courses or Subjects of Formation Program**

Some of the topics Anning proposed for formation of lay leaders are: Scripture, Theology, Spirituality, Christian Ministry, Skills-development, Nature of Church, Leadership,

Communication skills, and Pastoral planning skills.<sup>139</sup> Jewell and Ramey also insist upon establishing adult catechesis courses and pastoral theology studies for laity.<sup>140</sup> Considering them, in the sample survey, I proposed 12 subjects, but the response of lay leaders provoked me to make some changes such as: since people feel Scripture must be given more importance, I increased one more day for Scripture to deal with O.T. and N.T. separately; at the same time I combined Spirituality and Psychology into one subject. Most importantly, as the Church in India faces a crisis with regard to the influences of non-Catholic sects and their spreading of misconceptions about Catholic practices, lay leaders want to know and understand concretely the similarities and differences between Catholicism and other Christian sects and other religions. Furthermore, according to Gerard Mannion, the way Pope Francis gives prominence to pastoral care over doctrinal hardline stances shows that he would encourage more wide-reaching ecumenical and interfaith dialogue.<sup>141</sup> I too believe that ecumenical education and interfaith relations are crucially needed to face the crisis of religious fundamentalism in India. Hence, I included: ‘Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Faith.’ Finally, here are the modified twelve subjects or courses, which are divided under three major tracks:

TABLE 3. Courses for Integral Growth Formation for Lay Leaders

Scriptural	Theological	Pastoral
i. Old Testament	v. Theology	ix. Practical/Pastoral Theology
ii. New Testament	vi. Church/Ecclesiology	x. Spirituality & Psychology
iii. Sacraments	vii. Moral Theology	xi. Ecumenism & Inter-religious
iv. Liturgy	viii. Canon Law	xii. Leadership & Social Justice

These topics mirror the major topics seminarians study in the priestly formation in major seminaries. Thus, I name the plan: “Integral Growth Formation.” Nevertheless, Pope Francis himself acknowledges that it is sometimes difficult to understand the Church’s teachings and some may not appreciate them at first, for “faith always remains something of a cross.”<sup>142</sup> Since

each subject is handled for only one day in order that it not lose its depth and truth, the message has to concentrate on the essentials in a simplified form which will be convincing to the people.<sup>143</sup> This will be a seminar type class where participants will be given opportunity for questions, group discussion, and sharing of personal, professional, and theological wisdom. Participants will be provided with introductory materials on the particular topic prior to the meeting. Every seminar will begin with the questions: what did they find interesting, helpful or surprising in the reading? What comments or questions does it raise? On the whole, every topic will be substantiated from Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

### **8. Extra resources of Print media, Website, and Mobile App**

Besides attending these seminars, participants will be provided books and materials for further studies. Moreover, there is a plan to create a user friendly mobile application and a separate website, in which the participants can access multiple study materials, video clippings, rewarding quizzes, and authentic website links that are relevant to each topic. This may be helpful for those who are interested in deeper learning on. Creative and interactive materials for children's catechism, and a youth motivation seminar also will be accessible. The website will be updated regularly by the coordinating team.

### **9. Coordinating Team and Resource Persons**

A coordinating team is the heart of this pastoral mission. Those who have a clear vision and interest in lay ministry, according to the spirit of Vatican II and contemporary theological reflections, can be formed into a team to coordinate the entire plan throughout the diocese. Ironically, the diocese of Salem already has a tradition to assign one priest as a director taking care of three Commissions combined: the Commission for Laity, the Commission for Small Christian Communities, and the Commission for Catechism. Hence, it would be easy if the

director of these three ministries is willing to include this lay formation plan as one of his other plans and be the director of the coordinating team. It would be appreciated if the Bishop could identify and assign three or four priests, who have a thirst for teaching, forming, and empowering the laity to be resource persons for leading these seminars, to achieve the plan. My consistent persuasiveness calls me to be one among them as a personal commitment. Consequently, I suggest that the coordinating team can consist of four priests, two religious volunteers, ten lay ministers (two from each vicariate as representatives), one full time lay minister as a coordinator of the whole program, and the director. Totally, it would consist of 18 members. Though there is director, he acts as a facilitator, and the lay coordinator is the head of this team. The coordinating team has to meet once in two months, but it may need to meet more often in its starting stage. The bishop and vicar general will monitor the work of this team.

Appointing a coordinator, as a full time lay minister, to support and serve PCs of the diocese is the key element of developing this formation program vibrantly. The coordinator needs to have passion and vision in empowering laity. It is better to have a professionally trained and a matured person; otherwise, the candidate must be sent for some short term theological formation course. Coordinator has to work every day in the office. His/her responsibilities are namely: preparing materials for each subject through coordinating team; regular communication with lay leaders of parishes and parish priests regarding schedule and current activities; providing support, resources, and guidance to concerns and queries of members of PCs, SCCs, and CTs of the diocese; arranging place, materials, and necessary things for every month's seminar; information and reminders to resource persons; and most importantly, updating the website and mobile app. At the same time, the coordinator must be paid well by the diocese. Hopefully, in the future, every vicariate shall have an associate coordinator. Besides the

coordinating team members, it is also good to get resource persons who teach in major seminaries especially for the subjects like Scripture and Theology. Most importantly, there are some laity in Tamil Nadu region who are professionally well-equipped in some of the topics of this plan; they must be welcomed and utilized as resource persons in this development training.

#### **10. Consultation, Consent, and Mobilization**

The coordinating team, first of all, must make a good survey. A professional and well-prepared questionnaire can obtain data that describes the reality of the present situation and needs of the diocese. Accordingly, the diocesan bishop must sit with the coordinating team and discuss a tentative plan. Then, it has to be explained and discussed with the clergy in such a way that they understand the urgency and importance of the growth formation of laity and get their suggestions about a plan, because unless they are convinced of the need for the plan, execution will be difficult. Before executing the plan, it would be good to consult with the diocesan pastoral council, which is a diocesan body comprised of two lay representatives from each parish of the whole diocese. Eventually they are the members of our target group; they can share practical suggestions and field challenges in executing the plan throughout the diocese. Since we have a good number of religious involved in SCCs, PCs, and Catechism ministry, the tentative plan is to be discussed also with the religious through diocesan CRI meetings. After consolidating all their suggestions, the coordinating team can finalize a plan and start motivating the target group of all parishes to participate in it.

#### **11. Venue and Schedule**

This growth seminar can be conducted once a month regularly in Salem city, where the diocesan pastoral center is placed, as people are already accustomed to attending meetings there. While the seminar is conducted in Salem every month and every year, the coordinating team will

organize another cycle of seminars in two vicariates every year. This means, in the first year, for example, while six topics will be handled in alternative months in Mettur vicariate, another six topics will be taken in remaining alternative months in Tiruchengode vicariate. Likewise, in the second year, the other two vicariates Namakkal and Attur will be concentrated on. In the third year, the subjects that are missed in Mettur and Tiruchengode vicariates will be taught in those places as alternative months, which will be followed in a same manner, in the fourth year, in Namakkal and Attur vicariates. All four vicariates outside Salem city, will be provided full-fledged seminars on 12 subjects as a first cycle within the first four years. The whole diocese will be involved in this plan. As lay people having family responsibilities, work, active in parish, and society, it may not be practical to ask them to come once every month. Hence, it may be helpful to have programs conducted in alternative months in their vicariates. Furthermore, provision of books and mobile app with website may facilitate learning between classes. Thus, this program will enable lay leaders not for full time job, rather to grow deeper in their faith and practice without being overly burdened.

## **12. Registration and Participation**

Each seminar will be limited to 100 participants so that discussion and active participation is possible. While seminars are organized in vicariates so that people only have to travel short distances, anyone will be allowed to register and participate in any place in order to complete the formation program as early as possible or according to their availability. Each lay leader in the target group (PCs, SCCs, and CTs) will be given a registration card which will have 12 columns with the names of twelve subjects. Every time they participate in seminar, they will be asked to get the signature and seal of the coordinating team. Thus, each member is required to complete the growth formation program of 12 courses within four/five years. Unless the leaders

finish this certificate course, as a positive moral force, they should not be encouraged to be elected as leaders in their next term either in PC or in SCC.

### **13. Certification and Commissioning/Authorization**

Rewards rejuvenate. With the approval of the TNBC, dioceses can work with major seminaries and make this plan a consistent one by providing diplomas or certificates of completion. The coordinating team can arrange once in every two years a ceremony of certification, where bishop can distribute certificates to those who have completed the course in those two years. As *Co-Workers* emphasizes authorization as one of many characteristics of lay ecclesial ministry, it defines authorization as “the process by which properly prepared lay men and women are given responsibilities for ecclesial ministry by competent Church authority.”<sup>144</sup> It empowers laity to perform a ministry in the name of the Church. Hence, once a year, it would be good to arrange a mass of commissioning of PCs, SCCs, CTs, and other lay leaders of various ministries, where bishops can commission the people in public, appreciating and motivating the identity, dignity, and responsibilities of their call. In addition, he can encourage them to participate in the integral growth formation program. Additionally, whenever a bishop goes for a pastoral visit, he can recommission/authorize lay leaders in their parishes. This will encourage and honor their responsibility to Christian life, and will enkindle in parishioners and family members value of their role in the life of Church. Actually, I admit that my bishop, as a pastoral theologian tries his best to promote the flourishing of the mindset and systems necessary for collaborative shared leadership on every level.

### **14. Overcoming Difficulties and Challenges**

For Pope Francis, “Challenges exist to be overcome!”<sup>145</sup> As I am already aware of some difficulties and foresee some practical challenges from my previous field experiences, we can address them as follows:



(i) I expect that some of the members of PCs, SCCs, and CTs may be able to finish only partial subjects within four or five years, for there is no possibility of all 3,000 lay leaders completing the full course within four years because of a lack of resources. Despite this, surely around 1,000 lay leaders can get through this certificate course within four years. The drawback, however, can be eradicated if the diocese increases the number of resource persons including lay scholars; all five vicariates would then be able to conduct the faith development training every year. As Pope Francis reminds us, this kind of “in-culturating the Gospel” in the lives of lay leaders would demand long-term planning, but “we are constantly being called to grow.”<sup>146</sup>

(ii) The most practical challenge to the plan in India is that many lay leaders are illiterate (approximately 25% of the target group). Realizing the existential factor, the coordinating team must plan well, making seminars understandable to them also. Since the medium of the seminar will be significantly in the Tamil language, I hope that everyone can understand the core points of the subjects. The classes will not be about memorizing or exams. While a medium number of the Catholic population in Tamil Nadu region is uneducated, the bishops were able to bring up the newly revised words in the prayers of Mass, mainly focusing on the educated and younger generation for a better future; likewise, this plan can be perceived positively for the betterment of the future Church. To me, the educated Christians are increasing, and they look for knowledge and are thirsty to grow in faith.

(iii) Finally, finances will be quite a challenging issue. From my past experiences, however, if the program is done properly, people will extend their support for fund-raising for this cause. If there is continual committed Episcopal encouragement through allocating resources of personnel and finance to the integral growth formation of the laity, the execution of the plan will be successful.

(iv) Some clergy may resist the plan as several plans of the Vatican II were not welcomed or practiced by some clergy. Nonetheless, if bishops, a majority of clergy, and laity are convinced of the need of the program, it can proceed well. According to the survey, the lay leaders overwhelmingly welcome the plan; in fact, they mentioned to me during the video conference that as the TNBC execute ‘The Marriage Preparation Course’ successfully, if they really care about the empowerment of laity in the Church, they will consider the need and value of this plan and make it happen. Hence, I would like to discuss formation for clergy too.

### **15. Formation for clergy and Seminarians**

Since the old way of perceiving the Church from the hierarchical notion has been rooted out from the Vatican II, the new ecclesiology of communion, according to Lobinger, needs priests as enablers who have strong conviction in God’s generosity of sharing His charisms to numerous ministers in every community.<sup>147</sup> FABC’s AsIPA calls for “a paradigm shift on the part of priests” to admit and encourage “the potential and charism of the laity, especially of women, towards a more collaborative ministry.”<sup>148</sup> Courageous priests will unlock others’ talent of leadership potential and that would enhance the laity to take up responsibilities of a variety of ministries. Seminarians, for Lobinger, need to be formed to become enablers not as the exception, but as the norm. As a consequence, this plan will not be threatening to them, rather they themselves will become trainers. When priests become non-dominating and community-oriented leaders, naturally lay leaders will be influenced by their role model.<sup>149</sup> Therefore, I propose three practical implementations to the Church in Tamil Nadu:

(i) *Listening to laity*: More interaction with laity regarding theological, spiritual, and pastoral issues needs to happen. For example, lay leaders and professionals especially who have done some theological studies must be invited to lead the monthly recollections of clergy at least twice

a year. For instance, ever since I started learning theology under lay professors in the United States and reading books written by lay theologians, I have experienced a transformation in my thinking and attitudes. When I am open-minded, it gives room to learn from different perspectives and lenses about the teachings of the Church that I learned through priests in seminary earlier.

(ii) *Annual clergy retreat of laity*: At least once in four years, reflection on “Lay Ministry” can be focused in an annual clergy retreat. A team of laity in collaboration with some clergy can lead it.

(iii) *Ongoing formation for young priests*: While elderly priests may find the new way of the Church to be difficult, young priests (two groups: the first 15 years of ordained priests and from 16 years through 30 years) can be given a two days seminar in ongoing formation by the laity about the lay ministry with creative open dialogues.

(iv) *Formation for seminarians*: If the Church takes this issue seriously and aims at forming future candidates for priesthood, in seminary itself, to be convinced of theology of laity and be trained to become collaborative ministers with the laity, the future Church will mature. It is highly desirable for a greater number of lay students to study theology or some basic courses for their ministries with seminarians. As I have been doing my M.A. Pastoral Theology degree with many lay students in the U.S., it enhanced me to be more understanding, respectful, collaborative, encouraging, and friendly with laity without a hierarchical notion.

## **16. Hopeful Outcomes**

It was an incredible experience for me on the day I entered the sacristy to get ready for mass in St. Vibiana Cathedral Chapel in Los Angeles, when one of the adult altar servers welcomed me saying: “Father Bernard, I am glad that we both of us serve God at the altar this

morning.” This meant to me a lot. The perception of both clergy and laity equally serving God at the altar was fascinating. There was no hierarchical notion; rather collaborative shared ministry was expressed. This would be precisely one of the best outcomes that I could expect from the above formation toolkit. Coincidentally, the Good Shepherd Major Seminary in Tamil Nadu region has already organized a certificate course on Theology for the laity. Mohan, who is a devoted catholic lawyer, attended this course and got a certificate. After filling out the sample survey, he shared with me that: “I see some similarity between your tentative plan and the certificate course that I attended. Though what I learned was a long course of three years (two days for every month), I strongly agree with and appreciate your plan of arranging preliminary ongoing formation program of the laity for these reasons: First, I believe that the outcome of this integral formation will be effective, because the course that I attended was an eye-opener to many things which deepened my faith in God, in Church, and in my Christian life. Second, it is a welcoming idea to conduct it within the diocese; for we travelled a long distance every month and it was tedious; for that reason fewer people (around 40 including 5 from Salem) attended. Third, it is good that you are targeting leaders of PCs, SCCs, and CTs, because these people will contribute more to the parish life in collaboration with the parish priests. Finally, the issue of the role of laity in the Church needs to be addressed through this kind of formation so that we will realize our baptismal call and become matured in our Catholic faith.”

Another key outcome of this plan would be that a greater number of lay leaders, in the future, will get into this formation. I foresee, in the next 10 years, that we may achieve the faith formation of around 3,000 lay leaders in the diocese of Salem, India. Another outcome is that this pastoral plan facilitates the means of literature, social communication, information technology and mass media to disseminate the faith effectively and there will be some

transformation in the vitality of future Church. Thus, creating a pedagogical process as short courses and programs concentrating on the dynamics of Attending, Understanding, Discerning, and Dealing with faith and reason will enlighten lay leaders to become more engaged in the Scripture and Sacred Tradition; it may assist them to shake off the shackles of discriminations related to casteism, sexism, and hierarchism of power.

On the whole, this plan may raise people's thinking and understanding to a new higher way of looking at faith and life. It will uplift the laity by integrating their faith more effectively into all avenues of daily life, and thus, these leaders will respond to the needs of their parishes with energy, enthusiasm, and competence to make the parish community a more welcoming place of experiencing God's love. Giving importance to the servant leadership and following Pope Francis' style of collaborative and shared leadership may empower lay ecclesial ministers to participate in parish governance actively through contributing their valuable skills and gifts received from the Lord. It will facilitate laity slowly to move beyond a very clerical approach to a collaborative pastoral approach to strive for a participatory Church where laity will become leaders, co-partners, and true disciples of equals in God's vineyard. Since I have created this pastoral plan for the diocese of Salem as a sample, I have received a feedback about the project from my bishop Singaroyan, who replied that:

*“The creation of awareness among the Lay people on their singular role in carrying out the mission of the church in our world is essential today. For this your proposal of formation for lay leaders is a timely response. As you propose if some thousands of committed Lay leaders are identified, trained, empowered, commissioned and followed up in each diocese in the church there is possibility of great revival in the life of the Church, which is the call and the dream of Pope Francis today.”*

In conclusion, I strongly believe that risking this challenging plan will lead to renewing the Church and as a consequence, people start reliving the Christ in their lives, for the integral advanced formation program will not be confined simply to a theological instruction or to a

pastoral skill learning, rather essentially, it will uplift the lay faithful into a personal and intimate relationship with Christ. As the CCBI stated in the pastoral plan of the Indian Church, I greatly believe that those who do not have faith would receive faith, those who have doubts in different issues of faith would be clarified, and those who practice faith would be enriched more.<sup>150</sup> When the laity begins to be involved in achieving certifiable education and formation in the Church, it will give recognition to the reality that the greatest resource of the Church is the People of God. Therefore, let this tentative pastoral plan motivate us to be ready to risking, renewing, and reliving! Personally, I have determined to pursue this mission in my priestly life.

## Appendices

### I. Questionnaire on the Necessity of ‘Integral Christian Growth Formation Program’ for Leaders of Parish Council, Small Christian Communities, and for Catechism Teachers

1. In today’s Church, what percentage of laity is given participation in leadership roles?  
\_\_\_\_\_ (%)
2. What percentage of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) members do you think are fully aware of their responsibilities? \_\_\_\_\_ (%)
3. How actively the laity are allowed in the planning and decision making meetings of the parish? \_\_\_\_\_ (%)
4. What percentage of women is included in membership of PPC? \_\_\_\_\_ (%)
5. What are all the challenges that exist with regard to the growth of the parish? (Mark whatever is true)
 

i. Lack of God-experience of people.	ii. Secularism / Worldly mindedness
iii. Caste division	iv. Pastor’s non-involvement / lack of skill
v. Lack of interest of PPC members.	vi. Non-cooperation of the parishioners.
vii. Lack of understanding of Catholicism	viii. Influence of denominational Churches
ix. Competitiveness among people	x. Proudness and Selfishness
6. In what topics/disciplines do you believe that lay leaders should be required to attend short educational programs to acquire basic knowledge and experience of the Catholic Church?
 

i. Theology	ii. Scripture	iii. Sacraments
iv. Scriptural Theology	v. Ecclesiology	vi. Pastoral Theology
vii. Canon Law	viii. Moral Theology / Ethics	ix. Sacred Liturgy
x. Christian Spirituality	xi. Christian Psychology	xii. Christian Leadership
7. If members of PPC, leaders of SCC, and Catechism teachers are given a certificate program in which each of the above 12 topics are addressed once in a month (7 hour program), how fruitful do you feel it would be in the below areas:
 

i. Fruitful to the growth of individual and family Christian life	- ..... (%)
ii. Beneficial to the parish on various levels	- ..... (%)
iii. Increase the participation of Laity in the Church	- ..... (%)
iv. Bring good to the Community and Society	- ..... (%)
8. Do you feel that there is a decline in the number of candidates for the priesthood? Yes No  
If so, what percentage this integral formation program may facilitate the laity to be prepared to lead the Church in the future in a collaborative way with the ordained? \_\_\_\_\_ (%)
9. Do you feel the necessity of continual formation to the above lay leaders at least twice a year?
10. What percentage this growth formation program for lay leaders of every parish is necessary?

Any other suggestions for the empowerment of lay ministers:

.....

## II. Consolidated response of 100 lay leaders of the Diocese of Salem, Tamil Nadu, India

Participants: Male – 64 Female – 36

Age: Between 25–40: 22; 41–60: 48; Above 60: 30

Number of Parishes participated: 20

Number of participants from each Vicariate:

Salem – 50 Mettur – 18 Tiruchengode – 10 Namakkal – 10 Attur – 12

1. In today's Church, how far is the laity given participation in leadership roles?  
 Poor – 36; Not bad – 34; Good – 24; Excellent – 6.
2. How much are the lay leaders (PPC, SCC, CT) fully aware of their responsibilities?  
 Poor – 33; Not bad – 34; Good – 19; Excellent – 14.
3. How actively are the lay leaders (PPC, SCC, CT) allowed in the planning and decision making meetings of the parish?  
 Poor – 35; Not bad – 32; Good – 23; Excellent – 10.
4. Are women included in membership of Parish Pastoral Council (PPC)?  
 Poor – 60; Not bad – 26; Good – 8; Excellent – 6.
5. What are all the challenges that exist with regard to the growth of the parish?
  - i. Lack of God-experience of people – 48.
  - ii. Secularism / Worldly mindedness – 49.
  - iii. Caste division – 48.
  - iv. Pastor's non-involvement / lack of skill – 44.
  - v. Lack of interest of lay leaders – 48.
  - vi. Non-cooperation of the parishioners – 42.
  - vii. Lack of understanding of Catholicism – 53.
  - viii. Competitiveness among people – 27.
  - ix. Denominational Churches' influences – 38.
  - x. Proudness and Selfishness – 30.
6. In what topics/disciplines do you believe that lay leaders should be required to attend short educational programs to acquire basic knowledge and experience of the Catholic Church?
  - i. Theology – 68.
  - ii. Scripture – 85.
  - iii. Sacraments – 77.
  - iv. Scriptural Theology – 67.
  - v. Ecclesiology/Church – 69.
  - vi. Practical Theology – 75.
  - vii. Canon Law – 78.
  - viii. Moral Theology / Ethics – 75.
  - ix. Sacred Liturgy – 82.
  - x. Christian Spirituality – 81.
  - xi. Christian Psychology – 71.
  - xii. Christian Leadership – 84.



7. If members of PPC, leaders of SCC, and Catechism teachers are given a certificate program in which each of the above 12 topics are addressed once in a month (7 hour program), how fruitful do you feel it would be in the below areas:

i. Fruitful to the growth of individual and family Christian life

Poor – 10;            Not bad – 34;            Good – 31;            Excellent – 25.

ii. Beneficial to the parish on various levels

Poor – 12;            Not bad – 27;            Good – 35;            Excellent – 26.

iii. Increase the participation of Laity in the Church

Poor – 8;            Not bad – 27;            Good – 38;            Excellent – 27.

iv. Bring good to the Community and Society

Poor – 13;            Not bad – 35;            Good – 26;            Excellent – 26.

8. Do you feel that there is a decline in the number of candidates for the priesthood?

Yes – 97. No – 3.

If so, what level this integral formation program may facilitate the laity to be prepared to lead the Church in the future in a collaborative way with the ordained?

Poor – 8;            Not bad – 29;            Good – 39;            Excellent – 24.

9. What's your opinion of giving continual formation to lay leaders at least twice a year?

Poor – 3;            Not bad – 29;            Good – 30;            Excellent – 38.

10. How far this growth formation program for lay leaders of every parish is necessary?

Poor – 5;            Not bad – 23;            Good – 34;            Excellent – 38.

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**End Notes:**

- <sup>1</sup> Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI), *Pastoral Plan for the Church in India*, (Bengaluru: CCBI Centre, 2013), 3.
- <sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Koepping, “India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma,” In *Christianities in Asia*. ed. Peter C. Phan, (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 9.
- <sup>3</sup> See Sam Matthew, “Indian Biblical Hermeneutics: Methods and Principles,” *Neotestamentica*, 38:1, 110-111. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43048499>.
- <sup>4</sup> Dyron B. Daughrity and Jesudas M. Athyal, *Understanding World Christianity: INDIA*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016), 117-118.
- <sup>5</sup> See Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles Moore, *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), xxx; Daughrity and Athyal, 118.
- <sup>6</sup> Daughrity and Athyal, 119.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.
- <sup>10</sup> See V.V. Thomas, *Dalit and Tribal Christians of India: Issues and Challenges* (Malapuram: Focus India Trust, 2014), 203; Daughrity and Athyal, 123.
- <sup>11</sup> See V. Devasahayam, *Doing Dalit Theology in Biblical Key* (Chennai: ISPCK/Gurukul, 1997), 55; Daughrity and Athyal, 294.
- <sup>12</sup> Daughrity and Athyal, 262-264.
- <sup>13</sup> Koepping, 17.
- <sup>14</sup> See M.M. Thomas and P. T. Thomas, *Towards an Indian Christian Theology: Life and Thought of Some Pioneers* (Tiruvalla: The New Day Publications of India, 1992), 72; Daughrity and Athyal, 262-264, 277.
- <sup>15</sup> Daughrity and Athyal, 209, 264-265, 293.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.
- <sup>17</sup> See Prema CSST, “Bible and the State: Prophetesses of Biblical Times visa-a-vis Women of Modern India,” *Bible Bhashyam*, 28 (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2002), 313, 327.
- <sup>18</sup> <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/india-is-fourth-most-dangerous-place-in-the-world-for-women-poll/1/141639.html> (16th September 2013).
- <sup>19</sup> Keynote Address presented at the seminar of the American Academy of Religion in Chennai on the theme, “Identity and Social Distinctions among Indian Christians, at Home and in the Diaspora: Some Theological Reflections,” on July 19, 2014; Daughrity and Athyal, 146.
- <sup>20</sup> Daughrity and Athyal, 148.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 128-129.
- <sup>23</sup> See Sumit Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar, and Pradip Datta, *Christian Conversions* (Kolkata: Alap, 2004), 38; Daughrity and Athyal, 134-139.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 134-139.

- <sup>25</sup> See “Population by Religious Community,” Government of India, [www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census) (Accessed September 13, 2015); Philip Jenkins in his “Has Christianity Failed in India?” in *Aleteia* (May 11, 2015) assumes that Christians are around 40 million people (more than 3.5%); Daugherty and Athyal, 133, 142-143.
- <sup>26</sup> Thomas Vijay SAC, “Lay ministries in the Renewed Church of Asia,” in *SCCs are Ministering Communities*, ed. Thomas Vijay, (Nagpur: PAC Publications, 2013), 103-104; Daugherty and Athyal, 167.
- <sup>27</sup> Thomas Vijay SAC, “Guidelines for Lay Ecclesial Ministries in India,” in *SCCs are Ministering Communities*, ed. Thomas Vijay, (Nagpur: PAC Publications, 2013), 142; Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 1990.
- <sup>28</sup> Vijay, “Lay ministries ...,” 103.
- <sup>29</sup> Vijay, “Guidelines ...,” 126.
- <sup>30</sup> Vijay, “Lay Ministries ...,” 104-109.
- <sup>31</sup> Vijay, “Guidelines ...,” 125, 135.
- <sup>32</sup> See Selvester Ponnunmuthan, “Basic/Small Christian Communities: A Concrete Expression of the Local Church in India,” in *Mission and Conversion: Towards a New Ecclesiology*, ed. Selvester Ponnunmuthan and Shaji Jerman, (Bangalore, India: ATC, 2008), 299; Vijay, “Guidelines...,” 127.
- <sup>33</sup> See Augustine Kanjamala, “Seven Images of the Church in India,” in *The Church in India in the Emerging Third Millennium*, ed. Fr. Thomas D’Sa, (Bangalore, India: NBCLC, 2005), 38; Vijay, “Guidelines...,” 126.
- <sup>34</sup> Vijay, “Guidelines...,” 126-128.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.
- <sup>36</sup> CCBI, *Pastoral Plan...*, 8-9.
- <sup>37</sup> Vatican II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 2.
- <sup>38</sup> Claire E. Wolfeich, ed. *Invitation to Practical Theology: Catholic Voices and Visions*, (New York: Paulist Press, 2014), 289-290.
- <sup>39</sup> See C.K. Barrett, *Church, Ministry and Sacraments in the New Testament*, (Britain: Paternoster Press, 1985), 31-38; Vijay, “Lay Ministries ...,” 101.
- <sup>40</sup> Richard M. Gula, *Just Ministry: Professional Ethics For Pastoral Ministries*. (New York: Paulist Press, 2010), 16.
- <sup>41</sup> Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 7; Pope John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, 1988, 20.
- <sup>42</sup> Vijay, “Lay Ministries...,” 107.
- <sup>43</sup> Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries: A Relational Approach*. (New York: A Herder & Herder Book, 2003), 66, 69; See Leo Josef Suenens, “The Charismatic Dimension of the Church,” in *Council Speeches of Vatican II*, ed. Hans Kung, Yves Congar, Daniel O’Hanlon, (Glen Rock, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1964), 32-33.
- <sup>44</sup> Vijay, “Lay Ministries...,” 97.
- <sup>45</sup> William J. Rademacher, *Lay Ministry: A Theological, Spiritual, and Pastoral Handbook*, (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1993), 51.

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- <sup>46</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, Chap. 3.
- <sup>47</sup> Vijay, “Lay Ministries...,” 97-99.
- <sup>48</sup> Rademacher, 64-67; Vijay, “Lay ministries...,” 98-99.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 70; *Ibid.*
- <sup>50</sup> Vijay, “Lay Ministries...,” 105.
- <sup>51</sup> Hahnenberg, 9.
- <sup>52</sup> See Bernard J. Lee, *The Future Church of 140 B.C.E.: A Hidden Revolution*.
- <sup>53</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 39-42.
- <sup>54</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 1990, 23.
- <sup>55</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 4, 12.
- <sup>56</sup> Cecilia Anning, *Handbook for Parish Pastoral Councils*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (Archdiocese of Brisbane, Australia: In2Print, 2007), 7.
- <sup>57</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 12.
- <sup>58</sup> Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, 8, 754.
- <sup>59</sup> See John Henry Newman, *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine* (1859; reprint, New York: Sheed & Ward, 1961), 163.
- <sup>60</sup> Richard R. Gaillardetz, “The Theological Reception of *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*,” in *Lay Ecclesial Ministry: Pathways Toward the Future*, ed. Zeni Fox, (New York: A Sheed & Ward Book, 2010), 21; Hahnenberg, 7.
- <sup>61</sup> Gaillardetz, 21.
- <sup>62</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 31; CCC 897.
- <sup>63</sup> Hahnenberg, 11.
- <sup>64</sup> See Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (expanded edition, New York: Doubleday, 1987); Gaillardetz, 22.
- <sup>65</sup> See Pope John Paul II, Message for the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, May 30, 1998.
- <sup>66</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2013, no. 102.
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.
- <sup>68</sup> Gula, 119.
- <sup>69</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 4; Hahnenberg, 32.
- <sup>70</sup> Hahnenberg, 15.
- <sup>71</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 26, 31; Hahnenberg, 13-17, 32.
- <sup>72</sup> Vatican II, *Gaudium et spes*, 43.
- <sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.
- <sup>74</sup> Hahnenberg, 78.
- <sup>75</sup> Gula, 24-30.
- <sup>76</sup> Vatican II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 2; Bishop Fritz Lobinger, “Understanding Ministering in SCCs in the Perspective of Ecclesiology,” in *SCCs are Ministering Communities*, ed. Thomas Vijay SAC, (Nagpur: PAC Publications, 2013), 5.
- <sup>77</sup> Vijay, “Lay ministries...” 101.

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- <sup>78</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, 28, 92.
- <sup>79</sup> Lobinger, 8.
- <sup>80</sup> See Synod of 1985, Final relation, C. The Church as Communion, No. 6.
- <sup>81</sup> Lobinger, 8.
- <sup>82</sup> H. Richard McCord, "Lay Ecclesial Ministry: Pastoral Leadership in a New Era," in *In the name of the Church: Vocation and Authorization of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*, ed. William J. Cahoy, (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2012), 3, 5.
- <sup>83</sup> Gaillardetz, 23-24.
- <sup>84</sup> Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*, 2, 35.
- <sup>85</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*. (Washington D.C., 2005), 10; Susan K. Wood, "A Theology of Authorization of Lay Ecclesial Ministers," in *In the name of the Church: Vocation and Authorization of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*, ed. William J. Cahoy, (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2012), 99;
- <sup>86</sup> Hahnenberg, 9, 11.
- <sup>87</sup> Vijay, "Guidelines...", 130.
- <sup>88</sup> Ibid., 126-127.
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid., 138-139.
- <sup>90</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, 104.
- <sup>91</sup> Hahnenberg, 35.
- <sup>92</sup> Gula, 2-3, 23.
- <sup>93</sup> See National Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on the Laity, *A report of the subcommittee on lay ministry*, 1999, 16.
- <sup>94</sup> Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC), *AsIPA General Assembly IV "SCCs/BECs: Towards a Church of Communion"*, (Trivandram, India: Maria Rani Centre, 2006), 15.
- <sup>95</sup> Hahnenberg, 1.
- <sup>96</sup> Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction*, (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 25.
- <sup>97</sup> USCCB, *Co-Workers*, 6.
- <sup>98</sup> See Arulsamy S., "Urgency of Promoting Lay Leadership in Emerging India," in *Church in India in the Emerging Third Millennium*, ed. Fr. Thomas D'Sa, (Bangalore, India: NBCLC, 2005), 383; Vijay, "Guidelines...", 133.
- <sup>99</sup> William E. Jr. Simon, *Great Catholic Parishes*, (Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 2016), 14.
- <sup>100</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, 46-47; Gerard Mannion, "Francis' Ecclesiological Revolution." In *Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism*, ed. Gerard Mannion. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 12, 104.
- <sup>101</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, 111; Doyle, Dennis M. "Pope Francis' New Vision for Church as Expressed in *Evangelii Gaudium*," In *Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism*, ed. Gerard Mannion. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 25-26.
- <sup>102</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, 102; Mannion, 107.

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- <sup>103</sup> Gula, 20.
- <sup>104</sup> Simon, 18-19, 23, 36-39, 43.
- <sup>105</sup> Hahnenberg, 31, 135.
- <sup>106</sup> Gula, 19.
- <sup>107</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, 24, 63.
- <sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 102; Mannion, 107.
- <sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.
- <sup>110</sup> FABC, *AsIPA General Assembly IV*, 16.
- <sup>111</sup> McCord, 4; Wood, 99.
- <sup>112</sup> Gaillardetz, 28.
- <sup>113</sup> McCord, 10.
- <sup>114</sup> Marti R. Jewell and David A. Ramey, *The Changing Face of Church: Emerging Models of Parish Leadership*, (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2010), 7.
- <sup>115</sup> Wolfteich, 280, 283.
- <sup>116</sup> Hahnenberg, 132.
- <sup>117</sup> See Mary Gautier, ed., *Catholic Ministry Formation Directory 2009* (Washington, DC: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, Georgetown University, 2009), 226-27.
- <sup>118</sup> McCord, 13.
- <sup>119</sup> CCBI, *Pastoral Plan*, 1, 3; 75% of the total number of Catholics in India belong to Latin rite.
- <sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>121</sup> *Redemptoris Missio*, 51; CCBI, *Pastoral Plan*, 4.
- <sup>122</sup> CCBI, *Pastoral Plan*, 5.
- <sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>124</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, 62.
- <sup>125</sup> CCBI, *Pastoral Plan*, 6.
- <sup>126</sup> *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 26; Anning, 5.
- <sup>127</sup> Anning, 6.
- <sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.
- <sup>129</sup> Jewell and Ramey, 14.
- <sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-14.
- <sup>131</sup> *Redemptoris Missio*, 51.
- <sup>132</sup> See the statement of the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the FABC, "Journeying Together toward the Third Millennium," in *For All the Peoples of Asia*, ed. Gaudencio Rosales and C. G. Arevalo (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis books, 1992), 287, no. 8.1.1.
- <sup>133</sup> See the Final Statement of the Seventh Plenary Assembly of the FABC, "A Renewed Church in Asia: A Mission of Love and Service," in *For All the Peoples of Asia*, ed. Franz-Josef Eilers (Quezon: Claretian Publications, 2002), 3, no. 4.
- <sup>134</sup> See FABC, "Journeying Together toward the Third Millennium," 287, no. 8.1.1.

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- <sup>135</sup> Ibid., 287-289; FABC, “The Church: A community of Faith in Asia,” 56-61; See Joo Hyun Ro, “Small Christian Communities and Lay Women’s Leadership in the Roman Catholic Church of Korea,” 99-107.
- <sup>136</sup> Jewell and Ramey, 6.
- <sup>137</sup> Tami Nadu Bishops Council (TNBC), *Regional Pastoral Plan of the Catholic Church, Tamil Nadu*. (Chennai: TNBC office, 2008), 22; It is published in Tamil Language.
- <sup>138</sup> News Letter of Diocese of Salem, March 2018, 5.
- <sup>139</sup> Anning, 62-66, 75.
- <sup>140</sup> Jewell and Ramey, 30.
- <sup>141</sup> Mannion, 98
- <sup>142</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, 42.
- <sup>143</sup> Ibid., 35.
- <sup>144</sup> USCCB, *Co-Workers*, 54; Wood, 99.
- <sup>145</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, 109.
- <sup>146</sup> Ibid., 69.
- <sup>147</sup> Lobinger, 11.
- <sup>148</sup> FABC, *AsIPA General Assembly IV*, 15.
- <sup>149</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>150</sup> CCBI, *Pastoral Plan...*, 7.

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