

NATIONAL CERTIFICATION STANDARDS FOR LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTERS

These standards were developed by the NALM, NCCL, and NFCYM and approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Commission on Certification and Accreditation in November 2011. These standards are articulated in the USCCB document, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*.

Standard One: Human

Lay ecclesial ministers demonstrate the qualities of human maturity needed for fruitful ministry with the people of God.

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

Standard Two: Spiritual

Sharing in the common priesthood of all the baptized, a lay ecclesial minister demonstrates Christian spirituality as foundational to ministry, integrated in service with the people of God, and possessing a sacramental view of the world that recognizes the world can be a vessel of God’s presence and God’s transforming grace.

Vision Statement: Having encountered the person and message of Jesus Christ, the hunger of the lay ecclesial minister for union with the Triune God is constant. The result of this hunger is the call to holiness, built on the Word of God, experienced in the liturgy and sacraments, formed through suffering, nurtured in joy, and sustained in community with all the baptized and through the Church as Mystical Body. The minister gives witness to a well-formed spirituality through a rich and diversified prayer life, theological reflection, and action rooted in Catholic social teaching. Spiritual formation is grounded in the understanding that “if ministry does not flow from a personal encounter and ongoing relationship with the Lord, then no matter how ‘accomplished’ it may be in its

methods and activities, that ministry will lack the vital soul and source needed to bear lasting fruit” (*Co-Workers*, p. 38). Therefore, open to the mystery of God’s love and in touch with the world’s realities, all actions of the lay ecclesial minister flow from “that fundamental conversion that places God, and not oneself, at the center of one’s life” (*Co-Workers*, p. 38).

Standard Three: Intellectual

A lay ecclesial minister demonstrates understanding of the breadth of Catholic theological and pastoral studies as well as the intellectual skill to use that knowledge in ministry with God’s people from diverse populations and cultures.

VISION STATEMENT: “Formation for lay ecclesial ministry is a journey beyond catechesis into theological study” (*Co-Workers*, p. 43). A lay ecclesial minister’s faith and ministry is formed by the study of the Catholic theological tradition focusing on the following core elements: Scripture and its interpretation, dogmatic theology, Church history, liturgical and sacramental theology, moral theology and Catholic social teaching, pastoral theology, spirituality, canon law, ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, the social sciences, humanities, and culture and language studies. Based upon this study, a theologically competent minister can articulate and interpret this Catholic theological tradition with disciples from diverse communities. A key dynamic of effective lay ecclesial ministry is the integration into ministry practices of the key documents and principal theories of pastoral ministry.

Standard Four: Pastoral

A lay ecclesial minister demonstrates a range of leadership and pastoral skills needed for functioning effectively in ministry.

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

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

CRITERIA/PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION TO THE MINISTRY FORMATION PROGRAM

SELECTION PROCESS

Admissions

The Ministry Formation Program (MFP) complies with the Diocese of Saint Augustine’s equal opportunity/non-discrimination policy. The program recruits, promotes, and retains participants based on ability and valid qualifications, without regard to race, color, sex, age, national origin, or disability. Further, we are in full accord with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991. All class locations (Marywood Retreat Center and the Catholic Center) are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Admission Criteria

- A fully initiated Catholic who is in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church.
- Integrated Christian faith – he or she sees ministry as a way to live out the Christian faith in service to others.
- Personal integrity – he or she is known as someone who possesses and models Christian values.
- Demonstrated ability to be service minded to others – he or she has been involved in service to others in a leadership role and shows promise of leading others in ministry within the ecclesial community.
- Recognized leader within the diocese, on a parish level and/or within our Catholic Schools – who seek leadership skills for ministry along with personal faith development and enrichment within the Church.
- Collaborative – can work well with others and shows promise that they can minister cooperatively.
- Has an understanding and appreciation of the role of the baptized as outlined in *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*.
- Commitment to the three-year program – in light of his or her life realities (family situations, employment, and requirements of any existing ministry or other demands) can commit to a three- year formation program.

***"We need well-formed lay people,
animated by a sincere and clear faith,
whose life has been touched by the personal
and merciful love of Christ Jesus...We need lay
people who take risks, who get their hands dirty,
who are not afraid of making mistakes,
who go forward. We need lay people
with a vision of the future, not confined
to the little things of life."***

Pope Francis

Address to the Pontifical Council
for the Laity

June 17, 2016



DIOCESE OF
St Augustine

MINISTRY FORMATION PROGRAM

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MINISTRY FORMATION PROGRAM – INFORMATION PACKET –

TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF LEADERSHIP

The following initial understanding of leadership provides the basis for designing and structuring programs and for the selection of candidates:

LEADERSHIP is a PROCESS that involves assisting an individual or group in shaping a VISION or GOAL and MOTIVATING PEOPLE to working toward the vision or goal. Leadership includes being able to motivate DIFFERENT KINDS OF PEOPLE in a VARIETY OF SITUATIONS.

LEADERSHIP can be SHARED or ROTATED in a group and does not necessarily reside on or in one person or two persons. Different persons with different gifts, knowledge, and abilities can exercise leadership in different areas or on different topics.

DESIRED QUALITIES OF ECCLESIAL LEADERS

Co-Workers in the Vineyard

SUCCESSFUL AND EFFECTIVE ECCLESIAL LEADERS STRIVE TO DEVELOP SOME ESSENTIAL QUALITIES:

- ✦ Ecclesial leaders are PRAYERFUL and build their leadership on a personal relationship with Jesus, continual openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a strong COMMITMENT to the Church, and a lifestyle consistent with the SCRIPTURES and TRADITION of the Church.
- ✦ Ecclesial leaders are PREPARED. They have sufficient education and background to provide knowledge and skill for the effort to be undertaken and they seek ongoing formation and training.
- ✦ Ecclesial leaders are ENERGETIC. They have the needed vitality to energize other people and groups.
- ✦ Ecclesial leaders understand the LARGER PICTURE. They see how their project fits into the larger structure, and they understand the diocesan/universal aspects of the Church.
- ✦ Ecclesial leaders ENABLE and EMPOWER others. Leaders help people to discern and develop their talents and skills and authorize them to utilize these talents and skills as well.
- ✦ Ecclesial leaders have a sense of SELF-AWARENESS. They realize their strengths and limitations and recognize how others generally perceive them.
- ✦ Ecclesial leaders create an OPEN and TRUSTING ENVIRONMENT in which others can see the vision, feel free to share their talents and skills, and work with others to achieve goals.
- ✦ Ecclesial leaders are RELATIONAL. They understand and generally get along with people and assist others in building healthy and effective relationships.
- ✦ Ecclesial leaders are ACCOUNTABLE. They realize the parameters within which the group will work and know to whom they are accountable: their authority to one another and to those who are being served. They are willing to accept feedback and receive critiques of their efforts.
- ✦ Ecclesial leaders TAKE RISKS and deal with AMBIGUITY in order to help people move from the present situation that is known and comfortable toward the desired goal or vision which may not be clearly seen or understood.
- ✦ Ecclesial leaders MANAGE CHANGE effectively in order to move to a new situation or outcome.
- ✦ Ecclesial leaders are COLLABORATIVE. They realize that the Spirit of God resides in all members of the community in differing ways and that all persons are called and gifted to advance the mission of the Church.

