

87/No.4

15th April, 1987

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IN THIS ISSUE: The place of the laity in Mission is again the topic of main interest in this issue of SEDOS Bulletin. At Vatican Council II, the concept "People of God" came to the forefront in theology. As a result there has been a steady stream of documents and statements calling for greater lay participation in the Church. Through his work as a lay theologian in the Church of India, Josantony Joseph has become convinced that the amount of co-responsibility (and therefore involvement) that will be present in any particular local church depends primarily on the model of ecclesiology that is dominant in that church in practice. In this article, different models of ecclesiology are examined to see in which ways they inhibit or foster the growth of co-responsibility for making God's Kingdom come.

An extract from the 1986/4 Pro Mundi Vita Bulletin deals with the laity and the Extraordinary Synod held in December 1985. Many of the Reports from particular churches submitted to the Secretariat for the December, 1985 Extraordinary Synod gave serious consideration to the laity as fully fledged members of the Churches. So did many of the statements made by the participants at the Synod. Fr. Kerkofs quotes from the intervention of Bishop Hubert, president of the Canadian Bishops' Conference. "The mutual harmonization of the ordained ministry and of a ministry on the basis of baptism will be all the greater, the more we try, first and foremost, not to differentiate between two categories of people - with all that that implies - but try, as far as possible to keep our sights on fulfilling the mission of Christ." Bishop Hubert was one of many who stressed

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the relationship between the general and particular priesthood. It is precisely in particular Churches of the so called Third World (Tanzania, Chad, Bolivia, Indonesia, Brazil are quoted) that the process of harmonization is most demanding and calls for recognition of new forms of ministry, not least for women.

There are signs of hope in the Church to-day which the prophets of doom continue to ignore. The Religious Superiors in Rome had the happy thought of devoting one of their Justice and Peace meetings to positive signs of hope in the area of justice and peace. Speakers came from India, The Philippines, Brazil and U.S.A. We give here the text of Sr. Helene O'Sullivan's account of how the Church in the U.S., lay persons, bishops and religious are taking a corporate stance on key socio-political issues and following this up by a strategy for on-going involvement in the issues. The Church in the U.S. thus brings a moral/ethical dimension into the debate on key issues in the society, and helps the emergence of a renewed national value consensus.

#### NEWS:

The Report of the SEDOS Seminar on LAITY IN MISSION held at Villa Cavalletti, 24th to 28th March, 1987 will appear in the May issue of SEDOS Bulletin.

#### UISG/USG Justice and Peace Commission:

1. A ONE DAY SEMINAR ON WHAT RELIGIOUS CAN DO TO HELP REFUGEES IN ROME; Tuesday, 12th May, 1987 at Fratelli Christiani Generalate.  
Registration: Lire 10,000 (Lunch, Lire 12.000 extra).
2. A Public Meeting on: THE LAITY'S ROLE IN THE CHURCH IN THE PROMOTION OF JUSTICE.  
Speaker: Ms. Christine Savat of the Belgian Justice and Peace Commission. Tuesday, 19th May, 1987 at Fratelli Christiani Generalate.

SEDOS SECRETARIAT will close on Holy Thursday. The Secretariat will re-open on Monday, 29th April, 1987.

WE WISH ALL OUR READERS A VERY HAPPY  
E A S T E R!

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IS CO-RESPONSIBILITY POSSIBLE IN OUR CHURCH  
Models of the Church and their "hidden" Obstacles

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Josantony Joseph

*(Au Concile Vatican II le concept de "Peuple de Dieu" obtint une place de premier plan en théologie. Il en résulta un vaste courant de documents et de déclarations en faveur d'une plus large participation des laïcs dans l'Eglise. A la suite de son activité de théologien laïc dans l'Eglise de l'Inde, Josantony Joseph en est arrivé à la conviction que le degré de coresponsabilité, et donc d'engagement, dans une église particulière, dépend avant tout du modèle d'écclésiologie qui domine en pratique dans cette église. Cet article examine différents modèles d'écclésiologie pour montrer comment ils favorisent ou entravent la croissance de la coresponsabilité en vue du Royaume de Dieu. Ndlr.)*

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For quite some time now there have been a steady stream of documents or statements calling for greater lay participation in the Church. This has clearly been a direct result of the change that took place in the Church at Vatican II when the concept of "People of God" came to the forefront in ecclesiology. Yet, despite many apparently sincere attempts at getting lay people involved, I have heard many well-intentioned priests and committed lay people end up with the complaint: "Oh, the majority, the vast majority of lay people are so apathetic! With such laity how can one ever hope to have a co-responsible Church?"

Models of Ecclesiology in Practice: In this article I would like to share some reflections on what I consider the major cause of this apathy. My work as a lay theologian teaching in various seminaries and in other programmes of the Church around the country seems to convince me more and more that the amount of co-responsibility (and therefore "involvement") that will be present in any particular local Church, or in the Church in India at large, depends primarily on the model of ecclesiology that is dominant in that particular Church in practice. I stress the phrase, in practice, because what is preached in statements/documents from the rooftops of ecclesial and religious institutions may have little relationship to the actual ecclesiology practised in the same institutions. Thus, for example, while one priest could boldly call for "more democratic styles of management in the Church", another priest in a different province, while giving courses/seminars on legal and financial matters to seminarians openly stress that "We must make sure that the control remains

with us. Lay people can be brought in to collaborate in administrative matters but not on decision making bodies, not on policy making committees."

It is my hypothesis that if one could therefore test people, including bishops and priests, to find out which model of Church they accept in practice (and not just verbally), one could predict the kind of lay participation or co-responsibility that could be expected and would in fact be present in any given local Church.

The Use of Models: Models function by synthesising in particularly apt ways many disparate elements that go to make up a complex reality. All I can do, within the limitations of this article, is to take a few aspects of each model, and try to show how each aspect has an important bearing on the amount of lay participation or co-responsibility in the Church. Spelling out the implications of these models has increasingly strengthened my conviction that though involving lay people in decision-making is indeed a crucial element in creating a co-responsible Church, it is simplistic to consider this the only element. One could even imagine a situation where the laity were included in all decision making, and yet find few lay people coming forward to create a co-responsible Church. I have heard parish priests, whom I knew were sincere, say to me: "I told them (the laity): You make the decision...but they won't do it. They still want me to make the final decisions, to hold the reins." And yet, according to me, this would not be an unexpected response, precisely because the dominant model in that parish (and quite likely in that very priest), even though inarticulately buried in the subconscious, could be continuously working to undermine every attempt at creating this co-responsible Church. Models, I am convinced, can be self-fulfilling; "they make the Church become what they suggest the Church is".

Which are these three models I am referring to, and which are the aspects in each that affect co-responsibility in the Church?

The Pyramid Model: The first model is the pre-Vatican II pyramid model. It is however, pre-Vatican II only in theory, for I would suspect that in fact it is the model most widely subscribed to both among the clergy and the laity. In this model, as is commonly known, we have the pope, bishops and clergy on top with the vast corpus of the laity at the bottom. Consequently the "Church" is always identified with the hierarchy. All this is well known, and I will not belabour the description.

Vocation: A crucial aspect of this model is that from among this vast multitude that make up the bottom of this pyramid, a few are "raised up" to serve God. Thus, for those who accept this model, the term "vocation" is applied only to those high up on the pyramid—i.e. those who join the priesthood (or religious life).

As a result, lay people who buy in this model certainly do not see themselves as having a vital stake in making the Church a reality, for "after all I don't have a vocation." This is the model that still is preached every year when we have a vocation week that speaks of the great grace of having a priestly or religious vocation in the family.

Temporal-Spiritual Dichotomy: Since "vocation" applies only to those who are high up on the pyramid, and therefore "obviously" closer to God, this model leads to a clear temporal-spiritual dichotomy, with priests being set apart for "spiritual" and the laity for "temporal" works. There are of course exceptions, in one direction only, however, so that if the "temporal" work cuts close to the personal interests of the clergy, as for example the finances of the diocese/religious institution, then the priest can and must be in charge. Because of this clear dichotomy, since the laity's role is only temporal/secular, and the "Church" is connected in this model with "spiritual" matters, "pray tell me why I, as a lay person, must even bother about taking responsibility for the Church?"

Theology: Consequently too, in this model, all theological training (being connected with "spiritual" matters) is given only to priests, and therefore the priest is seen as having all the answers. Thus, for example, even without any real experience of fruitful and enjoyable sexuality, priests make all the decisions regarding sexual ethics (and the laity in this model would want/expect them to do so). As a result, thinking lay people are forced to behave like children and sacrifice their personal integrity for the sake of safety in the next life. Co-responsibility can hardly grow in such an environment.

Leader: Finally in this model, there is a beautiful example of Orwellian doublespeak, because though it is universally accepted that Jesus expected the leaders of the community of his disciples to be servants to the rest, the clergy, calling themselves leaders, "humbly, serve" by ruling, so that minister means magister. In this model the "Holy Childhood of the Laity" is fostered, the priest is always "father", and the pope/bishops are so far above one, that one must kneel and kiss their rings. But every time such titles are used (Father, Your Lordship, etc.), and everytime such marks of subservience are allowed/encouraged, the pyramid model is subconsciously being fostered, and any amount of "sincere" calls for a co-responsible Church will probably make little headway against this radically opposing subconscious message.

Lay Catholic Action: Does this mean that in this model there will be no lay participation? Certainly not. One will be able to point to a tremendous amount of lay Catholic action, but

only when "father" is a dynamic "good" priest who can evoke a lot of personal commitment to himself. But if "father" gets transferred and a new priest arrives who cannot foster this personal commitment, this lay participation will fall off. Of course, whenever such lay participation is present it will never be along the lines of co-responsibility, but in the hallowed tradition of Pius XI according to whom Catholic Action involved the "participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Church's hierarchy."

### THE CONCENTRIC CIRCLES MODEL

The second model, also well known, was in a sense officially patronised by Vatican II. The visual model of concentric circles sees the basis of everything as the People of God, and so the pope, like the lay person, is first of all one of the faithful. From within this community certain of the faithful are called to the priestly ministry. This model accepts firstly that the Church will not be able to fulfil its mission to the world unless the entire people of God is mobilised and secondly that the priestly ministry needs to be essentially linked and grounded within the flesh and blood struggle of the community. In this model, therefore the laity too have a vocation.

Vocation: However, as Jesus is the absolute centre of these concentric circles, and since the clergy are close to the centre, it is clearly understood that the priestly vocation is higher than all other vocations. Thus the decree on Priestly Training of Vatican II clearly refers only to the priestly vocation as a "divine" vocation, and at various other places in other decrees the Council sings the praise of this the most exalted of vocations, of which the bishop has the fulness, and the deacon partakes at a "lower" level. This immediately has repercussions on the possibility of a co-responsible Church. The laity do not see themselves as having to give priority to making the Church a reality. To the lay person in this model, this responsibility is most obviously the priority only for the clergy, while the lay person's responsibility is limited to helping out as much as possible. Co-responsibility, is, therefore, neither an ideal, nor a right that the laity can or even will want to demand/accept.

Temporal-Spiritual Dichotomy: Because all baptized Christians all have vocations, the temporal-spiritual dichotomy is in some ways lessened in this model. The laity can be "appointed by the hierarchy to some ecclesiastical offices with a view to a spiritual end," (LG 33) and "those in Holy Orders may sometimes be engaged in secular activities or even a secular profession", (LG.31) But in many other ways there is a constant reminder of this basic dichotomy, lest this blurring of the edges leads to an identity crisis, and so the previous quote goes on to say: "...yet by reason of their

particular vocation they are principally and expressly ordained to the sacred ministry." Therefore, priests will be constantly warned not to get embroiled in "temporal" affairs like politics, and the laity urged to make their weight felt in the temporal affairs of the Church, like finance committees.

Theology: What about the realm of theology? Here again there is a tempering down of the priest's vaunted omniscience. The clergy in this model openly acknowledge that they do not have all the answers, and will, in fact, consult lay people before advising in areas such as marriage, sexuality, medical matters, etc. Some might even daringly go so far as to encourage lay people to decide according to their own formed conscience. However, in this model, the official theology of the Church - though obviously flowing out of a clerical perspective which at the very least is the perspective of a male celibate who holds power in a non-equal Church - is foisted on all under the guise of an objective and perennially valid theology.

This leads the intelligent lay person to shy away from an area where one cannot pursue truth wherever it leads. And since therefore he/she does not become well-versed in theology, it is obvious that he/she cannot be given full and equal responsibility in the Church. So the lay person feeling totally incompetent in such areas would not even want to be part of a co-responsible Church.

Leader: For all these reasons, though they do feel somewhat responsible, lay people in this model do not see themselves as being equally responsible to make the Kingdom a reality. Therefore this model fosters the Holy Adolescence of the Laity, and a "good" priest will function as an open parent who sensibly consults his teenagers before making any family decisions. It is however clearly accepted by all that "father" being wiser and in this case also more spiritual, is the best person to make the final decision. This is the model of "benevolent paternalism" that Vatican II encouraged as opposed to the earlier authoritarianism. As a result, Catholic organisations will always have a member of the clergy in charge even if there are lay people who are better qualified. The principal of a Catholic school will almost inevitably be a priest/religious, even if one of the lay teachers is by far the best qualified. Or Caritas India will have a bishop and priest in charge neither of whom has any social work credential. The Catholic Hospital Association of India will have a priest in charge who has no medical training. But the clearest example of this is to be seen in the CBCI Commission for the Laity and the Pontifical Commission of the Laity which are so structured that in the former no lay person is a member (they are only consultors), and in the latter no lay person is a member of that central committee which alone has the right to call for a meeting. Still another example would be the Marriage Encounter where, though married people are heavily involved, the spiritual director is always

a priest who is obviously not married. So, too, none of the marriage tribunals in India has a single married member.

#### The Community's Role in Discerning Vocation's to the Priesthood:

Almost everything that has been said about the second model would also apply, often to a greater degree, to the first model. But what is very clear in both these models is that the priestly vocation is clearly understood in both cases as a call from God directly to the person concerned. This vocation has only to be discerned and ratified by the Hierarchy. The community of the faithful has no say in this matter, and the question at the ordination service whether anyone has any objection to the particular person being ordained has only a rhetorical value, and is certainly not meant to be taken seriously. And if the community's role is not meant to be taken seriously before the person is ordained, it is certainly not going to be taken at all once the person is already ordained.

#### THE INVERTED CROWN OR MULTIPLE FUNNEL MODEL

I come now to the third model which involves concepts that many are talking about in the theological world, and which in fact is being attempted to varying degrees in various local Churches around the world. The "picture" that I offer to describe this model is a means to better understand a concept of the Church within which co-responsibility can be fostered. I call this model by two names even though the visual is the same, because each of the names offers insights which are valuable. While it is obvious why I call it inverted crown, I also call it multiple funnel because it looks like a funnel with multiple spouts. It must especially be noted that the ends of the spouts are not sealed but open to let "water" flow through.

Leadership in the Jesus Tradition: In this model the community, the people of God, the Church, swirl in the top part of the funnel, and those who are called to function as leaders move to the lowermost parts, i.e. to the bottommost ends of the various spouts, thus functioning as slaves, the least, the last. Yet these slave-leaders, by virtue of their position in the funnel, have the ministry of focusing the energies of all those in the funnel as all valiantly strive to "water" the earth so that the Kingdom, that ultimately finds its origin in that God who sows the seed may sprout into flower. This concept of the slave leader is very much part of Jesus-tradition. Leadership, at least as Jesus understood it, was meant to turn the normal understanding on its head, to invert the crown,



as it were. The leader is very clearly called to be slave, and this is insisted upon not only by the powerfully symbolic "washing of the feet," but at least six other times in the four Gospels. The crown is no more a sign of glory, but needs to be inverted so that it often functions as a crown of thorns because the leader must often lay down his/her life for the others.

Different Leaders with Different Charisms: Coming back to the model, it is obvious that to coax the divinely sowed seed to life, much else is needed besides water. This obviously means that there will be different leaders with different charisms fulfilling different ministries ... yet all are of equal importance. Each local community will also be able to decide which are the ministries/spouts that it needs. This again is part and parcel of the Christian tradition as for example when Paul reminds the Corinthians that we all are like different parts of Christ's, body, each called to fulfil a different function, a different charism, and all to be used to build up the body that is the community. It is also a most obvious human dictum for the optimum functioning of any human group in our pluriform world that no one person could function as sole leader in every aspect of the life of the group.

Everyone Has a Spiritual Vocation: In this model the Vatican II concept of the Church as "People of God" is taken to its logical conclusion. Everybody has a "spiritual" vocation in that all are challenged to be fully involved in the "temporal" task of making God's Kingdom come. But the community calls on some to fulfil the challenging task of focussing the energies of the community in various spheres. Thus while all have charisms and all are called to exercise them for the building up of the community, there are some who exercise their charisms on a more stable basis and in response to the community's call. Such people are known as ministers.

Unifying and Building Up the Community: Who then is a priest in this model? Among these various ministries conferred by the community, there is one of unifying and building up the community. The one called to this ministry would already have this as his/her charism (and therefore it would truly be a call from God), but would exercise this charism on a stable basis because of the community's call (therefore ministry). The Federation of Asian Bishops says this of the role of the presbyter, which is the specific name for this minister: "The role of the presbyter is to inspire, to encourage, to foster initiatives and to help charisms to develop. The one concern is to form community into a living sign of presence in the world of the Risen Lord who assumed and heals all human situations and brings to fulfilment all hopes and aspirations."

Presiding at the Eucharist: As can be easily seen, this is not more (or less) spiritual than, say, focussing the energies of the community in the area of social work, politics, finance, etc. It is just a specific leadership function in a specific area. And since this person's ministry is precisely one of uniting and building up the community, he/she is also entrusted with the obligation, and therefore the right, to preside at the Eucharist, which at its deepest is a call to each Christian to break one's body, shed one's blood for the sake of establishing the Kingdom for all. The Eucharist being therefore the best symbol and most powerful means to unite and build up this Christian community, it is obvious that it should be presided over by the minister who is empowered by the community to "unify and build" it up.

In this sense I agree with the call to priests to fulfil their particular ministry, and not to interfere with other ministries in the Church for which others are empowered. But this is not to say that the various spheres in which priests today are actually involved are not spiritual, or are not ministries...whether they be in the sphere of politics, social work, or theology, etc.etc. All I am saying is that the right name should be given. Somebody actually involved in the ministry of teaching theology, for instance, should be perhaps known as a "theological minister," and not as "priest" or presbyter since he/she does not fulfil the latter's ministry of being a unifying spiritual leader.

Ministry is held in Trust for the Entire Community: It is clear that in this model leadership is only functionally and not ontologically different. Here all are equally adults, though decision making, while remaining ultimately with the whole Church may, for practical purposes, be delegated to emerging and acknowledged leaders. But, and this is crucially important, this power is not only delegated in different spheres to different people, but is always revokable because it is always held only in trust for the entire community. Thus a leader who functions at the bottom of the spout in the multiple funnel could end up blocking the community's energies, instead of focussing its energies constructively. In such a case this "leader" needs to be removed whatever his/her ministry, be it that of priest, social worker, whatever. Priesthood (or any other leadership position) here is still for life - but life is understood as the Christian life of the community, and not the physical existence of the individual concerned.

Theology: The multiple funnel model is also an open model..open to truth wherever it comes from, whether from other religions or from the sciences or anywhere else. Therefore, in this model, truth

The multiple funnel model is also an open model...open to truth wherever it comes from, whether from other religions or from the sciences or anywhere else. Therefore, in this model, truth can be pursued wherever it leads, and the tradition of the Church, yes even the Scriptures, become a guide and not a straitjacket for the theological enterprise. Theology, unlike in the previous two models where it is basically a defence of orthodoxy, is here a creative affair of offering proposals to the community, with the community having the right and duty to judge between what is life-giving and what is death-inflicting.

The community, the Church, will never be so presumptuous as to claim that in fulfilling its judging function it has always been kept in truth, in the sense that it has never made mistakes. History would not allow such a dishonest claim, not even in the realm of faith and morals. However, if being "kept in truth" is understood in the same dynamic sense as the expression that a couple is "kept in love" - and this involves fights, mistakes, failures, etc. - then this community can claim to be "kept in truth" ... that is the community is somehow always moving towards the truth, as the couple is moving towards greater love. In the process the community can make and acknowledge its mistakes, so that, stumbling and groaning and mis-stepping, the pilgrim community somehow lives in God's mercy and seems to be moving on in the figure of a dance.

This model Fosters Co-Responsibility: This model, in my eyes, is the only one of the three that can truly foster a co-responsible Church. It is definitely true that an inverted crown is in a state of unstable equilibrium, but this model can boldly say with the Indian Theological Association: "The traditional structures and institutions that gave the Church a certain stability and strength in the past have become today its problems. Since its structures are not absolute but relative to its mission, we must have the courage to discard those clearly irrelevant and even harmful, and look for those contextual and functional."

Theologian as Prophet: Is this third model practical? My answer to this involves backtracking a bit. I have suggested earlier that the underlying understandings of a model can become so accepted that they enter even the subconscious. At this stage the basic understandings behind the model

Ref: Vidyajyoti, June-July 1986, P.256-273.

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## CHURCH MINISTRIES FOR THE LAITY

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Jan Kerkofs, SJ

*(Le Bulletin trimestriel PRO MUNDI VITA, n.107 (1986/4) est intitulé: "LE LAICAT ET LE SYNODE EXTRAORDINAIRE (Décembre 1985)". De nombreux participants de ce Synode ont attiré l'attention sur son importance pour la préparation du Synode de 1987 sur le laïcat. Ils ont exprimé l'espoir que bon nombre de points fondamentaux qui y ont été abordés seraient traités plus complètement au Synode de 1987. Dans ce Bulletin de PMV, le P. KERKHOFs analyse l'importance de ce Concile extraordinaire pour le développement de la théologie du laïcat, dans la perspective du Synode de 1987. Il insiste sur cinq points principaux:*

*l'affirmation de l'Eglise conciliaire dans un monde en mutation; les laïcs comme membres à part entière de l'Eglise; leur engagement dans le monde; les ministères de l'Eglise pour les laïcs; la définition du rôle des laïcs dans le cadre des églises locales.*

*Nous extrayons de cette étude une section, courte mais significative, sur les ministères de l'Eglise pour les laïcs, exprimant la pensée de nombreux membres de ce synode extraordinaire..*

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Repeatedly in the Reports to the Synod it was emphasized that the increase in the number of lay people in Church ministries should not, first and foremost, be seen as a consequence of a shortage of priests but as something demanded by the co-responsibilities, the charisms and the competence of the laity. Besides their many tasks in the field of catechetics new ministries are springing up.

### ROOM FOR NEW MINISTRIES

In many of the reports and interventions we hear a concern for "more room to integrate lay leaders into pastoral work" (Brazil) and to design new ministries, while rejecting any discrimination against women. The same concern, also with regard to women, is to be found in the reports from Spain, Switzerland, Scandinavia, Australia, Canada and Gabon. In the report from Gabon it was said that: "Women often form the largest, most active and most faithful core of our Churches. It would be desirable for the Synod to redefine the role of women, particularly with regard to liturgical celebrations and the preaching of the Word." Bishop Monsengwo Pasinya (Zaire) mentioned in addition to the growth of basic communities, the development of lay ministries as one of the principal positive results of the Council. In order to provide better coordination of the pastoral and prophetic action of the laity in the country, the National Council of Catholic Lay People in Zaire was set up in 1984.

New offices and ministries must be adapted to the context. This is true of the permanent diaconate, which Archbishop Ndayen did not feel responded to the needs of his area: "It is suggested to us that it could be a solution for the shortage of priests. Although it is true that Africa has the smallest percentage of permanent deacons (married or otherwise), we still feel that the deacon cannot be a replacement for the priest. He can make the host with flour. But thereafter he can do no more.

"We have heard Western countries let out sighs of relief because at last they could have permanent deacons and lay people could play 'pastor' on priestless Sundays. In reality, our catechists and community leaders have been filling these ministries ever since the beginning of our evangelization. And they do it well without deacons. They can baptize (in articulo mortis), preach, pray for their dead; they like to settle the community 'palavers', etc. Why, at all costs, clericalize them through the diaconate?"

In Madagascar, between 1964 and 1984, twelve pastoral letters were written to encourage lay involvement. The English bishops asked that "the admission of women to the ministries of lector and acolyte be taken seriously". Moreover, they said: "We must find more appropriate means of detecting and developing the ministries and leadership roles of the laity."

#### THE GENERAL AND THE PARTICULAR PRIESTHOOD

It is not only the works of E. Schillebeeckx or the final text of the special Dutch Synod which have called attention to the relationship between general and particular priesthood. Many bishops have also touched upon it. Because he raised the kind of questions with which many Churches find themselves confronted, we shall quote in extenso from the intervention of Bishop Hubert, president of the Canadian bishops' conference.

"We could say that a large number of these (pastorally involved) lay people, be it as full-timers or as volunteers, are exercising a real ministry which we sometimes do not really know how to define, but the richness of which we recognize. The Church cannot do without this kind of involvement without endangering the vitality of the Christian community and the execution of its mission. This is particularly true of those places where the present tendency is making good headway and where we are counting on small groups and communities

on a human scale for education in the faith, a rethinking of commitment and of celebration.

"So far, the Canadian bishops have recognized certain ministries, be it by entrusting a specific mandate or by organizing celebrations for mission and commitment within the communities in which these lay people work, or by admitting lay people to the official ministries of lector and acolyte or to the diaconate. We should note here that these ministries are exercised by a very large number, even indeed a majority, of women.

"Whenever we evaluate the experience acquired, we see that certain forms of ministry carried out by lay people in our communities increasingly appear as expressions of a search for a new way of exercising the priesthood. It does not happen according to a preconceived plan, but it is the needs of the community, the quality, the competence and the leadership of the people which have led to these de facto situations which are challenging us."

"This demands an indispensable effort to clarify the meaning of the ordained ministry and of the ministries on the basis of baptism. This investigation, which must take account of tradition, must not take place at the expense of the responsible engagement of as large a number of Christians as possible in the life of the Church. It must take place within the framework of a theological reflection which neglects neither the communio character of the Church nor the consequences of this. The mutual harmonization of the ordained ministry and of a ministry on the basis of baptism will be all the greater, the more we try, first and foremost, not to differentiate two categories of people - with all that that implies - but try, as far as possible, to keep our sights on fulfilling the mission of Christ.

"We are well aware that we have opened up a broad range of problems. But we cannot keep silent about a reality we know is confronting others as well. We are also of the opinion that these questions concerning ministry raise questions with regard to ecclesiology. They must be looked at together..."

TANZANIA: This problem was also raised sharply elsewhere. In the Tanzanian report it was remarked that: "The forthcoming Synod on the Laity can formulate more clearly how we should understand the relationship between the ordained ministry and lay ministries and the role of the laity in evangelization. The consultation process in preparation of this Synod must call the laity to their task within the sensus fidei of the whole People of God (LG no. 12)."

CHAD: In another corner of Africa (Chad) this issue was linked to the shortage of priests. The report describes the situation very soberly: "The shortage of priests leads to worrying deviations: when, in a diocese with 2,000 places of worship, there are only 50 priests, what is to be done? Believers become used to a Sunday celebration presided over by a lay person. It is their usual way of celebrating the Sunday liturgy. The lay person who is given the task of presiding over the liturgy gradually appropriates, among his Christian brothers, the place which rightfully belongs to the ordained ministry. The distribution of communion in the course of the Sunday liturgy gradually blurs the distinction between a Sunday celebration without a priest and a real eucharist: 'as long as we can receive communion, isn't that what matters?' To counter this danger, the bishops' conference has been obliged to take very restrictive measures with regard to the distribution of communion in the absence of a priest.

"This situation in the Church results in an eclipsing of the meaning of the ordained ministry. In Chad, the leader of a community is not the priest but a lay person. The ordained minister is only a stranger to the community, someone who visits it, who celebrates the eucharist and then disappears as quickly as he came. Are we not thus experiencing a sort of silent Protestantization? Nevertheless, the believers have a right to the Sunday eucharist.

"In Chad we are making all possible efforts to encourage a large number of young men on the path towards the priesthood. Recently we have seen an encouraging increase in vocations. Nevertheless, even if this trend were to be a lasting one, we have to acknowledge that it will not be adequate to solve the doctrinal and pastoral problems which we have raised. We believe that we must have the courage to call married lay people to the ordained ministry, on condition that they are adequately trained, have given proof of their service to their community and have also decided to live there."

Archbishop Vandame (Chad), in his intervention, returned to this point, underlining that in his country each parish is the size of a diocese and that it is almost impossible for celibate, trained priests to go and live among the believers in the small communities.

BOLIVIA: The spokesman of the Bolivian bishops' conference also pleaded for greater understanding for his many priestless communities: "we should see the need for eucharistic ministers who should not necessarily be obliged to follow the very academic

curriculum of the classic training in order to serve our numerous Church communities."

The Indonesian report put it succinctly and clearly: "We particularly hope for greater openness to lay leaders and deeper reflection on the identity of clergy and laity. In this perspective it is perhaps necessary to consider the need to ordain family men to the priesthood and also to seek means of making laicization easier."

The Brazilian report rejoiced in the increase in the number of vocations to the priesthood, but it recognized that there is a continuing crisis concerning celibacy and added: "In a great many small communities of believers the fullness of the eucharist is missing because priests, trained according to the model laid down by the Church, are too few, despite the fact that these communities have mature men whose integrity and pastoral zeal are proven..."

"We must give considerably greater emphasis and place to priestly celibacy. Above all, we must courageously study the hypothesis of a diversification of the priesthood in this area. Priests who have left the ministry should be employed in other services of the Church."

In Western Europe, too, most countries are confronted with the same sort of problems. Will the 1987 Synod be able to offer a clarifying and practicable pastoral solution? The Scandinavian bishops went into this in greater depth as we can see from their report:

"We have the impression that the old question (1971 Synod) of the ordination of viri probati (men who have proved their competence) should be studied anew. Indeed, there where Church life is seriously handicapped by a shortage of priests, as is the case in our region, that life could blossom once again thanks to the services of such viri probati. Experience has taught us that a priest is needed 'on the spot'. His presence, to a large extent, encourages the communities and the mutual relations among the believers'..."

Quite a different tone could be heard from a number of spokesmen from the Eastern Churches. They expressed their caution about the role of the laity in the Church and saw in it the danger of the politicization of the Church. In this respect they pointed to the rather unhappy experiences of the Orthodox Church.



Let us close with some comments from W. Kasper: "We should grossly reduce the communio-ecclesiology, were we to limit it to the relationship between the bishops among themselves and with the Pope. The Church as communio means that all of us are the Church..." All are therefore co-responsible. Since the Council, new and urgent questions have arisen in this respect, e.g. with regard to the co-responsibility of women, young people and basic communities. "The communio-ecclesiology has certainly not been without consequences. Of course the Synod could only mention these further consequences; they must be discussed and deepened at the next ordinary Synod which will deal with the mission of the laity. Behind those things which the Synod could but mention lie various tricky questions which must first of all be sorted out."

Ref. Pro Mundi Vita. Bulletin 107, 1986/4. Rue de la Science 7,  
B 1040 Brussels.

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TAKING A CORPORATE STANCE  
SIGNS OF HOPE IN THE U.S. CHURCH

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Helene O'Sullivan, M.M.

*(CORPORATE STANCE: on entend par là une prise de position publique d'un groupe, d'une congrégation sur une affaire controversée, à la lumière de l'Evangile. Une telle prise de position résulte d'un long processus de discernement auquel tous les membres de ce corps prennent part. La déclaration publique initiale, l'engagement et l'action ne sont qu'un début, suivis d'une stratégie commune englobant le groupe dans son ensemble et chacun de ses membres.*

*Parce qu'une prise de position commune sur une question sociale cruciale est publique, l'Eglise est souvent accusée par ses critiques (de l'intérieur ou de l'extérieur) de faire de la politique. L'Eglise doit être capable de préciser ce que signifie être une Eglise publique, plutôt qu'une Eglise politique.. Le P. Bryan Hehir de la Conférence Episcopale des Etats-Unis a précisé que l'Eglise, dans ses déclarations publiques, considère les questions socio-politiques clés, sur lesquelles des décisions majeures doivent être prises dans la société et qui auront de larges implications nationales ou internationales.*

*Parmi ces questions il y a la course aux armements, la politique étrangère en Amérique Centrale, l'avortement et l'économie. Toutes ces questions se tiennent. Par exemple la politique étrangère des Etats-Unis en Amérique Centrale, implique aussi la politique étrangère en d'autres régions. L'avortement demande une éthique de vie cohérente, une prise de position en faveur de la vie dans toutes les autres questions. Ces points vont au coeur-même des choses, touchent les fondements et les valeurs de base de la vie publique et nationale, et doivent être examinés à la lumière de l'Evangile et confrontés à l'Evangile. Ce sont là des points cruciaux abordés par Helene O'Sullivan dans son allocution devant le symposium de la Commission "Justice et Paix" des Supérieurs Religieux le 24 février 1987 à Rome sur certains développements positifs dans la domaine de Justice et Paix.)*

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Introduction:

In 1980 I returned to the US from Hongkong to work in our Justice and Peace Office at Maryknoll N.Y. At that time President Reagan had

just been elected and President Carter was leaving office. President Reagan came into office on a strongly anti-communist platform and focused much of this on Central America. Only the year before two major events took place in Central America that focused world attention on it. One was the murder of Archbishop Romero in El Salvador in March, 1979, and the other was the Nicaraguan Revolution and the overthrow of Somoza in July '79. In December 1980, the suffering of the peoples of Central America touched Maryknoll in a very personal way when two of our Sisters, Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, were murdered in El Salvador with Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel and Lay Missioner Jean Donovan. Because of my position in our Justice & Peace Office I represented my Congregation on the investigation into the death of these four Churchwomen. During the next few years I worked with members of the Bishops' Conference, members of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, as well as numerous religious women and men, laypersons and priests as we collaborated together as Church to oppose the growing militarization of US foreign policy in Central America. We worked together on many other issues as well. Over the course of five years I had an opportunity to be part of and to watch develop throughout the Church in the U.S. a specific strength that I think is the most positive development of the U.S. Church in the area of Justice and Peace.

#### OUTSTANDING PUBLIC ACTIONS OF THE CHURCH IN THE U.S.

All of us are aware in recent years of some of the more outstanding public actions of the Church in the U.S. regarding important social justice issues: the Bishops' Pastorals on War and Peace and on the Economy; entire parishes deciding to become sanctuaries for Central American refugees; religious and priests joining in prayer vigils and manifestations around the Pentagon to protest the growing militarization of foreign policy and the arms race. There is a common element in all of these actions and this afternoon I would like to focus on this element in the U.S. Church. The one common element is the growing willingness and skill of the Church and entities within it, such as religious congregations, to take a corporate stance, to make a corporate response to the deepest issues in Society.

Corporate Stance: By corporate stance I mean taking a public stand as a group, a body, a congregation on a controversial issue in the society in the light of the Gospel. A Corporate Stance is taken after a long discernment process in which all the members participate. The initial public statement or commitment or action is only the beginning. It is followed by a strategy for on-going involvement in the issue by the group as a whole and each member of it.

Accused of Being Political: Precisely because a corporate stance is a public stance on a crucial social issue, the Church is often accused by its critics (inside and out) of being political. In a country like the U.S. where there is a strict separation of Church and State and where the Church clearly sees action for justice to be a constitutive element of preaching the Gospel and where the Church is trying to be faithful to its prophetic calling, the Church must be able to articulate what it means to be a Public Church rather than a Political Church. Fr. Bryan Hehir of the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Conference has articulated this by stating that the Public Church acts not by responding to all the issues raised in the public domain nor by responding to only one issue. Rather, the Public Church addresses the key socio-political issues on which major decisions are to be made in society and which will have far reaching implications nationally and internationally. The purpose of the Church being part of the public policy debate is to introduce moral/ethical dimensions into the debate, to make its voice heard and to aim at a renewed national value consensus. The call for a renewed national value consensus is not addressed only to the American public at large or to members of Congress but also to the Church itself.

The four areas that the Church is focusing on are the arms race, foreign policy in Central America, abortion and the economy. All of these concerns are clusters. U.S. foreign policy in Central America, for example implies foreign policy elsewhere as well; abortion calls for a "consistent ethic of life", a pro-life stance on all issues. These concerns go to the very heart of things, to the foundations and core values of public and national life that must be examined in the light of the Gospel and challenged by the Gospel.

#### EXAMPLES OF CORPORATE STANCE

At this point I would like to look briefly at the issue of U.S. foreign policy in Central America and the corporate response of laypersons, the Bishops, religious and priests.

Laypersons: In 1981-82 when the Contra-war was starting in Nicaragua, the Contras started attacking villages and farms along the border with Honduras. Innocent people were being killed. At that time a group named Witness for Peace was begun. These people, in my experience mostly lay people, went to Nicaragua to the border area, lived among the people and picked coffee and cotton with them. They hoped that their presence in the vulnerable areas near the border would prevent attacks because of the national outcry if they were attacked by Contras equipped by the US Government. Groups went for 2 weeks and lived under difficult circumstances. The organization that went into

this in both Nicaragua and the U.S. was considerable and attested to the depth of their commitment.

But their commitment to the people of Nicaragua didn't stop when they left there. When they came back to the States they spoke in parishes (often the parish had sponsored them and paid their air fare); they gave interviews in local newspapers; they spoke to their congresspersons and took every opportunity to educate the people in their towns and cities about the real effects of the Contra war on the ordinary people of Nicaragua. They spoke from their experience and were very effective. Obviously these laypeople were looking for a way to come together to speak out with other Christians, to be part of the prophetic Church.

The Bishops: Throughout the last 5-6 years the Bishops have had a consistent public stance calling for a political and peaceful solution to the conflicts in Central America. The US Bishops have sent numerous delegations of Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops to Nicaragua so that they might speak from first hand experience.. They have then publicly testified before congressional committees - Cardinal Bernardin, Archbishop O'Connor, Archbishop Hickey and others. They spoke about what they witnessed and the official stance of the Bishops' Conference. Prior to making any of these statements a committee of 46 Bishops heard the testimony to be given and approved it. This committee was authorized by all 300 Bishops at their meeting in November where they discussed US foreign policy in Central America.

The testimonies of the Bishops speak of their experiences and also address the principles upon which foreign policy should be based. In one of their testimonies, they gave nine criteria to be used when deciding if foreign aid should be given in a particular situation. The criteria included asking who would benefit from the aid and its impact on ordinary citizens in the country in terms of helping them become more independent, etc. These testimonies by the Bishops are much publicized and thus are a real opportunity to present the moral/ethical dimensions of the debate.

Religious: Many religious congregations have taken a corporate stance on such issues as the nuclear arms race, apartheid and foreign policy toward Central America. In many cases, having members of the congregation in Central America helped conscientize the whole congregation or at least the US province. Having discerned together towards a common statement and vision they also developed strategies or steps for action. These included involving other religious in visiting members of Congress, prayer vigils on the steps of the Capitol when important votes were coming up, prayer vigils at embassies, letter writing campaigns to Congress. Those who had personal experiences gave

talks or arranged speaking tours for human rights workers from Central America. The concerted efforts of laypersons, bishops and religious impacted US foreign policy by restraining or limiting the funding and commitment of personnel that the Reagan Administration wanted in order to pursue its goals. Irangate demonstrates this because the Administration simply could not get the support it wanted and needed for its policy in Nicaragua and so had to turn to covert and underhand methods.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF CORPORATE STANCE FOR THE U.S.

Why is the growing reality of corporate stance a positive development specifically in the U.S.?

1. The Catholic Church until recently has been an immigrant and minority Church in the U.S. For the most part the Church went along with the prevailing cultural values and with the government policies to prove that it was truly American. Thus the Church was like its members: upwardly mobile and respectable and fairly non-controversial. The Civil Rights Movement (Martin Luther King) and the Vatican Council in the 60's woke us up and the Church began to realize that many groups and peoples in the society were hurting and that we had not paid attention to the total U.S. or international reality. The Cuban Revolution had just taken place in '59. The stage was set for a change, a growth from a quiet compliant Church to a more dynamic community more involved in American society and more ready to challenge injustices in domestic and international policy. This did not happen right away but was growing.
2. The second reason why the development of corporate stance is so important is that in many ways it is counter-cultural. There is in American society a very strong emphasis on the individual and on the rights of the individual. In its positive forms this emphasis on the individual and the dignity of the person is the basis for strong civil and human rights legislation and equality before the law etc. On its negative side it can lead to a rugged individualism whereby the individual pursues his or her own goals without reference to the rights or needs of others. The ability of a congregation to take a corporate stance on a justice issue counters this rugged individualism precisely because it brings a group together to focus on the needs and rights of others and to recognize the brotherly and sisterly relationship between the other and the members of a group or congregation.
3. Since Vatican Council II there have been major changes in the ministries and life-styles of religious congregations. There are changes from institutional types of ministries such as schools and hospitals to a variety of ministries in which religious collaborate with other groups and agencies and thus work as individuals rather than in congregational ministries. Living and working

together in large communities with common prayer times, meals together etc. is less and less common among us. Thus congregations and religious houses are now discerning anew the charism of the foundress/founder in the light of today's urgent social needs and in the light of new forms of ministry and community. The discernment process that is part of corporate stance can focus the charism and energies of the congregation and help to create the unity in diversity which characterizes authentic religious life today, at least in the U.S.

#### CONCLUSION

By way of summary: Corporate Stance is one of the signs of vitality of the Church in the U.S. as it works for genuine social and structural change in society. In today's world where social, economic and political problems are so complex the Church must respond with knowledge, wisdom and courage. Action for justice which is a constitutive element of the preaching of the Gospel must be action together, action in solidarity, a corporate response. I leave you with two questions for reflection:

On what issues have members of your congregation/provinces for example taken a corporate stance?

What discernment process or procedures have been set up in your congregation for taking a corporate stance?

Ref. UISG/USG Justice and Peace Commission: 24 February, 1987;  
c/o. Via Aurelia 476, 00165 Rome.

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TWO THOUGHTS FOR MISSIONERS

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THE EARTH IS SACRED

*(From a letter which Chief Seattle of the Duwamish people from Washington State wrote to the American President in 1854 in response to a request by the government to buy the Indian lands and relocate the people on a reservation.).*

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man. The white man's dead forget the country of their birth when they go to walk among the stars. Our dead never forget this beautiful earth, for it is the mother of the red man. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and man and woman - all belong to the same family.

(Quoted by SEAN McDONAGH in TO CARE FOR THE EARTH - A CALL TO A NEW THEOLOGY. London, Geoffrey Chapman, 1986).

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FROM ST. SERAPHIM OF SAROV

*Men and women cannot be too gentle, too kind. Shun even to appear harsh in your treatment of each other. But remember, no work of kindness or charity can bring down to earth the holy breath, unless it is done in the name of Christ. When it is - joy, radiant joy, streams from the face of him who gives and kindles joy in the heart of the one who receives. All condemnation is of the devil. Never condemn each other. Not even those whom you catch at the evil deed. We condemn others only because we shun knowing ourselves. When we gaze at our own failings, we see such a morass of filth that nothing in another can equal it. That is why we turn away, and make much of the faults of others. Keep away from the spilling of speech. Instead of condemning others, strive to reach the inner peace. Keep silent, refrain from judgement. This will raise you above the deadly arrows of slander, insult, outrage, and will shield your glowing hearts against the evil that creeps around.*

*(Contributed by Donald Nicholl, Rostherne, Common Lane, Bentley, Crewe, U.K.).*



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