

# Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education

## *RC Schools Formation of Laity Peer Group Final Report*

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### **Appendix: Summary Chart**

#### **Why Form Catholic Laity for Ministry and Service in a Variety of Sectors?**

To intensify the apostolic activity of the people of God, the most holy synod earnestly addresses itself to the laity, whose proper and indispensable role in the mission of the Church has already been dealt with in other documents. The apostolate of the laity derives from their Christian vocation and the Church can never be without it. Sacred Scripture clearly shows how spontaneous and fruitful such activity was at the very beginning of the Church (cf. Acts 11:19-21; 18:26; Rom. 16:1-16; Phil. 4:3). (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, AA 1)

Nine of sixteen documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) affirm the role and contribution of the laity to the mission of the Church, to evangelize and catechize future generations of Catholics and potential converts.<sup>1</sup> In particular, The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*, 1964) and

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<sup>1</sup>cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Nature of the Church, nos. 33 ff.: A.A.S. 57 (1965) pp. 39 ff.; cf. also Constitution on the Liturgy, nos. 26-40; A.A.S. 56 (1964) pp. 107-111; cf. Decree on Instruments of Social Communication: A.A.S. 56 (1964) pp. 145-158; cf. Decree on Ecumenism: A.A.S. 57 (1965) pp. 90-107; cf. Decree on Pastoral Duties of Bishops, nos. 16, 17, 18; cf. Declaration on Christian Education, nos. 3, 5, 7; cf. Decree on Missionary Activity of Church, nos. 15, 21, 41; cf. Decree on Priestly Life and Ministry, no. 9.

The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 1965) affirm the call to form lay leaders and ecclesial ministers to serve in collaboration with clergy and to be salt and light (Mt. 5:13-16) in a variety of sectors, serving in various professions and states of life. The Council Fathers emphasized the need for proper training and formation, encouraging lay people to use their gifts to bring the Gospel to their families and workplace environments, and to assist clergy in a variety of diocesan, parish, and school ministries.

Pope St. John Paul II maintained and confirmed the magisterium's commitment to lay formation in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles Laici*, On the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and the World (1988). As "labourers in the vineyard," (CL 1), lay people collaborate with clergy and spread the Gospel throughout the world with their gifts, serving the Lord in a variety of vocations and states of life. Consequently, many Conferences of Catholic Bishops throughout the world have issued their own documents celebrating the role of the laity in their own communities, providing training and support through diocesan offices for lay discipleship and training and partnerships with seminaries and universities, offering non-credit programs as well as diploma, certificate, and degree programs designed to form lay leaders for professional ministry within a parish or diocesan context or in other disciplines and occupations.

American bishops have published documents such as *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium* (1995), *Together in God's Service: Toward a Theology of Ecclesial Lay Ministers* (1998) and *Co-workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry* (2005). Similarly, Canadian Bishops have published *Responsibility in Ministry* (1996) and *On Good Soil: Exploring Best Practices for Adult Formation* (2015). To be sure, Bishops have committed to forming "missionary disciples" who will participate in the building of the kingdom through communion and collaboration.

Members of The Roman Catholic Schools Formation of Laity Peer Group have studied the successes and challenges associated with providing this level of training in their respective schools. The following report will summarize and address the group's deliberations regarding guiding principles for lay formation. Each principle will be explained, including an analysis of crucial issues, challenges, obstacles, educational effectiveness, financial viability and innovations to be considered.

### **Guiding Principles for Lay Formation**

The Peer Group has developed and identified six principles that support the basis of lay formation:

***1. The universal call to holiness (LG 40) affirms the secular and ecclesial vocations of the laity as authentic charisms.***

This means all people are called to holiness regardless of state of life. A single lay person or married person is called to achieve the same level of sanctity as a member of a religious community or the clergy. A desired outcome of lay formation and the call to holiness is clarity for the discerning layperson regarding their vocational paths and uses of gifts. This outcome can be achieved by fostering a culture of personal and communal vocation and discernment; forming and providing accountability for disciples who witness to Gospel values; promoting the dignity of the person and social solidarity, and preparing students to understand and engage the culture, showing them how to serve and lead within it as witnesses to Christ's love, truth, and beauty. This desired outcome requires communal support and sharing of resources for lay discerners.

The call to holiness is infused throughout programming initiatives, shaping and influencing the level and intensity of preparation for laity coming from diverse backgrounds. Although all people are called to holiness, screening and preparation of candidates vary according to states of life as most schools have a longer history of forming men for the ministerial priesthood and permanent diaconate than they do forming lay people for ministry.

Various schools noted the need to articulate the distinction between screening and preparation of candidates in the ordination stream versus the lay ministry stream. Most seminaries and theological schools have rigorous screening tools for candidates for the ministerial priesthood. Although screening for lay candidacy varies from school to school, with some schools placing more emphasis on psycho socio competencies than others, other schools have designed programs to address the needs of the growing Hispanic population in the United States and members of other Christian communities through ecumenical initiatives.

Another challenge involves those lay candidates who receive training but do not seek church employment. Rather, they are being equipped to evangelize by serving in secular employment, infusing their Catholic identities into their secular vocations. They are called to be witnesses to Gospel values in a variety of sectors. Although it would be fruitful to have trained lay people infuse Gospel values into their secular settings, some may limit the use of their gifts to apologetic or political matters without applying their gifts and knowledge to other sectors. This concern needs to be addressed. Consequently, member schools noted the need to encourage and assist these individuals with job searches, placement, and follow-up.

## ***2. By virtue of baptism, Christians are called to participate in the threefold office of Christ: Prophet, Priest, and King.***

The Church's mission of salvation in the world is realized not only by the ministers in virtue of the Sacrament of Orders, but also by all the lay faithful; indeed, because of their Baptismal states and their specific vocations, in the measure proper to each person, the lay faithful participate in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of Christ. (CL 23)

Participation in the three-fold office of Christ suggests collaboration between clergy (bishops, priests, and deacons) and the priesthood of the baptized, the laity. Member schools noted the need for partnerships and support from diocesan leadership.<sup>2</sup>

Pope St. John Paul II, in his apostolic exhortation on the laity, confirmed the need for collaboration between lay people and clergy. Similarly, in 1997, various Vatican offices, congregations, and commissions issued guidelines for this collaboration in their document titled, *Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priest*. Although the respective Vatican offices underscored the need for lay assistance, they caution against confusion regarding the rights, roles, and obligations of the lay faithful:

Because these tasks are most closely linked to the duties of pastors, (whose offices require reception of the sacrament of Orders), it is necessary that all who are in any way involved in this collaboration exercise particular care to safeguard the nature and mission of sacred ministry and the vocation and secular character of the lay faithful. It must be remembered that "collaboration with" does not, in fact, mean

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<sup>2</sup> Group members recommended consulting *In Fulfillment of their Mission: Duties and Tasks of a Priest* prepared by the National Catholic Educational Association in 2008 as a guideline that could assist with collaboration between clergy and laity.

"substitution for." (Introduction)

One school has developed a "coordinating model" to ensure the collaboration and distinction between the ministry of the ordained and the lay faithful. The challenge remains preserving the unique identity of the priest and/or deacon and the unique contribution of the laity to the life of the Church. A few schools noted mixed classrooms where lay people are invited to attend the same classes as candidates for the ministerial priesthood. One school offers a course called *Lay Ministry in the Diocesan Church* that includes a unit on the legalities and boundaries associated with lay diocesan ministries, emphasizing collaboration and distinction between the two ministries, ordained and lay.

Field Placement provides another opportunity for collaboration. Most schools require MDiv students to complete placements in various settings, including parishes. It was noted that MTS or MRE students might not normally have access to such experiences, depriving them of the opportunity to collaborate with members of the clergy. MDiv students are evaluated in these placement settings by qualified supervisors, offering invaluable insights to formators or school administrators. Lacking a degree-program requirement, MTS or MRE students might not receive this important feedback as they prepare to serve in a variety of ministerial settings.

***3. Theological education for laity encompasses all four pillars or dimensions of formation: pastoral, intellectual, spiritual, and human.***

The emphasis on the formation of the whole person requires faculty members who are trained to cover all four formational areas. Some faculty members may have a strong academic background, but little ministerial experience. The desired outcome is a candidate for ministry or secular service who is well integrated or equipped with resources to become well integrated. This might be achieved using a multidisciplinary approach to formation, emphasizing the need for self-knowledge and the consultation of the science of psycho-socio development. This approach calls for regular assessment and screening, and monitoring spiritual and psycho socio growth. This approach to formation will assist with the integration of learning into a pastoral context.

This continues to be a challenge for schools with limited resources and assessment tools, making it difficult to measure spiritual and human growth. One school's educational principles have a deep grounding in a Vatican II ecumenical vision, and have been informed by these four pillars of formation. These pillars are addressed in their "three-legged-stool" approaches to lay formation: student formation, development of ministerial competence and integration, and demonstration of academic learning and intellectual development.

Various member schools indicated the use of this approach in their lay formation programs. In particular, one school has a more developed approach to the human formation of the laity. It uses a process called "Integration and Processing" to integrate the four pillars. Students are evaluated based on supervision reports, candidacy reviews, case studies, and peer reviews.

Although this school has been innovative in this area, other members noted the assessment of human formation is difficult as best practice models have not been well researched. Other schools offer some days of human formation, but those offering mostly online learning noted difficulty in addressing this pillar of formation in distance education. The intellectual, spiritual, and pastoral pillars are far more developed and well established than the human pillar or dimension of formation. Some schools offer non-credit days of formation for lay people that address each of the four pillars. Although some schools

offer online learning opportunities that are attractive to introverts, or have various teaching sites, some students do not have access to some of the spiritual supports that can assist them with their human and spiritual flourishing.

At one school, the work of the formation of distance education students is chiefly intellectual but the school's faculty is discussing how the spiritual and human pillars can be better responded to by their work. This can be challenging due to the high cost of providing on line education. Moreover, large class sizes might compromise the sense of community. Similarly, another school noted that its focus is primarily on intellectual formation. To attend to this concern, our group discussed the possibility of referring students to known spiritual directors and human formation counselors and other innovations including hybrid courses with some online and on campus options. Another option includes hiring faculty members who have had some practical ministerial experience. These individuals bring a combination of intellectual formation and years of ministerial experience.

***4. This theological education is offered in continuity with the Tradition using innovative and proven techniques, practices, and insights.***

Tradition might be understood as the handing on of "the living memory"<sup>3</sup> of our faith. This "living memory" of revealed truths or the deposit of faith is transmitted through Sacred Scripture, Liturgy, Liturgical Art, Early Church Fathers, Councils, and Creeds. Theological education must engage these pillars of Tradition, encouraging faculty to further develop their spiritual characters and theological bases so that students can be fully catechized before they are entrusted with the care of souls.<sup>4</sup> The mission statement of one school relates well to this principle: "Formed in tradition, trained in compassion, prepared to shepherd—Together in Christ, we are Mundelein, we form parish priests and those who collaborate with them in ministry." Mundelein uses the methodology of "See, Discern, Act, Evaluate, and Celebrate" and the pedagogy of the oppressed as ways of transmitting the Tradition to its students. These models encourage outreach and sensitivity to different cultural backgrounds.

Elsewhere, graduates of another school are expected to "be familiar with the teaching of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and will be able to use the *Catechism* as an instrument to inform and to guide their own catechetical teaching." Hence the touchstone for all work of formation at this school is the Catechism of the Catholic Church. They have built their scholarship program to keep costs down and to assist students with this training. Similarly, another school offers several bursaries and scholarships and uses a catechetical approach to form lay people for ministry. They are catechized before they engage in theological discussion. Yet another school has a different approach. Given that this school's context is ecumenically diverse, it utilizes principles that flow specifically from Vatican II's Decree on Ecumenism (UR 7, 8, 9, 11, 16). This school has been raising money to secure a \$35 million dollar endowment to cut down on school expenses.

Although most member schools offer courses rooted in Tradition, some schools are finding that students are lacking in basic elements of preparedness for graduate study, such as mastery of the liberal arts, especially as they relate to written and oral expression and reasoning, and also conversancy with the history and culture of the Church. Some schools noted the lack of training in Philosophy, an essential foundation for the study of our Tradition.

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<sup>3</sup> See Yves Congar, *The Meaning of Tradition*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> See John Paul II, *On Catholic Universities (Ex Corde Ecclesiae 1990)*, 22.

***5. Catholic social teaching principles provide the foundation for institutional policies and practices.***

This means policies and practices must honour the sanctity of life, understanding that all people are created in the image and likeness of God with the dignity this mystery entails. These principles inform policies that promote respect for all persons and the development of resources that assist with job placement opportunities in a variety of contexts. Although one school requires all faculty to integrate Catholic Social Teaching Principles into each course, other schools offer separate, required courses on the topic of Catholic Social Teaching and inform their policies with these principles. One school promotes these principles in their efforts to promote dialogue and ecumenical sensitivity in their programs. Notwithstanding the effort that has gone into the promotion of Catholic Social Teaching Principles, various schools noted cultural shifts, societal fluctuations, distance and economic barriers and insufficient institutional support as challenges for the engagement of this principle in all programming efforts. Some students live in rural settings, requiring more technical or online support in their training. This might add additional costs and resources. Moreover, Social Justice Principles apply to administrative practices as well as curricular planning.

The need to assist clergy and other administrators with human resources related issues was also noted. Transparency should be encouraged at all levels regarding hiring practices and protection, advising on career paths, and other decisions pertaining to job security and institutional integrity. Compensation of lay staff may vary depending on school or parish involvement. This led to some discussion regarding viability of various new degree programs and training since there are very few positions waiting for students upon graduation. Employment counseling was recommended as a response to this issue. Job counseling could include some assessment of transferrable skills. The service of financial advisors may help with the securement of endowments and grants for this type of training.

***6. Lay theological education promotes and supports a culture of encounter, solidarity, and accompaniment in participation in the life of the Church, infusing Gospel values in all sectors of our community.***

The New Evangelization targets baptized Catholic Christians who have fallen away from the Church for one reason or another. Using witness and proclamation, evangelizers—consisting of lay, clergy and religious—reach out to these individuals using their gifts and skills in a variety of professions and in all sectors of our community.

The working document (2012) for the synod on the New Evangelization lists seven sectors in need of an encounter with Christ:

1. Culture
2. Social Sector
3. Economy
4. Technology and Scientific Research
5. Civic Life
6. Media and Social Communications
7. Religion

Lay Formation programs provide ecclesial formation for the parish and training of the lay apostolate in the world. Forming lay evangelizers for accompaniment of others in the life of the Church requires an encounter with Christ and His truth, goodness and beauty, properties of God's being. This calls for an awareness of the signs of the times and the reality of cultural diversity in Canada and the United States,

especially the large Hispanic presence in American Catholicism through an experience of *Encuentro* (faith gathering). *Encuentro*, as a model of faith formation, contextualizes the candidates' faith experiences. Several schools noted the use of this model in their programs. One school designed a program to prepare lay ministers in East Los Angeles where its fastest growing demographics and greatest pastoral challenges are faced.

Although *Encuentro* and accompaniment requires understanding and empathy, some schools noted the difficulty some faculty members have relating to students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Online learning was cited as another obstacle to accompaniment and encounter as meeting with mentors and advisors is key to integrating the learning and applying it to their personal lives. This same school faced another problem with students who could not physically access the seminary. To meet this challenge, they have begun discussions to implement distributive learning and technologies by which lectures can be broadcast to remote locations and student learning managed in a meaningful way.

Similarly, several schools noted partnerships with dioceses, publishers, Catholic media, and religious communities. Moreover, they offer a wide variety of credit, non-credit, residential, and distance education opportunities. Some schools are more advanced in their uses of technology for distance education. Some schools cited financial limitations, delaying plans to implement the use of technology to reach those students who may not be able to take credit courses or attend non-credit lay formation days in person. One school has purchased some equipment with the help of a grant, but will need to acquire more resources in order to secure the services of professional technicians.

Many schools are engaging in innovative ways of reaching students who cannot attend in person. Encouraging partnerships with diocesan offices and Catholic media can ensure the delivery of such programs, securing funding for programming and technical needs to reach a wider audience. These new approaches must consider the emerging reality of more students whose normal intellectual habits do not involve the reading of books, presenting new pedagogical challenges.

### **Implications of our work for the broader work of theological education?**

Theological education consists of external and internal curricula.<sup>5</sup> The external curriculum consists of training in the area of catechesis and doctrine, or training in our intellectual tradition. The internal curriculum emphasizes human formation, the cultivation of virtue and other important life skills: how to manage conflict; how to manage anger; how to forgive; self-knowledge and self-awareness; how to communicate tactfully, yet truthfully. Moreover, the internal and external curriculum should consult the expertise of other disciplines, offering important insights into the human condition. It is worth the effort to explore options and resources to ensure a balance between the two approaches to formation for discipleship.

### **Implications of our work for the possible process of redevelopment of the Standards of Accreditation**

We, members of the Roman Catholic tradition, have a lot to offer other Christian communities and schools by way of language of our four pillars, or dimensions of formation. Some of our member schools could assist with the development of approaches to learning based on these for dimensions of formation. Additionally, our committee proposed the following:

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<sup>5</sup> For more on this see Josephine Lombardi, *Experts in Humanity. A Journey of Self-Discovery and Healing* (Toronto: Novalis, 2016).

- Clearer definition of the kinds of formation needed in different degree programs. For example, there are variations of the MA degree
- Clearer recommendations regarding residency and online learning communities
- Clarity regarding prerequisites for theological education with some validation of prior learning experience
- Creation of separate standards for the formation of lay people
- Clarity regarding the training of rural part time pastors with no credentials
- Discussion of the external and internal curricula, balance between intellectual and pastoral
- Discussion on the variation within degree programs regarding the following: ministry, context, history, and personal development.

Overall, our involvement with the ATS Education Models and Practices in Theological Education Peer Group Forum has been quite fruitful—encouraging, and inspiring dialogue, fellowship, and the sharing of best practices. The study has affirmed the important work of lay formation, showing how rewarding it is.



<b>Principles</b>	<b>Crucial Issues/Questions</b>	<b>Opportunities/Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges/Obstacles</b>	<b>Insights/Innovations</b>
#1 <i>1. The universal call to holiness (LG 40) affirms the secular and ecclesial vocations of the laity as authentic charisms.</i>	Screening for lay people vs. Screening for clergy candidates	All people in all states of life are called to holiness. Affirmation of the service the laity provide the Church and the secular environment.	Address the needs of growing Hispanic Community. How to prepare lay people who will not serve in a ministerial setting, but in secular service?	Assist students with employment counseling, job searches, placement and follow-up.
#2 <i>By virtue of baptism, Christians are called to participate in the threefold office of Christ: Prophet, Priest, and King.</i>	How to encourage collaboration between clergy and laity without compromising the nature and mission of the ministerial priesthood.	Some schools have mixed classes with lay people studying alongside with seminarians. Particular courses offered to prepare lay people for diocesan service.	Need clergy support and encouragement. How to reconcile collaboration with distinction of roles.	Most schools offer courses to prepare lay people for this level of collaboration. Some dioceses and media have partnered with schools to support this initiative.
#3 <i>Theological education for laity encompasses all four pillars, or dimensions of formation: pastoral, intellectual, spiritual, and human</i>	How to measure and assess human formation? Human formation is a dimension/pillar that requires special attention and consideration.	Lay people are being formed using the same four pillars of formation used for clergy formation.	Schools that focus mostly on online learning and the intellectual tradition noted the need to consider how they can assist their students with human formation.	USML uses a process called "Integration and Processing" to integrate the four pillars.
#4 <i>This theological education is offered in continuity with the Tradition</i>	Some students need to be catechized before they can engage in graduate theological study. It is important that they know the	Several schools ensure the students are fully catechized as part of their formation. This will prepare	Some students are lacking in basic elements of preparedness for graduate study, such as	A combination of online learning and in class preparation can make the

<p><i>using innovative and proven techniques, practices and insights.</i></p>	<p>Tradition before they prepare for ministry.</p>	<p>them to be catechists and defenders of the Tradition.</p>	<p>mastery of the liberal arts. Funding for programs and tuition continues to be a concern for most schools.</p>	<p>programs more accessible to students.</p>
<p>#5 <i>Catholic social teaching principles provide the foundation for institutional policies and practices.</i></p>	<p>Including Catholic Social Teaching Principles in programming and course content.</p>	<p>Students and staff will be mindful of the dignity of all persons and will use this principle in their day-to-day administrative activities.</p>	<p>How to address cultural shifts, societal fluctuations, distance and economic barriers and the challenge of institutional support and partnerships.</p>	<p>USML requires that all faculty members integrate Catholic Social Teaching Principles into each course. Other colleges have required courses.</p>
<p>#6 <i>Lay theological education promotes and supports a culture of encounter, solidarity, and accompaniment in participation in the life of the Church, infusing Gospel values in all sectors of our community.</i></p>	<p>Faith gatherings (<i>encuentro</i>) and other educational opportunities encourage the New Evangelization, infusing Gospel values in all sectors of our community.</p>	<p>Encourages an encounter with Christ's truth, goodness and beauty. Facilitates an awareness of the signs of the times and cultural diversity.</p>	<p>Some faculty members experience difficulty relating to students from diverse backgrounds. In one case, students had difficulty accessing the campus for training.</p>	<p>Some schools are using distributive learning techniques and technologies by which lectures can be broadcast to remote locations. Partnership with media and publishers has assisted with making educational material more widely available.</p>

