

Working in the Vineyard of the Lord: A National Symposium on Lay Ecclesial Ministry

Pre-symposium Preparation

Session 4 – The Ministerial Workplace

“Raising Expectations in the Ministerial Workplace,”

Michael Brough, National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management

“Lay ecclesial ministers – and indeed all lay Church employees and volunteers – function in a workplace that shares both the characteristics of a faith community of co-workers, as described by St. Paul, and the characteristics of a modern organization. Thus, in the ministerial workplace, one finds the special challenge of establishing policies and practices that integrate Gospel values and best organizational practices. This is particularly true as regards the management of human resources.

Best organizational practices are consistent with Gospel values. They balance the goals and needs of the organizations, its workers, and the community in which it is located. They imply respect for persons, justice, integrity, efficient use of resources, successful accomplishment of mission and goals, and an environment in which committed and skilled workers are treated fairly.”

Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, USCCB, 2005

This session of the symposium will respond to the bishops’ call to establish best organizational practice that is consistent with Gospel values. A parish’s relationship to its ministerial personnel, both clergy and lay, paid and volunteer, is fundamental to its ability to achieve its mission. Human resource policies should be fair, establish clear expectations, and provide for meaningful and effective performance evaluation. Our purpose in this session is to develop concrete recommendations and commitments that will raise expectations in the ministerial workplace.

In preparation for this aspect of the symposium:

1. View the *Church in America* DVD. The video can be viewed online at <http://www.nlrcm.org/DVD/Diocesan/Media/default.html> by symposium participants and a participant sheet can be downloaded at <http://www.nlrcm.org/DVD/Diocesan/HR-Resp.pdf> for recording your responses. You will view the human resources section of the diocesan version of the DVD. The full 25 minutes are relevant with particular focus on the question of what constitutes an effective human resources management system. For further information on the DVD and the best practices it promotes, visit www.nlrcm.org.

- Which elements of a comprehensive personnel system as presented in *Co-Workers* need to be strengthened in the ministerial workplace in general, and in your own setting in particular?
- What approaches have you found effective for raising standards and expectations in the area of human resources development in parishes and dioceses?

2. Reflect on the six human resource areas identified in *Co-Workers in the Vineyard* as important elements of a comprehensive personnel system. Brief descriptions of those areas can be found on page 43-44 or online at <http://www.usccb.org/laity/laymin/co-workers.pdf>.

Recruitment and selection
Orientation and support
Evaluation and feedback

Compensation
Transitions and terminations
Grievance procedures

- As a lay ecclesial minister, what has your own experience been of these six elements?

- How can we improve these areas for future lay ecclesial ministers?