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Lay Collaboration – an Integral part of our Mission

Editorial

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It is absolutely true when some theologians and Church leaders call the Second Vatican Council “the Council of the Laity”. The Council placed, for the first time in the history of the Church, the concerns of the laypeople on its agenda as a major topic for discussion; it promulgated the first-ever document on their place in the Church, known as **Degree on the**

Apostolate of the Lay people (*Apostolicam Actuositatem* [AA]); and in the post-Vatican II Church, it is the magna charta of their vocation and mission in the Church and the world.

Laypeople are often described negatively as persons who are not-priests or not-religious, having no identity of their own in the Church. All this has been changed. The conciliar document states the laity receive their share in the mission of the Church directly from Christ himself. Their right and duty to be apostles come from their union with Christ their head (AA, 3). This is one of the single most insights of Vatican II, overturning a pre-conciliar hierarchical view that all ministry in the Church trickle down through the hierarchy.

Based on the conciliar degree on the laity, *Christifideles Laici*, a Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, issued in 1988, underscores the dignity and the pastoral significance of the mission entrusted to the lay faithful with rich and positive description. This typological description contains several elements: That the lay person is an active member in the community of the people of God, an active participant in the mission of the whole Church and engaged in world affairs to permeate the world with the Spirit of Christ.

These documents pose a demand that priests and religious examine their kind of approach and working relationship to lay collaborators in their institutions and their mission and that they build this relationship into deeper harmony with the spirit of the Council.

The clergy require an on-going formation in the overall governance and more in the area of collaboration with others

– to respect others, relate with them on equal basis, work with them as a team and function as effective facilitators.

The clergy need to become aware of the vocation of the laity and make efforts to understand their life and aspirations by fraternal dialogue and involvement in lay organizations. The laity need to be helped and accompanied to understand and share our spirituality, charism, history and way of proceedings, cultivating a true friendship and extending fraternal hospitality. We must open up to the laity in various ways a wide participation in direction, administration and even governance of our institutions. We have a lot to learn from them.

The power and the depth of collaboration always make our mission fruitful. Collaboration with lay colleagues cannot be just a strategy, but a necessity, an integral part of Christian formation and mission. We are called not only to participate, but to actively collaborate in tasks and events which previously were almost exclusively reserved for the clergy and the religious. Unless and until collaboration grows deeper and is built on solid and enduring foundations, Christian mission will be incomplete and unfinished.

Fr. Adolfo Nicholas, the thirtieth Superior General of the Jesuit Order, had once said in a talk to his fellow Jesuits, 'when we start an institution, we should immediately prepare our lay successors so that we can hand the work over to them after some years and move on. Shrinking number of Jesuits will be compensated for by the growing number of competent lay persons. This gives us the freedom again, to be creative, flexible and mobile. Our institutions are our children, let them grow, go off, get married and go on their own way.

This issue of the Goethals News focuses on Lay Collaboration in our institutions and centres. Lay leaders and collaborators like Dr. John Dayal of Delhi, Dr. Pushparajan of Madurai, Dr. Panchali Sen and Dr. Charlette Simpson-Veigas of Kolkata, theologians Dr. Sunil Michael Caleb of Kolakta, and Dr. D. John Romus of Raiganj share their ideas and reflection from their perspectives. I am confident that their ideas will make our readers think and initiate an on-going praxis on the topic. Our objective is to contribute towards furthering the collaborative efforts already existing in our institutions.

The Laity: A Historical Review

Dr. D. John Romus



The laity participation in the Catholic Church gained so much recognition after the Second Vatican Council that one might think it is something new; but that is not true. The Council, in fact, restored an ancient tradition, going back to the time of the apostles. The sociological and theological distinction between clergy and laity was not emphatic in the early Church as it happened in the later history of the Church. The terms 'laity' and 'clergy' are not even found in the New Testament as titles designating two separate classes of people in the Christian community. Hence, this article revisits the historical development of the laity from the beginnings of the Church till Vatican II and to see what we may learn for our times.

The Church as the People of God

After the Easter experience of the Risen Christ, his followers called themselves as “brethren” (Acts, 1:16), “disciples” (Acts, 11:26), “believers” (Acts, 2:44), and members of “the way” (Acts, 9:2). Around 40 C.E., the people of Antioch in Syria called Christ's disciples “Christians”, as those loyal to Christ (Acts, 11: 26). By the time Nero's persecution of the Church began in 64 C.E., “Christian” was the official name given to Christ's followers by the Roman Empire (*Annals of Tacitus*, 15:44), and this name continues to this day.

The word 'laity,' a derivative of the Greek word '*laos*', means, in its secular usage, people/nation. Christians of the New Testament time applied this term to the entire Christian community, because they believed they were the new people of God as referred to in 1 Peter, 2: 9-10: “holy people” / “holy nation” (*agion laos*) and “people of God” (*laos theon*). St. Paul informs us, as people of God, the Church is an egalitarian community (Galatians, 3:26-28) in which varieties of charisms blossom into diverse ministries (Romans, 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians, 12:27-30).

Some of the baptised were functionally 'set apart'. This is the literal meaning of word 'clergy,' a derivative of the Greek word '*kleros*.' They were “set apart” by ordination for the service of the entire community. The early Christian leaders considered themselves as ministers of Christ in the service of the people (1 Corinthians 9:19-23; 2 Corinthians 4:5). There was no question of their lording it over the community (1 Peter, 5:1-3; 2 Corinthians 1:24). Yves Congar, peritus (theological adviser) to Vatican II, noted, “There is no distinction between 'lay people' and 'clerics' in the vocabulary of the New Testament” (Congar, *Lay People in the Church* [1965], 4). Similarly, Alexander Faivre, a French Church historian, observed that in the first three centuries the presbyters (priests) and even some bishops lived as ordinary working men, tending their farms and businesses. In most respects, sociologically, the presbyter was not differentiated from the lay person (Faivre, *The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church* [1990], 144-45).

Commenting on the clergy-laity relationship in the early Church, Edward Schillebeeckx, peritus to Vatican II, remarked: “According to St. Paul and the whole of the New Testament... relationships involving subjection are no longer to prevail... This early Christian egalitarian ecclesiology in no way excludes leadership and authority... authority must be filled with the Spirit, from which no Christian, man or woman, is excluded... on the basis of the baptism of the Spirit” (Schillebeeckx, *The Church with a Human Face* [1985], 39). The Church Fathers further developed 'the people of God' image of the Church as described in the New Testament. St Cyprian and St Augustine depicted it as the “body of Christ,” “building” and “temple” in which all Christians – laity and clergy participated in its edifice, growth and nurturing.

Examples abound of the laypeople living their faith as actively as their clergy during the first four centuries of Christianity, when the Church in the Roman Empire faced persecutions. Many laypeople earned the crown of martyrdom along with their clergy – and sometimes without them, when some priests and bishops denied faith to save their lives. In North Africa and in the Eastern Roman Empire, learned laypersons were involved in Church administration as teachers and theologians, taking part in great public debates. Many of them were equipped with classical education and conversant in theological matters. They accompanied the bishops as theological advisers to the regional and ecumenical councils (C.M. Bellitto, *Ten Way The Church Has Changed* [2008], 36-39).

Clergy-Laity Divide: An Aberration

An unforeseen disastrous division set in between clergy and laity in the fourth century, when Emperor Constantine declared Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire. The clergy were raised to civil service position with all political and economic privileges of rank and status. Moreover, when the fall of Roman Empire began in the fifth century, it was left without an Emperor. Led by the Pope, the clergy stepped in and took the reins of power. Thus, the clergy were elevated to a higher order in the society with political power and honour.

Late in the fifth century, Pope Gelasius (+ 496) endorsed diarchy. It meant that the world was ruled by two independent powers, namely spiritual/priestly and temporal/kingly powers of which spiritual power was superior to temporal power, the papal power superior to emperor's power. Lay persons were gradually eased out of Church's administrative positions and excluded from the decision making process. Pope Leo (+461) banned them from preaching, and Pope Gregory (+604) replaced all of his lay servants with clerics or monks.

The distinction between clergy and laity was also aggravated by the kind of understanding the clergy had towards the life of perfection. Pope Urban II (+ 1099) declared: “From the beginning the Church has offered two kinds of life to her children: one to help the insufficiency of the weak, another to perfect the goodness of the strong... a true Christian, consistent

with the apostolic life, left the world for a life of continence. Life in the world, including marriage and family, was considered a compromise” (Congar, *Lay People*, 12). Such pessimistic ideas, though opposed to the Gospel values, prevailed through the Middle Ages. Thus, it came to pass that the Church was equivalent to clerical order. Consequently, Serious-minded laypeople, often the well-educated aristocratic class, were in search of new spiritual outlets. Many embraced monasticism and ascetical life, neglecting their responsibilities to society for the benefit of their own salvation (Congar, *Lay People*, 12).

In the Middle Ages, theologians and canonists divided the Church into two separate states of life, namely *ordo clericorum* (clerical state) and *ordo laicorum* (lay state). R.P. McBrien's portrayal of this binary state of Christian life is informative: “The latter (the laity) was composed of men of the world, given to the flesh. The former was composed of those devoted to the spiritual realm (the clergy), responsible for the governance of the Church. The division was influenced also by a Neoplatonic view of the world, which defined reality as gradational and hierarchical, consisting of lower and higher forms. The clergy were at the highest end, with the pope at the very top, and the laity were at the bottom” (R.P. McBrien, *Ministry* [1990], 38-39). This system continued until Vatican II.

The Age of Laity Awakening

The dawn of the Modern Age – roughly the late 15th century, brought in laity revival. The expansion of the mercantile class increased material wealth of the laypeople; contact with Islam and classical antiquity created growth and expansion of their educational profile that guided them towards a positive approach to life in the world, secular order, morality and spirituality itself. The Protestant Reformation of Martin Luther (+ 1546) registered effectively the longings of the lay faithful for reform in the Church. Luther condemned clericalism and the disparaging position assigned to the laity; he advocated the common priesthood of all the faithful (cf. 1 Peter 2:9). He claimed by baptismal anointing, all Christians share in the one priesthood of Christ and form one spiritual community, but all

were not called to be pastors. This principle opened a huge space for the laity in the Church and their empowerment through education for ministry in the Church and the society.

The Catholic Church witnessed to laity revival in the decades leading up to Vatican II. Many lay movements in the West, like the “Catholic Action”, brought to the forefront lay faithful's importance in the life and mission of the Church. Popes Pius X (+ 1914), Pius XI (+ 1939) and Pius XII (+1958) encouraged these movements. Pius XI saw Catholic Action as a powerful force for extending the Church's influence into family, political life and the world of work, especially in the industrial sector. At this point of time, everyone agreed on the need to affirm the laypeople's contribution to the Church's mission, though their place was assigned to the bottom of the hierarchical order. It was left to Vatican II to remedy the fault.

A Lesson to Learn

During the first four centuries of Christianity, the Church was overwhelmingly participatory in carrying out its mission. Team spirit and solidarity among clergy and laity animated their ministries. This, in no way, excluded the leadership and authority proper to the Church, but preserved them in an egalitarian ambience of Christ's disciples. Vatican II reclaimed this ancient idea of participatory Church as given in the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, and invites us to put it into practice.

Church's mission in the world is represented in a pre-eminent way by the laypeople, who make up more than 98 % of the people of God. It is their mission to bring the Gospel values to the realms of politics, economics, culture, education and family life so as to uphold human dignity and to enhance the welfare of the society. Well-informed laity, both in the secular and ecclesiastical sciences, is the need of our time. Collaborative ministry and team work with them are essential components of a participatory Church that we need most today.

Hierarchy must share blame for a Disempowered Laity

Dr. John Dayal



The Indian Catholic, and in fact larger Christian, landscape is littered with the debris of dashed hopes of the Church to change the national discourse from within through a legion of policy makers and administrators.

Collectively the community – the Church, NGOs and individuals – may run perhaps more than 50,000 educational institutions across the map

of India, but its numbers in the governance structures remains miniscule, and its ability to influence policy and polity near non-existent. Pockets of influence in Kerala, and three of the eight states of the northeast, are demographic aberrations that sharpen

the bitterness of the truth that the Christian community is among the most politically disempowered of India's religious groups.

Over the last 100 years, including the backdrop of the Freedom struggle, especially in the southern and eastern regions, Individual Christian leaders glittered brightly in the firmament, but that galaxy seems now in the distant past. Contemporary students in Bengal, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Goa, Punjab, Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya can name the Christian leaders from those regions.

Orissa, in fact, owes a debt of gratitude to Madhusudan Das for its modernity. In contrast would be the militant political leaders of the north eastern states who confronted the newly independent nation state to defend their cultural and ethnic identity and their sovereign political systems. It is a matter of

political maturity that eventually they foreswore a military confrontation, and peacefully brought their people into the development mainstream and stability. In many ways, the populations of the Sikhs and the Christians in India are comparable: the Sikhs at just under 2 per cent and the Christians constant at 2.3 per cent over the last three census exercises in the country. The political clout of the two communities shows the skewness that political demography brings about.

Many factors come into play favouring the Sikh community, almost none of which exist for the Christians. The Sikhs are concentrated in rural Punjab. They have a religion based political party, the Akali Dal, which also commands a great control over religious forums, and their coffers. Like the Church, they also run educational institutions and formation of the young. In addition, after the end of the British-Sikh wars, the Indian army began a process of recruiting a large chunk of its soldiery from this community. With control over town and rural self-governance mechanism, they are able to exercise considerable influence on policy making – from external affairs to agricultural regulations.

Even in Kerala and the north-eastern states, areas of their concentration, the Christians are not in position to influence policy. The best they have could do is to perhaps periodically push a senior jurist into the High Court when there is a friendly government or chief minister, after which the laws of attrition and promotion ensure that there is a Christian, often a Malayalee, judge in the Supreme Court of India.

But other than when the Congress is in power, there are few Christian Ministers in the central government. In the BJP's government under Mr Narendra Modi, the tenure was three fourths over before the ambitious but non-representative bureaucrat turned politician, K. J. Alfons, was made a junior minister. The UPA's senior Christian ministers over the recent decades, CM Stephen, Oscar Fernandez, AK. Anthony, Sequeira and Eduardo Faleiro will hardly be remembered for path breaking legislation.

The record in bureaucracy and the police is better, though again the numbers are not much. Even the reserved categories of Scheduled Tribes, which once sent many bureaucrats from the Chhotanagpur tribal belt, and the north east, is fast drying up with highly educated newly designated tribal communities such as the Meena from Rajasthan and neighbouring states doing very well in the Union Public Service Commission's examinations.

The Church has woken up too late to the crisis. It does not have a policy in place for the political empowerment of the community in states other than its traditional power bases. Andhra, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Orissa and even pockets in south Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh offer an opportunity to ambitious young men and women to enter politics at the grassroots level and then climb up on their own merit. This has not been explored very much.

A serious stumbling block is the fact that Christian converts from the scheduled castes are, under current law, not eligible to contest from seats reserved for such communities. The Dalit

Christians, as we call them, have little prospect in government jobs – unless they falsify their documents and style themselves as Hindus. This is a dangerous game, apart from its questionable morality. State governments such as in Orissa have in fact launched witch-hunts to trap persons who have jobs or scholarships in educational institutes under the reserved categories but are practising Christians.

This is a battle the Church has not fought very well either in court or in the political arena in the first five decades of the Independence and a new constitution. At long last, the matter was taken up in the Supreme Court by the Church leadership and groups such as the all India Catholic Union. The issue will come up later this year before a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court. It is to be hoped that it will be argued well and get a fair decision.

It is patently unfair that Buddhists and Sikhs, as casteless as they come, are given the benefits of reservations but Muslim and Christian converts from the former untouchable castes are not. The government argument is specious, at best. Untouchability is long outlawed, but in giving Hindus, Sikh and Buddhists these benefits, the government seems to acknowledge that untouchability remains a fact in India. And of course, it does. Untouchability is in the air and the soil of the land, and contaminates all religions, as former Chief Justice Misra said in his report as chairman of the special National Commission constituted to decide this issue. But even if the Supreme Court admits Dalit Christians in the Schedule Caste category, striking down Article 341 part 3, there is no guarantee they will enter central and state services in large numbers.

Selection examinations cover the entire country, or an entire state, with tens of thousands, sometimes hundreds of thousands of earnest young men and women trying to actualise their ambitions to be in the seat of power. Many of them come from well off families or social groups and have the advantage of an excellent education and targeted coaching in cracking such examinations. Various communities are devising strategies for their young to cope with the highly competitive modern globalised world. The government has also set in place a comprehensive system of financial assistance to the poor but talented of the religious minorities. Adding to this, are NGOs and charities of the communities themselves.

The Jains, for instance, have intensive coaching institutes for the competitive exams of their chosen profession – chartered accountancy. The accountancy tests are as hard as the UPSC ones, but surprisingly the student of the Jain coaching centres manage to crack the question paper every time. In recent times, various Muslim charities have launched similar programmes. The most successful, perhaps, is of the Zakat Foundation which runs on the title of well off members of the community. In process of deep search, the foundation spots talented young men and women, brings them to metropolitan cities, specially Delhi, which have excellent coaching institutions, and then support the scholars till they pass. In a few short years, the Muslim numbers on the central services have seen a rise after decades of stagnation.

The Church is only now trying to institutionalise such a system. The Orissa Bishops conference has this year launched an ambitious programme to create a Centre which will assist talented youth of the marginalised communities, the Dalits and Tribals of which Orissa has large numbers. The centre has no success stories on which to base itself. Earlier attempts were sporadic, very local, and without the sort of transparency that would encourage a large catchment area and enthuse local youth.

The CBCI's Scheduled Caste commission and its counterpart in Tamil Nadu had some years ago tried to support young men and women to clear the competitive examinations. There have been reports of some success at the level of subordinate services, but there are no reports of any significant entry in the main administrative state and central services. The experience of the Church in north India is not better, from what has come out in the open.

It is quite clear that running educational institutions created by dioceses or religious congregations over the years, some for more than a century, does not mean success in empowerment, which requires a complex set of skills and support systems. The search for talent ought not to be confined to looking only at a creamy layer, but going deep and encouraging, through financial and morale-boosting support, children who have the ambition

and the grit to make it. In army parlance, this is called a deep search.

Experiments tried out in the north have failed to take off, largely because of the conflict of purpose. Most prefer the easy way out. Either running an institute which will also provide sinecure for retired bureaucrat and others to coach candidates, or just financing them to take up study in one of the many, but expensive coaching institutes that abound in Delhi or Mumbai, and now are mushrooming in Kota and Jaipur in Rajasthan. Church hierarchy, lay leadership, the family and youth wings of various churches need to formulate a long-term policy to help empower the youth in participation in political processes and for entry through competitive examinations into government and private sector services.

This must be woven through into the processes of laity formation. And this, in turn, seeks from Diocesan Bishops and parish priests across the length and breadth of the country a new paradigm of pastoral care so that an altar boy or a girl must be a future administrator, banker, judge or general. They have the spark. See it in the current and engulfing gloom, and fan it into a flame with all the resources at your command. The nation will be the brighter for it.

Collaborative Leadership: My Journey as a Woman Lay Leader

Dr. Charlote Simpson-Veigas



My journey as a lay leader associated with Jesuit education began in 1991. While as a student of Loreto College, I was elected as the President of the All India Catholic University Federation (AICUF) that had and continues to this day to have its State Secretariat in St. Xavier's College, Kolkata. I fondly remember visiting the College very regularly as most of our programmes were in collaboration with St. Xavier's

College. I was introduced during those days to various Leadership Training Programmes, Ignatian Spirituality, Work Camps and Leadership Camps, National Conventions as an Executive Committee member and a plethora of personality development and character building exercises.

Years later, when I entered the portals of this hallowed institution as one of the faculty members of the Department of Education, I continued this meaningful collaboration with the AICUF. In 2014, I became the State Coordinator of the AICUF, a post that I continue to hold till date. In 2018, I was asked to take up the responsibility of Vice Principal (Education) at St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Kolkata. Therefore, my collaboration with a Jesuit institution as a lay woman leader spans 26 long years till date. The experience has taught me much, and continues to provide me with many valuable lessons on life and

leadership, for which I will be ever grateful. I would like to share some of my reflections based on this valuable, life-changing experience.

The Jesuit Superior General Fr. Arturo Sosa S. J. in one of his recent addresses had said, "I want to emphasize that the mission given by the Lord is not a mission that belongs exclusively to the Society of Jesus. The Lord calls all of us to the same mission, even though we have different ways of fulfilling it. That is why the Society of Jesus today stresses cooperation with others as a necessary dimension of how we conceive and practice the apostolate."

When we reflect on the words of Fr. General and other Jesuit documents such as GC 35 Decree 6, that states that collaboration is at the heart of the Mission or General Congregation 36 Decree 2, that emphasizes the role of lay leaders, as well as the various papal teachings which reinforce the contribution of women while emphasizing the role of women as mothers, we are reminded of the story of Ignatius of Loyola. In a part of his book entitled, Ignatius of Loyola: The Psychology of a Saint, the psychoanalyst William Meissner, S.J., studies and explains the psychodynamics of Ignatius's religious conversion in terms of his relationships to women. Ignatius lost his mother, and was raised by a foster mother until the age of seven. As a young man, he led a privileged and flamboyant life as a knight and soldier. Ignatius was wounded at the battle of Pamplona. During his

convalescence and after he suffered repeated painful and disabling surgeries, Ignatius's sister-in-law Magdalena undertook to nurse him back to health. It was during that period, he witnessed a vision of the Blessed Mother and Child. This experience was central to his conversion. This narrative, as I see it, brings out the integral role of women in the Ignatian tradition.

Today, Jesuits clearly recognize that education for the apostolic role can and should include both a social justice dimension towards women. This has translated itself into an egalitarian "collaboration" with women lay leaders of which, I bear ample testimony. The Jesuit commitment to social action, justice, and service for others, is presently expressed as the "preferential option for the poor," This has been further expanded in a more inclusive way to include an option for and with women.

As I reflect on my role today as an administrator and professor in a Jesuit College, I am led to explore the pastoral role of the teacher towards the students under my care. I uphold a specifically religious worldview as the context of the Education that I impart and I am committed to the education of my students not only in the intellectual and academic apostolate, but also so that they might "assume an active apostolic role in the world."

A contemporary issue, which has fuelled much discussion in Jesuit education, has been its Catholic and Jesuit identity. Discussion of this issue has inevitably turned to the roles of women in these institutions. Some feminists are of the opinion that there is a fundamental problem in the manner in which the role of laywomen is translated. Apparently, it is appreciative of women – our role as nurturer's with virtues such as sensitivity, affection, compassion, and care that should be celebrated. However, this apparent appreciation often reinforces stereotypical expectations of both women and men.

Consequently, the lop-sided association of these virtues with women often hampers our entry and progress into institutions where traditionally "masculine" virtues such as intellect, leadership and power relations have been dominant. However, the prophetic invitation by the Jesuit community, for me to assume this role as a woman administrator, to share a collaborative responsibility with them bears clear testimony to the positive and progressive direction in which we are moving.

The Catholic emphasis on women-as-mothers encourages institutional support and a need to be more flexible with the role of women administrators who also have their responsibilities in the rearing and upbringing of children at home. It is true that women as nurturer's have to de facto shoulder the responsibility for the early care of children. My dual role as a mother as well as an administrator has progressed and moved towards a more balanced sharing of both professional and domestic roles. My experience as a parent and as an Educator has thus moved towards a sense of greater cooperation in the family. For this I am grateful for the support that I have received from my institution as well as the willingness, spirit of sacrifice and readiness to spin into action and thereby perform multiple roles by the loving members of my family.

As a woman lay leader, I have often reflected upon some of the inevitable challenges of leading an academic community in the Ignatian tradition. I have often challenged myself to discern the Spirit of God in the experiences of my everyday life. I am continuously seeking new ways to be better informed about the Ignatian tradition and to grasp the essence of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

One of the greatest challenges for me as an administrator is to manage people, manage infrastructure as well as manage time. I however remind myself that this should not take away time spent on leadership and capacity building. As a lay leader I am called to make time to understand the circumstances that affect people's lives. I am constantly searching for newer ways to make my humble contribution to enhancing the vision and the mission of Jesuit Education.

As a lay leader, I feel called to play a prophetic role. In the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius tells us that actions are to be preferred to words. One of the challenges as a lay leader is to model the behaviours, attitudes and values that we want to see in others. In seeing how we respond to the various vicissitudes of life, in observing the values, which reflect our actions, others should be able to experience our prophetic role. Our daily interactions with others should clearly express the core values that we uphold. In Ignatius' words, our 'way of proceeding' should be rooted in the Ignatian tradition.

As a lay administrator I am required to play multiple roles that include that of teacher, guide, counsellor, friend and philosopher to all those who seek my time, care and attention. In the words of the former Superior General of the Jesuits, Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, this task would require a 'creative fidelity. To be able to inspire our youth, to make all interactions with them personal and engaging, to seek new and innovative ways to deal with their problems within well-defined lines of action, transparency and accountability. This would be an authentic expression of our creative fidelity. We need to mould teachers in the Ignatian tradition, to regard teaching not only as a profession but also as a true vocation, imbued with an intense desire to build up the community.

As a lay administrator I am committed to creating a welcoming and inviting atmosphere in all works that I undertake, to recognize that each person requiring my concern and attention, will relate with their unique style and degree of association and connectedness, each one has a different requirement and to celebrate their unique contributions to the growth of the institution.

As a lay woman administrator, rooted in the Ignatian tradition I am convinced that each of us have the propensity for self-improvement. As a Catholic Educator, I firmly believe that Education is an instrument through which, by consensus and consent, we can ultimately create a peaceful society and a beautiful world.



The role of laity in the Post-Vatican II Scenario

Dr. A. Pushparajan



The second Vatican council triggered 'clearly a revolution' in the Catholic Church. A significant aspect of this revolution was the new vision of laity. It is already close to sixty years since then. It is the right time to grapple with that vision and to assess the extent of its realization during these years of the post-conciliar period.

The Vision of Laity by Vatican II

To recapture the Vat II Council's vision of laity we need to know first the new vision of Church it enlisted.

Ecclesial Vision

Formerly the Church was seen more as a mega institution with a rigorous hierarchical order. Laity was the lowest rung of the ladder. In contrast to it, Vatican II, in its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (LG), defined the Church as 'the New People of God' (LG 7). This is an Old Testament concept indicating a 'covenanted people' who accepted God's sovereignty in their lives collectively. The Apostles of Jesus Christ appropriated it to the believers in him to express that they were a 'chosen to be God's own people' (1 Pet.2:9-10), destined to be united as 'one body and one spirit' (Eph.4:4).

Now, reclaiming the biblical concept, Vatican II defines the Church as "God's own people" who 'participate directly in the life of God in Christ and through the Spirit'. It clearly affirmed: "All the members ought to be moulded in the likeness of Him, until Christ be formed in them" (LG 7). It also avowed that the call to holiness is addressed to all (LG 39-42). This implies that laity are equally members of Jesus' assembly (*ekklesia*), along with clergy and religious. They are no longer a separate class appended to the hierarchy. Nobody is high or low. Every member of the Church is called to holiness. Another implication is that laity also participate directly in the mission of Jesus Christ, the priest, prophet and shepherd (LG 30, 33). 'By virtue of baptism, all are made one body with God and are established among people of God, sharing the priestly, prophetic and shepherding functions of Christ, in their own way' (LG 31). Thus the new description of the Church as people of God by Vatican II is a clear vindication of the view that laity 'not only belong to the Church, but they are the Church'.

The Conciliar and Post Vatican II Vision of Laity

Apart from the new vision of the Church as the people of God, which has given a new meaning to the understanding of laity, Vatican II put forth explicitly some teachings which further strengthen laity's significance in the Church. *Lumen Gentium* declares that 'laity have the same dignity as clergy and religious' and that 'they share true equality with them in their duty to building up of the Body of Christ' (LG 32). It exhorts the shepherds (bishops and clergy) to give recognition of laity's services and charisms (LG 30). It also accredits laity with

Christ's triple functions: priestly, prophetic, and kingly (LG 31, 34, 35, 36). Further, it speaks of a special aspect of mission that belongs to laity: "What specifically characterizes the lay faithful is their secular nature.... engaging in temporal affairs and ordering them according to the plan of God: (LG 31) and "being a soul to the world (LG 38).

The laity's position in the Church has been further reiterated by another important Council's document, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes* (GS), emphasizing on the specific of the laity. It even made their secular involvement an obligation: "The Christian who neglects his temporal duties ... jeopardizes his eternal salvation" (GS 43); the lay faithful 'need to dedicate their gifts to service' (GS 38, 43). Their task is to build up the world (GS 34: 3), improve the earth's condition (GS 57:2). Politics also falls into their purview (GS 75:5); they have to 'work with all people with a faith-incentive and a sense of the commitment' (GS 57:1).

All addition to all this, Vatican II devoted even a separate document on the Church's lay faithful. The Decree on Apostolate of the Laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (AA), charts out many areas of laity's missionary activities. It exhorts laity to cooperate and collaborate with other believers, and even with all persons of good will, implying atheists and agnostics as well in the promotion of all that is true, just, holy, all that is worthy of love (AA 2). "They are to enter into dialogue with them, approaching them with understanding and courtesy, and are to search for means of improving social and public institutions along the lines of the Gospel" (AA.2). They need to enter political life and work for the common good (AA14:1).

All the post-conciliar Popes endorsed the conciliar vision of laity. Pope John Paul II, in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles Laici* [CL] (1988), restated the main teachings of AA, in his own way, style and method. The teachings of CL are so close to those of AA that a systematic study has been undertaken to establish that the CL is a commentary on the AA. (Cf. *Anointed for Others* by NBCLC: Bangalore,1993). Pope Francis acknowledges that "There has been a growing awareness of the identity and mission of the laity in the Church". He recognizes laity's role as so important that he defines the ministry of clergy in terms of serving laity. In his manifesto, *Evangelii Gaudium* [EG] (2013), Pope Francis states: "Lay people are, put simply, the vast majority of the people of God. The minorities – ordained ministers – are at their service" (EG 102).

In sum, the new vision of laity registered by Vatican II implies that lay faithful are no more passive and voiceless. They are no longer at the lowest rung of the hierarchical ladder or at the receiving end only, but active members of the Church, having a clear vocation of their own, enjoying the same dignity of clergy and religious, sharing equally in the Church's mission; they are commissioned with a specific call to usher in the values of God's

reign in the secular order, and precisely to pursue a life of holiness in the secular world.

The Actual Profile of Laity in India

It is remarkable that Indian Church was very enthusiastic about implementing the conciliar vision, in the beginning. Even as Council was issuing documents one after another, regional Churches in India got them translated in their respective languages. Strenuous efforts were made to put Council's teachings into action. A national Centre was founded in 1967 for carrying out "Renewal" systematically at all levels. Its founder director, Fr. D. S. Amalorpavadass, with his charismatic leadership made significant contributions to overall renewal of the Church in India, specially focusing on laity formation. In the 1980s, CBCI Commission for Laity initiated a nationwide program called Small Christian Communities (SCCs) to facilitate laity's participatory role in all dioceses. The seriousness of purpose was evident from the many attempts at evaluations: The scientific Study Aid prepared by CBCI Laity Commission (1987), the Evaluation Report on the CBCI (1995), Evaluation on the "Life and Practices of the Laity" by the CCBI Commission for Laity (2007). Many individual researches have been undertaken too.

Matters of Appreciation

Gleaning from the evaluations, one can authentically claim that immediately after Second Vatican Council there prevailed a lot of enthusiasm in India such that laity across the country were well motivated to play their role in the Church and in society. In Particular, the laity's participation in liturgy in commendable and their involvement in parish activity is notable, thanks to the SCCs. Even the traditional 'pious associations' are incorporated into the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC). There has been a significant growth in 'ecclesial movements' such as the Charismatic, Neo-Catechumenate Way, Evangelization Groups, Jesus Youth, Couples for Christ and so on. Laity's thirst for Word of God is increasingly palpable. This is visible from their deep craving for retreats in Divine Life Centres.

Matters of Concern

However, it is not a mainstream process. Especially in rural parishes, laity are still passive, satisfied with same old devotional practices. The SCCs in most parishes are turning into mere prayer groups. The participatory structures like the PPCs and Diocesan Pastoral Councils (DPC) are outnumbered by nominated religious members. As a result, lay representatives are *de facto* voiceless. They do not have a real say in decision-making processes. Some lay persons who are intelligent, serving as top executives in corporate managements, who are



most experienced and competent, are simply cowed down by the authoritative approach of ordained men who are sometimes too young, less competent and less knowledgeable.

More and more lay persons are dissatisfied with over-dominating approaches of the clergy. Several lay groups feel alienated either due to the caste social structures or the divisive approaches of the clergy and religious who run the Church institutions. In some places this tragic scenario has ignited the laity to protest by leaving the Catholic Church and to join the new Pentecostal groups. They claim to find better spiritual nourishment in those prayer groups which allow spontaneous religious sharing.

Formation Deficiency

Most of the pastoral difficulties that we come across among the lay faithful are due the Church's lack of interest for their formation. For instance, a large sum of money and personnel are invested for clergy formation, but not even a fraction of them goes for the laity training. Consequently, the reform and renewal measures proclaimed by Vatican II have not reached to a vast majority of lay faithful in India.

Conciliar vision of Church's participatory ministry, its affirmative approach towards religious pluralism and interfaith dialogue, human dignity, social justice and common good have to become integral part of laity formation in India where clericalism abound and multi-faith traditions flourish amid the prevailing state of inequality, unjust social values and structures. But the training programmes imparted to the lay faithful do not enlighten them on these issues for appropriate faith-based action.

Another big drawback of our laity formation is that the good-willed lay persons, when they get back to their parish after completion of a formation course, they do not get the pastoral support and encouragement from the clergy.

To impart pastorally relevant training to the laity, the pastors must, first and foremost, be willing and well equipped. "Are they?" is a big question. Given the over-institutionalization of the Church and clericalization of its institutions as well as clerical apathy towards social concerns, it seems that this great Council's progressive vision of the Church and society, Christian calling and mission, which humanity needs so much, is slowly dwindling.

Conclusion

The expected vision of the vocation of the lay faithful in the Church as enshrined in the documents of Vatican II is far from actualized. Unless the clergy **take seriously** the Council's

affirmation of the laity's 'dignity', 'equality', and 'co-responsibility,' these will remain slogans only.

The clergy ought to make a real effort to come out of their comfort-zones, the power-ridden institutions. So long as clergy do not shed away their outmoded theology of a highly institutionalized medieval image of a pyramidal Church in which the laity's place is shown at the lowest level, the lay faithful will not get their rightful place and mission given by Christ (AA 3). How perceptive are the words of our Holy Father Francis: "I remember the famous expression: 'It is the hour of the

laity', but it seems that the clock has stopped" (. *LA CROIX*, 27 April 2016).

Could we, then, fondly hope that the people concerned in the Church will take cue from Pope Francis' remark and try to meet this challenge squarely so that the post Vatican II scenario becomes bright enough contributing to the realization of laity's role as envisioned by that historic Council of the last century?

Fulfilling Expectations Together

Dr. Panchali Sen



Education is one of the main apostolic commitments in which the Society of Jesus has invested and stayed committed to since its foundation in 1540 by St. Ignatius of Loyola. The Jesuits have been running their educational institutions following their own charism (Ignatian charism). It is that charism that distinguishes the various religious groups and gives importance to the contribution of each.

It also depends largely on the generous, loyal and skilled collaboration of women and men of diverse religions and humanistic convictions. Collaboration refers to the close working conditions between Jesuits and non-Jesuits; a true union of hearts and minds and a sharing of vision and purpose.

I learnt the early lessons of life from my 'Maa'- a devout devotee, performing Hindu rituals. I saw her seek blessings for her daughter so that she may conduct herself towards service – of the self and of the context she would locate herself in.

In joining St Xavier's College as an under-graduate student, I was inducted into the principles of Jesuit education and evaluation of life. I found an immense, inherent similarity between that which my mother told me about Goddess Kali and the Holy Mother Mary, who is holding her son as a reward offered to humankind. Years later when I returned as a faculty, no transition took place. My Hindu thoughts merged into Christian belief that surrounded me.

I was appointed the Dean of International Studies by Rev. Fr. Felix Raj, S.J., the former Principal of the College. I continue to serve the College, in this capacity, since October 2013 as a "lay collaborator" - as the term goes in Jesuit parlance. I find myself adapting spontaneously to the parameters of administration of my duties and designs. As I reach College for my daily chores, I find the same thoughts culminating through my acts - Maa Kali and Maa Mary come together, to blend my personal attitude into professional attributes. Hinduism and Christianity meet at the commitment of care, concern, faithfulness and fidelity with which I conduct myself. JISHU-KRISHNO is the lesson that I have learnt and pledge to promote.

Laity is the body of religious worshippers, as distinguished from Clergy – which signifies the group of people ordained for religious duties. I consider myself a devout Hindu Clergy woman who has located in Jesuit pursuits a temperament that has furthered the knowledge and understanding gained since childhood.

Hatred is conquered by love, ignorance by knowledge, and superstition by right thinking. As lay collaborators, each one of us is called upon to promote these values not only for our social and community welfare, but also for our individual peace, happiness, and prosperity. It is by transforming ourselves that we transform the world. The key to transformation is the transformation of the soul. Hence in working together with the Jesuits, we can certainly create a better world by understanding the purpose of the universe and identifying ourselves with it.

Sri Ramakrishna, India's prophet of the harmony of religions, reminded us that the essence of religion is God-consciousness. When that is forgotten, religious differences begin—and not before. The oneness of existence and harmony of religions are cardinal principles of Hinduism, and the Ramakrishna Order stands as an example of unity, tolerance, and diversity. There are monks in the Ramakrishna Order who are Muslim, Christian, Jewish, and Hindu. They live together, dedicating their lives to the service of all humanity.

My experience with the Jesuits for all these years at St Xavier's reflects the immense impact they have made in the contemporary educational climate by blending all religions. Disciplined learning, academic excellence and a rigorous knowledge base of multiple disciplines in both the arts and sciences, and a willingness to work hard, all seem to be a great foundation for any student in the contemporary world. It seems to me that Jesuit education is as foundational now as it was several years back as St Xavier's continues to carry forward its motto of creating 'men and women for others' - linking Faith With Justice. "Different creeds are but different paths to reach the same God." (Sri Ramakrishna)

Lay Leadership And Collaboration In The Church: A Protestant Perspective

Rev. Dr. Sunil M. Caleb



The Movement that the Lord Jesus Christ began (also called the Jesus Movement) to build the Kingdom of God, which eventually turned into what we today call the Church, was at its inception a Lay movement (a non-priestly movement). Jesus did not come from a traditional priestly family, but from the tribe of Judah and not from the Jewish priestly tribe of Aaron; the first apostles were all either fishermen, or tax-collectors or even freedom fighters.

Peter, on whom Jesus said the Church would be based, was originally a Galilean fisherman who lived far away from the Temple at Jerusalem. It was only gradually that a priesthood developed within the Church; it became very strong after the Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity (around 313 CE), and Christianity became a state religion of the Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire. The Protestant Reformation, which began with the protest in Germany led by Martin Luther (an Augustinian monk) beginning in 1517 CE, spawned a number of sects and denominations that rebelled against the domination of the clergy in the Roman Catholic Church and emphasized the 'priesthood of all believers'. Non-ordained Christians (lay persons), were given greater roles in the liturgy and the administration of these Protestant sects and denominations.

As an example of Protestant thinking of the Church, the Baptist Church Covenant defines the Church as, 'the people of God, constituted of those who trust in Christ. As the Body of Christ it depends upon him as Head, and is called to manifest his life in the world.' Following the text of the First Letter of Peter, 2:9, the Church of North India (CNI) Constitution (Canon Law) states that, "The Church is a 'royal priesthood' of all believers, all its members have direct access to God, and all the members have their share in the commission and authority of the whole Church....To the whole Church and to every member of it belong the duty and privilege of spreading the good news of the Kingdom of God, and the message of salvation through Jesus Christ... It is the duty and privilege of every Church member to share in the service of God which is the Church's ministry. This ministry includes the worship of God both in private and in public, Christian loving service both within the family of the Church and to the community at large, and the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through evangelism" (*Part I, Chap. I, Section IV, Clause I*). As the latest World Council of Churches (WCC) document on Mission and Evangelism states, "the church is called to celebrate life, and to resist and transform all life-destroying forces, in the power of the Holy Spirit" (*Together Towards Life, Para 2*).

Since the Church is known as the Body of Christ (of which Jesus is the head), it is composed of persons who have varied talents just as the human body has different parts which have different functions. These various talents, given to various members of the Church, are given to them to be able to perform different functions within the Church. There are those who are good at music, others at public speaking, and others at printing and publishing and so on. It is therefore reasonable to expect that

different tasks that need to be done to bring closer the rule of God in every area of life, are given to different persons who have the ability to carry those tasks out. Further, it has been the tradition of the Church that certain spiritual functions within the Church, like baptizing new members, celebrating the Eucharist (the Mass) and ordaining new priests and deacons can only be done by those who are already ordained by a special Church ceremony. However, as the CNI Constitution says, "The [ordained] ministry is committed to the Church as a function of the whole Body of Christ, and therefore, while it is especially exercised by the ordained ministry, it is thus exercised as a function of the Body as a whole, and does not belong to the ordained ministry exclusively or in separation from the Body" (*Part I, Chap. I, Section VIII, Clause I*).

Hence, in the Protestant view the ordained ministry is not superior to the ministry of the laity; it is just a different function. There is equality since there is the 'priesthood of all believers' and all baptized members of the Church can have equal access to God. Those who are Ordained are specially 'set apart' for Spiritual and liturgical activities because they have a calling from God for these functions, and not because they are more holy and spiritual than the lay-persons of the Church. The ordained ministry is able to perform the spiritual functions that they perform, because they have been given the training needed to be able to perform these functions.

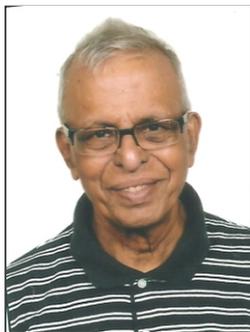
It is the Protestant view that the Lay-persons must have a very important role in the administration of the Church. Thus, for example, the Executive Committee of the Church of North India Synod (its highest decision making body) has to always have at least 51% of its membership composed of lay members of the CNI. Though the Moderator of the CNI (elected from among the bishops at triennial meetings of the CNI Synod) is always a bishop and is the Chairperson of the CNI Synod Executive Committee, the membership of the Executive Committee must always have a certain percentage of women and youth, most of whom are not ordained and therefore lay-persons. Hence, the administration of the Church is jointly conducted by the ordained believers and the lay-persons. Even the election of the bishop for a particular diocese is done by an electoral college of twenty in which half the members are laypersons and half are ordained persons. Thus, the lay faithful form an essential part of electing a bishop for a particular diocese as well as for the election of the Moderator of the CNI from among the bishops that takes place during the Triennial Synods of the CNI.

At the same time, of course, much of the mission and ministry of the Church can and is carried out by lay persons through their work as teachers, musicians, medical staff, social workers, evangelists, office workers, cooks, cleaning staff and so on. They collaborate with the ordained members in fulfilling the work that has been given by God to the Church. Hence, we can say that the relationship between the Lay-persons and the ordained members needs to be one of mutual respect and complementarity. When they work together the Church is able to progress in a holistic way and further the goal of bringing closer the Kingdom of God on earth as it is present in heaven.



Jesus Says: Get Laypeople Involved

Dominic J. Azavedo



Affirming the direction set by Vatican II, Pope Benedict XVI called for “ecclesial and social co-responsibility” of the laity and to take up their critical role in the life of the Church, alongside of the Clergy. He gave this call to the 6th Assembly of the International Catholic Action Forum, held in Rome, on August 10, 2012. He said, “Co-responsibility demands a change in mindset especially concerning the role

of lay people in the Church. They should not be regarded as “collaborators” of the clergy, but, rather, as people who are really “co-responsible” for the Church's being and acting. It is therefore important that a mature and committed laity be consolidated, which can make its own specific contribution to the ecclesial mission with respect for the ministries and tasks that each one has in the life of the Church and always in cordial communion with the bishops”. His advice has great significance to every lay Catholic.

Fr. Oswald Hirmer, former Director of the Lumko Institute of South Africa, who, in 1990, gave us a course on Basic Christian Community (BCC) Training for Trainers, in Varanasi, told us that the laity had to be more involved in evangelization as the Lord's vineyard was wide and open to everybody to work. He reminded us Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation (*Christifideles Laici*), began with this parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Mt 20: 1-4). It sets before our eyes the Lord's vast vineyard and the multitude of persons, both women and men, who are called on different hours of the day to labour in it. Hence, should not the clergy help us to be part and parcel of Church's evangelizing mission?

I see this parable reflected in the in the image of the Church as depicted in Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium, [LG]), which reminds us of the great advantage the Church may enjoy through a process of healthy partnership between clergy and laity. The document states, “Many benefits for the Church are to be expected from this familiar relationship between the laity and the pastors. The sense of their own responsibility is strengthened in the laity, their zeal is encouraged, they are more ready to unite their energies to the work of their pastors...Strengthened by all her members, the Church can thus more effectively fulfil her mission for the life of the world” (LG, 37).

Lumen Gentium further gives a long narrative on laity's mission and their contribution to the welfare of the entire Church and the world community as well. It says that the lay faithful profoundly participate in the Church's evangelizing mission, specifically in the secular order: “By reason of their special vocation ...the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and ordering them according to God's will. They live in the world, that is, in each and every work and business of the earth

and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life, which, as it were, constitute their existence. There they are called by God that, being led by the spirit of the Gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties. Thus especially by the witness of their life, resplendent in faith, hope and charity they must manifest Christ to others” (LG, 31).

The foregoing conciliar narrative on the laity is a commendable affirmation of their proactive mission in every realm of the secular order where they are called to be witnesses to the Gospel values. But this specific emphasis of their place in the secular realm is not meant to create a rigid division between laity and clergy; the Council only states that the laypersons typically work in the world, raise families, and hold secular jobs; and therefore they are professionally equipped for the Church's mission in the secular order.

It should be emphasized that the responsibility of renewing the secular order does not belong to laity alone. It belongs to the entire people of God – clergy and laity. It is the whole Church that is a leaven in the world, working to transform all of the society into the family of God. Precisely, this calls for restoring healthy environment to promote pastoral co-responsibility between clergy and laity according to their calling in the Church.

I see this type of conciliar portrayal of the participatory Church in the way in which Jesus prepared his apostles and disciples as a team to work with him in his mission as given in Luke's Gospel: “After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest” (Lk 10:1-2). Luke also reports that some women were also part of his missionary team (Lk 8: 2-3).

I wonder, however, does the post-Vatican II Church provides a participatory ambience for the laity to play their legitimate 'co-responsible' role in the Church as reiterated by Pope Benedict XVI. The messages coming from many dioceses in India and articles appearing in some Catholic journals seem to suggest that the Catholic Church in India in not yet prepared for it. Pope Francis, who often reprimands clericalism as it prevails in many countries, says clericalism is a major stumbling block to laity's participation. (See his *Letter to the People of God*, 20 August 2018). In the preparation for the Kolkata Synod of 2017, as a lay resource person, I had given a call that the laity should awake from slumber for unless the giant wakes up, the Church will not go forward. Yes, great words from the Scriptures and sermons are uttered about empowering the laity for the work of evangelization; but what is the ground reality?

Next issue on "Higher Education-Forming Global Citizens"

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New Arrivals

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