



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – LAY MINISTRY PROGRAM

Who are lay pastoral leaders?

There are pastoral leaders who serve the parish as Pastoral Associates and Directors of Religious Education. In addition, there are lay pastoral leaders who serve the Church as volunteers in many and diverse leadership roles, for example, RCIA team members, coordinators of bereavement ministry, youth ministers, coordinators of parish outreach or catechetical ministry. Generally, they use the title of Pastoral Coordinator.

For whom is the diocesan program intended?

The diocesan program for lay ministry is intended for persons who will assume leadership for **a particular ministry or project on a volunteer basis**. They will serve in collaboration with other members of the staff in promoting the mission and vision of the parish community. Persons who complete the diocesan program will be prepared to coordinate a particular ministry such as baptism preparation, care of the sick, bereavement ministry, parish outreach etc. The pastor, in collaboration with the parish staff/team and in dialogue with the program participant, determines the ministry to which the individual is called.

Who will select the participants?

The pastor in collaboration with the parish team/staff will select the person(s) whom they feel will benefit from the program and who has the potential to assume **leadership** for a particular ministry in the parish at the conclusion of his/her formation. The parish serves as a **sponsor** for the candidate and offers guidance and mentoring throughout the formation process and discernment for ministry.

What does the diocesan program look like?

The diocesan formation program is a three-year process that includes theological content (theology of lay ministry, ecclesiology, Christology, moral theology, scripture, cultural diversity, ecumenism/inter-faith relations), spiritual formation (days of reflection, journaling, etc.), ministerial preparation, and a mentoring process.

Where will the classes be held?

Classes are scheduled in various locations in order to make transportation as convenient as possible. The schedule generally includes weeknight and Saturday options.

What is the cost of the program?

The financial cost of the program is the responsibility of the parish, the participant and the diocese. Each parish will contribute \$135 per semester for each person it sponsors; the participants will pay \$60 tuition per semester and a yearly \$25 book fee. There is also a one-time commissioning fee of \$10. The diocese will cover the remaining cost. Financial assistance may be available through the Alive in Hope fund for parishes or individuals who cannot make the full contribution.

What will this program do for a parish?

The program will provide parishes with individuals who are capable of coordinating a particular ministry or project in the parish. They will bring to that responsibility a foundation in theology, experience in spiritual formation and the skills and competencies required by that ministry.

How will these lay leaders differ from Pastoral Associates and Directors of Religious Education?

Lay pastoral coordinators have limited program responsibility and decision-making authority. Ordinarily, they function as volunteers in collaboration with the parish staff.

How does a person join the program?

The pastor in collaboration with the parish staff/team recommends the candidate to the Pastoral Institute by sending the sponsorship form. The candidate will then receive an application packet and information about the interview process. Each person will be asked to sign a release for a background check that will be conducted by an independent agency.

Whom do we contact for further information?

Pastoral Institute

Phone: (718) 281-9556

FAX: (718) 399-5920

E-mail: PastoralInstitute@diobrook.org

Director: Mr. Gerald J. Tortorella

Associate Director: Ms. Nelsa I. Elfas