

**PASTORAL INSTITUTE
DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN**

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PRESS RELEASE

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Pastoral Institute Welcomes New Participants

The Pastoral Institute welcomed 87 new participants for the Lay Ministry Program. Coming from parishes across the diocese, they embarked on a three-year course of studies and formation that will prepare them for pastoral service in their parishes. Fifty-nine persons will follow the English language track while twenty-eight will be part of the Spanish language track. An additional 104 participants have begun the second year and 51 have started the third year of the lay formation program.

At a recent Orientation Session, Bishop Guy Sansaricq spoke to the new participants about the need to be grounded in scripture. He reminded them that as pastoral leaders, they have to be well rounded in Catholic doctrine and Church teachings. This period of their lives should be a special time of reading, reflecting, praying, and discussing that will lead to conversion of one's life.

At the completion of their studies, the participants in the Lay Ministry Program will serve as coordinators or team members for a variety of parish programs. A recent survey of the graduates of the program lists twenty-five different ministries in which they are engaged. Among these are Adult Faith Formation, Ministry of Consolation, Pastoral Care of the Sick, Bereavement, Prison Ministry, Scripture Study Groups, Women and Men's Spirituality, Stewardship, and Charismatic Renewal. All serve as volunteers and many participate in more than one ministry.

At the same time as new participants joined the three-year Lay Ministry Program, additional 117 persons began their studies in the ten-week Foundations for Ministry Program. Located at four parish centers in Jamaica, Brooklyn Heights, Wycoff Heights and Springfield Gardens, this program is intended for persons already engaged in parish ministry and for those who are discerning participation in the three-year program. Offered in English and Spanish, the course of study includes the major theological facets of the Catholic faith, a theological reflection process, and an examination of the evolving role of the laity in today's Church. Participants leave the program with a renewed energy for ministry and a deeper understanding of their role as collaborators in fulfilling the mission of the Church.

These 359 persons are making a major commitment of time and talent in order to serve more effectively in their parishes and to promote the evangelizing mission of the Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens.

For further information:

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