

SUMMARY OF PATHWAYS DIALOGUE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The symposium opened by exploring the various pathways that had brought participants to lay ecclesial ministry. A pre-symposium exercise invited participants to “map out” their journey with particular focus on three areas:

- Identify significant moments of personal discernment.
- Identify significant moments of discernment through your program of formation.
- Identify significant moments of discernment by an ecclesial body or agent.

Table dialogue in groups of six to eight lay and ordained ministers was animated by stories of vocation and call. Participants demonstrated affection for, perseverance in, and hope for our Catholic faith. Thus, the symposium opened with the morning prayer of the Church as well as the lived faith experiences of participants. Subsequent recommendations on pathways to ministry centered around three themes.

Practical Resources for Pathways to Ministry: Creation of programmatic and practical pathways to lay ecclesial ministry should occur, emphasizing ways for Catholic leaders to invite persons to lay ecclesial ministry and for persons to discern God’s call to collaborative ministries. Generated recommendations focused upon the following specific issues and actions:

- Incorporation of resources and tools that effectively advertise and market interpersonal experiences of prayer and mentoring, and multi-ethnic perspectives.
- Adequately funded “programs for collaborative ministries” emphasizing pathways to serve Christ in ways that appeal to both ordained and lay persons.
- Sponsorship of annual diocesan “vocations/ministry summit” for its ordained and lay ministers.

Theology of Vocation: Enhanced conversations and education should occur regarding experiences and theologies of vocation. Generated recommendations focused upon the following specific issues and actions:

- Initiatives should occur in families, parishes, and educational organizations.
- Conversations, ideas, and practices should strive to develop the enhanced understandings of vocation that are expected in *Co-Workers* and emphasize the practice of mentoring.
- Coordination, perhaps by USCCB of a National Week of Lay Ministry, incorporating both prayer and vocational storytelling.

Culturally Diverse Pathways: Culturally diverse pathways into ministry should be understood and developed. Generated recommendations focused upon the following specific issues and actions:

- Development of culturally appropriate strategies to assist recruitment and discernment into lay ecclesial ministry.
- Intentional incorporation of the unique aspects of language, ethnicity, personal invitation, and life experience.
- Collaboration by perhaps the Instituto Fe y Vida, National Association of Black Catholic Administrators, National Association for Lay Ministry and other national organizations to produce culturally appropriate guidelines for recruitment and discernment into lay ecclesial ministry.

