

## The Theological Reception of *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*

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Since the publication of the USCCB document, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, questions have been raised regarding the authoritative status of this document. Critics (including some bishops) have pointed out that the document was not promulgated as an instrument for teaching doctrine but merely as a resource guide. Consequently, it is held, the document should not be considered doctrinally binding. This statement is true, as far as it goes, but it misses the larger question, namely, is the theological vision of ministry contained in this document likely to be received in the life of the church? It is often thought, quite mistakenly, that the only way that a theological development becomes part of the church's living tradition is through a formal doctrinal pronouncement. Such a view ignores some of the most important insights emerging today around a theology of ecclesial reception.

In the first section of this essay I will outline some of the central features of a theology of ecclesial reception, concluding with some observations regarding the pertinence of a theology of reception for a consideration of *Co-Workers*. In the second section I will outline some key developments in the document that need to be highlighted with an eye toward assessing their ongoing ecclesial reception.

### I. A Theology of Reception

Scholars have used the French term *ressourcement* to refer to the process by which the Second Vatican Council sought to renew the church by recovering often neglected insights from our ancient tradition. One of the most important of these retrievals was the council's recovery of pneumatology. For much of the history of Western ecclesiology, the role of the Holy Spirit had been eclipsed by a tendency to think of the church almost exclusively in its relation to Christ. The Holy Spirit received very little attention. At Vatican II, however, we find a renewed appreciation that if, in some sense, Christ laid the foundations for the church, it is the Spirit who continues to animate the church, guiding it along its pilgrim journey. Although undoubtedly the Spirit guides the church through its apostolic office, the council also recognized that all the Christian faithful are gifted by the Holy Spirit in the discernment of God's Word. The whole body of the faithful who have received an anointing which comes from the holy one cannot be mistaken in belief. The church shows this characteristic through the entire people's supernatural sense of the faith, when, "from the bishops to the last of the faithful" it manifests a universal consensus in matters of faith and morals. By this sense of the faith, aroused and sustained by the Spirit of truth, the people of God, guided by the sacred magisterium which it faithfully obeys, receives not the word of human beings, but truly the word of God, "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." The people unfailingly adheres to this faith, penetrates it more deeply through right judgment, and applies it more fully in daily life (LG # 12).

This affirmation of the *sensus fidei*, the spiritual instinct for recognizing the Word of God, has further implications for a theology of tradition. For centuries Catholic theology had treated tradition reductively, virtually identifying it with the ecclesiastical organ by which tradition was thought to be handed on, namely, the magisterium. Yet the council recovered a more ancient vision of tradition as growing and developing through the contributions of all the Christian faithful: This [the growth in tradition] comes about through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts. It comes from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience. And it comes from the preaching of those who, on succeeding to the office of bishop, have received the sure charism of truth (DV # 8).

Catholic doctrine teaches that the bishops alone possess supreme authority in the church and, by virtue of their apostolic office, are the authoritative guardians of the faith. But the council's teaching reminded us that the bishops, including the bishop of Rome, do not teach new revelation, but only what has been passed on. And how do they receive what has been passed on to them? There is no one answer. Surely they receive it through the celebration of the liturgy, through the study of scripture and the writings of the fathers and mothers of the church and the contributions of contemporary scholarship. In the nineteenth century, Cardinal John Henry Newman, who may be thought of as a kind of grandfather to the ecclesial vision of the council, reminded us that the bishops also receive what has been passed on through the testimony of the faithful. Newman held a vision of the church in which tradition grew and developed through the *conspiratio fidelium et pastorum*, the "breathing together of the faithful and the pastors."

Newman developed this notion in his famous essay, *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*.<sup>1</sup> In our age it is all too common to set bishops and faithful in a relationship of opposition and subordination. Yet Newman avoided any harsh separation between a teaching (*ecclesia docens*) and a learning church (*ecclesia discens*). Newman believed that the one apostolic faith given to the whole church was manifested in different forms in the life of the church. To discover this faith one must look to "the mind of the church."<sup>2</sup> Consequently, in some sense the whole church could be seen as both teacher and learner.

The council's theology of tradition gave unprecedented attention to the contributions of the insight of the Christian faithful. Since the council, further developments in a theology of tradition have emerged, most significantly concerning the closely related process of ecclesial "reception." If the term "tradition" draws our attention to the necessary processes by which the Christian faith is "handed on," ecclesial "reception" focuses on how the faith that has been handed on is *received* as the Christian community makes that faith its own.

Although theological reflection on the concept may be relatively recent, the reality of ecclesial reception has always been operative in the church. It is evident, for example, in the way in which local churches received (or at times did not receive) the authoritative pronouncements of synods and councils. For example, it took decades for all the churches to fully "receive" and accept into their life and worship the creeds of the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople. The formation of the biblical canon was itself the result of a centuries-long process of reception as local churches discerned whether or not to embrace a particular text as divinely inspired. Ecclesial reception often occurred with respect to the liturgy, as when the churches of the West "received" the Eastern liturgical tradition of the *epiklesis* into their liturgy.

Central to a contemporary theology of reception is the insight that the act of ecclesial reception is not a passive one. When a community receives a theological insight, a particular ecclesial or liturgical practice, or even a formal articulation of the faith, in that process of reception what is received is always in some sense reshaped, changed by the receiving party. It is this active element in the process of reception that inserts genuine creativity into the “traditioning” process. This active reception, according to Ormond Rush, occurs across numerous ecclesial axes:

(1) reception between God and humanity; (2) reception between God and the whole community of believers; (3) reception between God and the Roman Catholic Church as a communion of churches; (4) reception between the episcopal magisterium and the *sensus fidelium* of the whole body of the faithful; (5) reception between a local church and its particular context in the world; (6) reception between local churches in *communio*; (7) reception between local churches and the church of Rome in *communio*; (8) reception between theologians and their local church in its context; (9) reception within and between diverse theologies; (10) reception between the episcopal magisterium and theology; (11) reception between separated churches and ecclesial communities; (12) reception between Christian churches and other religions.<sup>3</sup>

As Rush points out, this process of reception cannot be limited to a single ecclesial relationship. For example, reception is active when a practice, theological insight or belief emerging in one local church is handed on to other local churches who discern whether to make that practice, insight or belief their own. It occurs between theologians and bishops and theologians and ordinary believers.

This emerging theology of ecclesial reception provides a helpful framework for considering the contributions of *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*. First, it helps us to recall that *Co-Workers* itself represents a moment in the process of ecclesial reception. An important ecclesial development has been occurring in the U.S. church and elsewhere, called lay ecclesial ministry. This document is concerned with that prior ecclesial development. The document is not simply articulating what *ought to* happen as regards lay ecclesial ministry; it is also giving testimony to what has already been happening. Consequently, *Co-Workers* can be understood as a provisional act of episcopal reception of a ministerial structure and a set of ministerial practices that already existed. Since reception is more an ongoing ecclesial process than a discrete act, *Co-Workers* serves as a moment in the process of reception even if it did not represent a formal *doctrinal* approbation.

Second, this framework helps us see *Co-Workers* as an ecclesiastical document that must itself be subject to the ongoing reception of the church. The bishops were not only receiving a set of structures and pastoral practices regarding lay ecclesial ministry that were already operative; they were offering a constructive theological rationale for those practices. That theology will, in turn, have to be received in the ongoing pastoral and theological reflection of the church. It is far too early to know whether this document will ultimately be received as an authentic and fruitful expression of a legitimate future for ministry in the church. However, a theology of ecclesial reception demands that we remain attentive to the document’s ongoing theological impact on subsequent theologies and practices of ministry both within the U.S. church and worldwide. In another essay in this volume Rick McCord outlines the first indications of the document’s pastoral

reception. In the second part of my essay, I would like to highlight some of the document's most significant theological contributions. My hope is that this brief exercise will help identify elements in the document that, if fully received, will doubtless reshape the church's ministerial self-understanding.

## II. Theological Contributions of *Co-Workers* that are Subject to Ecclesial Reception

A solid case can be made that *Co-Workers* is the most mature and coherent ecclesiastical document ever produced on a theology of ministry. One of the real strengths of this document is the way in which it successfully integrates lay ecclesial ministry within a broader theology of church and ministry. Pope John Paul II offered a helpful theology of the laity in *Christifideles laici*, a positive theology of the priesthood in *Pastores dabo vobis*, and a mature theology of the episcopate in *Pastores gregis*. However, in no ecclesiastical document, papal or episcopal, has there been a truly successful theological integration of the various forms of ministry in the church. *Co-Workers* provides a coherent theology of ministry built on a number of basic theological concepts and pastoral applications.

### THE PRIORITY OF THE BAPTISMAL CALL OF THE *CHRISTIFIDELES*

One of the most important initiatives of the Second Vatican Council was its attempt to find new foundations for its consideration of the church. The preparatory draft document on the church given to the bishops at the opening of the council was little more than a synthesis of the ecclesiology that had been operative throughout much of the first half of the twentieth century. It presupposed that the church was, as Pope Pius X put it, an "unequal society" comprised of two ranks, the clergy and the laity.<sup>4</sup> With the fundamental rejection of the ecclesiology reflected in that document, the council set upon a new course. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, offered a new framework for situating any and all distinctions in the church. That new framework was made evident in the well known decision to place the chapter on the church as people of God prior to the chapter on the hierarchy in the *De Ecclesia* schema. In that chapter the council members "were focusing on the common matrix, the fundamental equality and dignity of each and every follower of Jesus..."<sup>5</sup> This matrix is further reinforced by the council's frequent use of the term *christifideles* to refer to all the baptized and by its appeal to the priesthood of all believers. Before there are ordained and non-ordained, clergy and lay, all church members are the Christian faithful, the baptized, called to a common discipleship in Christ. Indeed, while the council did not itself make use of this metaphor, its theological affirmation of the equal dignity of all the baptized readily suggests a view of the church as the "community of disciples."<sup>6</sup> In baptism we are initiated into Christ's body, the church, and in a sense, discover ourselves fully, our truest identity, in the life of the church. At the same time, by baptism into Christ's body, the church, we are drawn by the power of the Holy Spirit into participation in the triune life of God.

All Christians, by baptism, are called in discipleship to follow the way of Jesus of Nazareth, to grow in holiness, and to help further the reign of God. This commitment, far from being one among many human commitments that one might undertake, is in itself more than a religion. As the early

Christians understood it, this commitment brought one into a new form of existence, a new understanding of the human vocation.

The Second Vatican Council augmented its rich treatment of the common matrix of Christian baptism and discipleship with an uneven yet still significant use of the biblical notion of charism. It is a development which was strongly advocated by Cardinal Suenens, who gave a very influential speech on the subject on October 22, 1963.<sup>7</sup> This more pneumatological line of thought is evident in the first chapter of *Lumen gentium*, which considered the place of charisms in the context of the whole people of God's participation in the life of the church.<sup>8</sup>

The Spirit dwells in the church and in the hearts of the faithful, as in a temple, prays and bears witness in them that they are his adopted children. He guides the church in the way of all truth and, uniting it in fellowship and ministry, bestows upon it different hierarchic and charismatic gifts, and in this way directs it and adorns it with his fruits (LG # 4).

The theme is picked up again in the second chapter.

Moreover, it is not only through the sacraments and the ministries that the holy Spirit makes the people holy, leads them and enriches them with his virtues. Allotting his gifts "at will to each individual," he also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts, he makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks and offices for the renewal and building up of the church....(LG # 12)

While the terminology employed is not altogether consistent, nevertheless there is a fundamental assertion that charisms are given to all the faithful "for the renewal and building up of the church." There are clear Pauline resonances here as charisms are presented not as private gifts or talents but as gifts of the Holy Spirit offered *to and for* the church *through* the individual believer (cf. 1 Cor. 12). *Co-Workers* is to be credited with taking these various strands of a theology of baptism found throughout the conciliar documents and weaving them together to construct a firm baptismal foundation for lay ecclesial ministry.

#### MINISTRY IS MORE THAN DISCIPLESHIP

A second foundational contribution of this document is its attempt to clarify what is meant, precisely, by the term "ministry."<sup>9</sup> According to *Co-Workers*, ministry is not the same as discipleship.

Not all Christians are called to ministry. All are called to be followers of Jesus, that is, disciples. We have gone from a situation fifty years ago when the term "ministry" was associated with Protestantism and if used, was used solely in reference to the clergy, to a contemporary situation in which virtually anything from gardening to golf is referred to as "my ministry." One of the distinguishing features of ministry pertains to its public character. A ministry is something to which I am formally called by the community over and beyond my baptismal call. Let us consider the matter concretely. When John Osman and his son go to Cherry St. Mission on a Saturday morning to feed the homeless, they are not doing ministry. Rather, they are responding to their baptismal call as disciples of Jesus to feed the hungry. However, when John's parish leadership calls him forth to be the coordinator of a parish soup kitchen, then he is being called to ministry. Why? Because he is being called forth by the community to serve in some formal and public way in a ministry for which he will be held accountable.

Ministry generally begins with the manifestation of some charism for the building up of the church in mission. Of course every Christian possesses charisms to be exercised in their daily life. These charisms may appear quite ordinary (making them no less vital), as with the charism of parenting<sup>10</sup> or that of imbuing the atmosphere of one's workplace with the values of the gospel. At other times these charisms may take on a more dramatic and even public character, as in the evangelical witness of Dorothy Day. The exercise of these charisms, however dramatic, does not call for undertaking any new ecclesial relationship for the sake of the church and its mission beyond that constituted by baptismal initiation. However, there are other charisms, the manifestation of which *does* suggest the suitability of entering into a new, public, ecclesial relationship within the church.

What distinguishes these many ordered ministries from the more basic activity of all the baptized in fulfillment of their baptismal call? For a Christian activity to qualify as a formal ministry, that ministry must create for the one who undertakes it some new, formal and public relationship within the community. The public character of this ministry is evident in the way in which we tend to hold such ministers to a higher moral standard. We recognize the possibility that their moral failings, because of their public character, might be a cause of scandal. Consider the case of the person who in sharing her faith with family and friends manifests great passion and insight. Members of her local community recognize this charism for sharing the faith, a charism already being exercised in her life, and so call her to exercise this charism in a public ministry of the church as catechist. In some cases individuals may sense the presence of this charism as a personal call to service and offer themselves to the church. At other times it is the community itself, in its processes of ecclesial discernment, that will first recognize the presence of a given charism and call that person into ministry. In any case ministry begins with the recognition by the individual and/or the community of an already existing charism. The failure to recognize that evidence of a charism must *precede* one's entrance into church ministry has done great harm to the life of the church. Particularly as regards the ordained, the church has too frequently suffered from the inadequate ministrations of well-meaning priests and deacons called to ministry because of their personal holiness or eagerness to serve but without evidence of a recognizable charism for the ministry they have undertaken.

This insight that ministry is to be distinguished from Christian discipleship is one of the most important contributions of this document as it serves to distinguish lay ecclesial ministry from volunteer service. One does not simply volunteer for ministry without the participation of the community in the discernment of whether a person is in fact called to a particular ministry.

### MINISTRY WITHIN AN ECCLESIOLOGY OF COMMUNION

A third contribution of *Co-Workers* was its incorporation of an important concept explored, if only tentatively, at Vatican II, *koinonia-communio*. Two decades ago Pope John Paul II famously referred to *communio* as the central theological concept of the council<sup>11</sup> and it has played a decisive role in contemporary ecumenical dialogue.<sup>12</sup> *Co-Workers* employs an ecclesiology of communion as an essential foundation for a theology of ministry. It gives particular attention to the Trinitarian dimension of ecclesial communion.

The Trinitarian character of ecclesial communion is vital because Trinitarian doctrine asserts the “fundamentally relational” being of God.<sup>13</sup> The Trinitarian missions of Word and Spirit draw humankind and indeed all of creation into the divine life of communion. From this Trinitarian foundation, *Co-Workers* then develops the relational nature of the church, attending to the ways in which the sacraments of initiation establish our primary mode of relating within the life of the church, that of discipleship.

The document also draws on an influential trend in contemporary theologies of ministry, one which views the church as an “organic and ordered communion” and sees ministry “as diverse and at the same time profoundly relational.”<sup>14</sup> The document consistently avoids a more problematic approach to ministry that defines ministry in terms of the conferral of sacramental power and consequently sees ordained ministry as the only true form of ecclesial ministry. In a relational theology of ministry both the ordained and those called to exercise the gifts given to them at baptism play vital and complementary roles in the life of the church. *Co-Workers* teaches that “lay ecclesial ministers take on a new relationship to the mission of the church and the other ministers who work to accomplish it.”<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the document also asserts that lay ecclesial ministers are given “special graces” for the performance of these ministries.

To its credit, *Co-Workers* applies this relational view of ministry to ordained ministry as well. The ministerial priesthood is placed at the service of the priesthood of all the baptized. The ministry of the bishop is described as a ministry responsible for the ordering of all ministerial relationships within his diocese, and the deacon’s ministry is placed at the service of the bishop. What distinctive contributions does this relational approach offer the church?

A theology of ministry based primarily on sacramental powers—the bishop defined by his power to ordain and confirm, the priest by his power to celebrate the eucharist and administer the sacraments of penance and anointing, the deacon by his status as an ordinary minister of the eucharist and his authorization to preach during the Eucharist — inevitably puts various ministers in a competitive relationship with one another. Each is defined by what one group can do that others

cannot. It encourages a view of hierarchy conceived as a top-down command structure, what we might call a “spiritual trickle down” theory.

Yet from a theological point of view power is not something that one possesses but a reality that one participates in to the extent that individuals are open to the work of the Spirit. Power is not hoarded; it flows through authentic ecclesial relationships. Vatican II had already taught that the hierarchy does not compete with the rest of the faithful. The Spirit bequeaths to the church gifts both “hierarchical and charismatic.”<sup>16</sup> As one assesses *Co-Workers* as a provisional act of episcopal reception, its incorporation of this relational theology of ministry may be its most significant contribution.

### COLLABORATION NOT COMPETITION

*Co-Workers* affirms the complementary relations of both ordained and lay ecclesial ministries. It insists upon the hierarchical nature of the church but presents hierarchy not as a vertical command structure but as a right ordering of the church under the bishop’s ministry of *episkopē* or “oversight.”<sup>17</sup> The relational framework presupposed here constitutes a firm rejection of any theology that would grant to lay ecclesial ministry a mere auxiliary ministerial status. Lay ecclesial ministry, according to *Co-Workers*, has its own ministerial integrity as something more than an auxiliary to the ordained. This establishes the basis for a more collaborative relationship between the ordained and lay ecclesial ministers. It also provides the indispensable foundation for Part Two of the document, which impressively affirms the rights of lay ecclesial ministers to such things as just work conditions, due process, adequate ministerial formation, etc.

We have discussed a theology of charism earlier. We must consider it again here because the appropriation of a theology of charism plays a vital role in the document’s non-competitive conception of ministry. Too often ministry in the church has been conceived as a zero-sum game in which affirmation of lay ecclesial ministry was thought to lessen the importance of ordained ministry, and vice versa. The document’s theology of charism helps break that impasse by conceiving the ministry of the ordained, particularly that of the bishop and priest-pastor, as that of discerning, ordering and empowering the charisms of the baptized.

### MINISTRY WITHIN A THEOLOGY OF MISSION

A further insight evident in the document’s theology of ministry is its emphasis on mission and discipleship. *Co-Workers* highlights the primary identity of all the baptized as disciples of the Lord. The document asserts that “[d]iscipleship is the fundamental vocation in which the church’s mission and ministry find full meaning.”<sup>18</sup>

It will be important not to overlook one subtle, but very important development in the document’s treatment of mission. Early in the first section *Co-Workers* affirms the teaching of both the council and Pope John Paul II on the “secular character” of the lay vocation. It is a claim that has dominated the theology of the laity, at least in magisterial documents, since the time of the council. This longstanding emphasis is unfortunate since, as numerous commentators have pointed out, the

council was hardly offering an *ontological* definition of the laity but merely a *typological* one, that is, a practical definition that captures the "typical" situation of the vast majority of the laity.<sup>19</sup> Yet since the council, the secular character of the laity has been given a quasi-ontological status. Now it is doubtless true that the majority of lay Catholics are immersed in "the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, form the context of their existence."<sup>20</sup> However, if pushed too far, this view of the secular character of the laity creates more problems than it solves, a point Edward Hahnenberg has made.<sup>21</sup> There is a risk of turning the distinction between the sacred and the secular into a separation, by presenting the laity as the church's "foot soldiers" sent out into the world by the clergy, who remain safely ensconced in the privileged realm of the sacred.<sup>22</sup>

*Co-Workers* deftly avoids this danger in a single sentence that is lifted almost verbatim from an earlier document of the sub-committee on lay ecclesial ministry, *Lay Ecclesial Ministry: The State of the Questions*. In that 1999 document we find the following statement:

All of the *laity* are called to work toward the transformation of the secular world. Some do this by working in the secular realm; others do this by working in the Church and focusing on the building of ecclesial communion, which has as *its ultimate purpose* the transformation of the world (emphases are mine).<sup>23</sup>

This passage was inserted almost entirely into *Co-Workers* as follows:

All of the *baptized* are called to work toward the transformation of the world. *Most* do this by working in the secular realm; some do this by working in the church and focusing on the building of ecclesial communion, which has *among its purposes* the transformation of the world (emphases are mine).<sup>24</sup>

A single word change suggests a major theological development. *Co-Workers* asserts that not just the laity, as the previous text had it, but "*all of the baptized* are called to work toward the transformation of the world." This reflects the insight of the council's most mature document, *Gaudium et Spes*, which attributed the image of leaven not to the laity alone as other conciliar passages had, but to the church itself, which "is to be a leaven and, as it were, the soul of human society in its renewal by Christ and transformation into the family of God."<sup>25</sup>

One of the difficulties that some bishops and conservative commentators like Russell Shaw have had with a theology of lay ecclesial ministry has been the concern that it might distract from the laity's primary orientation toward the world.<sup>26</sup> This concern is both legitimate and misconceived. It is legitimate in the sense that one of the perennial temptations for the church has been to ignore its orientation in mission toward the world. This was the concern of Cardinal Suenens and Archbishop Dom Helder Camara at Vatican II when they insisted that the document on the nature of the church

be augmented by a document on the church oriented toward the world. In fact, today ecclesialologists tend to reject the common view that Jesus first instituted a church and then gave it a mission. It is biblically and theologically more accurate to say that Jesus established a mission in the world and then called forth a community of disciples for the fulfillment of that mission. Thus, although the concern about a kind of ecclesial "navel-gazing" is legitimate, this concern is misconceived to the extent that it sees this avoidance of mission as a problem that applies to the laity only. It is the *whole* church that must embrace the demands of mission to the world. This is why the editorial change in the text of *Co-Workers* is so significant; it recognizes that no baptized Christian is exempted from the obligations of church mission and the responsibility toward the transformation of the world.

### VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT

Yet another contribution of *Co-Workers* lies in its recognition that lay ecclesial ministry is a genuine vocation. This represents a marked departure from the longstanding reluctance of many to conceive of it in vocational terms. The bishops write:

These lay ecclesial ministers often express a sense of being called. This sense motivates what they are doing, guiding and shaping a major life choice and commitment to church ministry. At the same time, they know that a self-discerned call by the individual is not sufficient. Their call must also become one that is discerned within the church and authenticated by the bishop, or his delegate, who alone is able to authorize someone to serve in ecclesial ministry.

This is no minor point. Once it is admitted that one might have a vocation to lay ecclesial ministry, it becomes necessary to provide institutional processes for vocational discernment analogous to those that have long been established for discerning a vocation to ordained ministry or consecrated life.

*Co-Workers* not only recognizes the vocational dimension of lay ecclesial ministry; it also attends to the need for a communal context for this vocational discernment. Many lay ecclesial ministry formation programs suffer from the same failings as those of presbyteral and diaconal formation programs. That is, they fall into the trap of discerning impediments to ministry rather than discerning charisms for ministry.

Moreover, the bishops' document highlights the need in this discernment process for someone such as a mentor or spiritual director who can help assess the individual's "human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral readiness." Of particular note is the emphasis on the human dimension. Elsewhere in the document the bishops refer to this as "mature emotional balance." We have a long tradition, paved by our treatment of vocations to religious life and the ministerial priesthood, of focusing on spiritual holiness. Too often, however, a reductive approach to ministerial holiness has meant a

neglect of such basic issues as human wholeness and a sense of emotional balance. Recall the Thomistic maxim, grace builds on nature. Authentic Christian ministry requires a certain basic health.

## CONCLUSION

None of the theological contributions outlined above are particularly original. All can be found in important theological works written prior to *Co-Workers*. The significance of *Co-Workers* lies not in its theological originality but in its status as a tentative but genuine episcopal reception of a theology of ministry already operative in the life of the U.S. church. This document gives that theology a greater visibility and authority. More importantly it offers an integrated and coherent theology of ministry as a gift of the U.S. church to the universal church. If it is received by the church universal, *Co-Workers* may prove to be a far more influential document than its provisional doctrinal status might initially have indicated.

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<sup>1</sup> John Henry Newman, *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine* (1859; reprint, Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1961).

<sup>2</sup>Newman, 163.

<sup>3</sup> Ormond Rush, *The Reception of Doctrine: An Appropriation of Hans Robert Jauss' Reception Aesthetics and Literary Hermeneutics* (Rome: Gregorian, 1997), 206-7.

<sup>4</sup> *Vehementor nos*. In *The Papal Encyclicals*, edited by Claudia Carlen (New York: McGrath, 1981) 3: 47-8.

<sup>5</sup> Kenan B. Osborne, *Ministry: Lay Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church* (New York: Paulist, 1993), 530ff.

<sup>6</sup> Years later, in a revised edition of his classic work, *Models of the Church*, Avery Dulles would propose this model (Church as Community of Disciples) as a "bridge model" that drew together the fundamental features of the five models of church (Herald, Servant, Institution, Sacrament and Mystical Communion) that he had addressed in the earlier edition of his book. Cf. Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Expanded Edition, New York: Doubleday, 1987).

<sup>7</sup> *Acta Synodalia* II/3, 175-8.

<sup>8</sup> For a careful analysis of the council's treatment of charisms, see Albert Vanhoye, "The Biblical Question of 'Charisms' After Vatican II," in *Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives*, volume 1, ed. by R. Latourelle (New York: Paulist, 1988): 439-68.

<sup>9</sup> The reader will profit from Bishop Wcela's insightful chapter on this topic.

<sup>10</sup> See Wendy Wright, "The Charism of Parenting," in *Retrieving Charisms for the Twenty-First Century* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), 85-101.

<sup>11</sup> *Christifideles Laici, Origins* 18 (February 9, 1989):570.

<sup>12</sup> As but one example, consider the role the concept of *koinonia* played in the fifth WCC Faith and Order Commission's world conference which was convened in 1993 in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, ed., Thomas F. Best and Günther Gassmann [Faith and Order Paper No. 166] (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994).

<sup>13</sup> USCCB, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, Origins* 35 (December 1, 2005): 404-27, at 409.

<sup>14</sup> *Co-Workers*,411. For examples of this relational theology of ministry see Susan K. Wood, ed., *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003) and Edward Hahnenberg, *Ministries: A Relational Approach* (New York: Crossroad, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> *Co-Workers*, 412.

<sup>16</sup> *Lumen gentium*, # 4.

<sup>17</sup> For different conceptions of "hierarchy" see Terence Nichols, *That All May Be One: Hierarchy and Participation in the Church* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1997).

<sup>18</sup> *Co-Workers*, 410. See also Kathleen A. Cahalan, "Toward a Fundamental Theology of Ministry," *Worship* 80 (March 2006): 102-120.

<sup>19</sup> This distinction was famously made by Cardinal John Wright in his *relatio* presenting the draft of this text to the council bishops. *Acta Synodalia* III/1, 282. This also appeared in the *relatio* introducing chapter four of the *De Ecclesia* schema, see *Acta Synodalia* III/3, 62.

<sup>20</sup> *Lumen gentium*, # 31.

<sup>21</sup> Edward Hahnenberg, "Ordained and Lay Ministry: Restarting the Conversation," *Origins* 35 (June 23, 2005): 94-99, at 96.

<sup>22</sup> Richard R. Gaillardetz, "Shifting Meanings in the Lay-Clergy Distinction," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 64 (1999): 115-39.

<sup>23</sup> USCCB Sub-Committee on Lay Ministry, *Lay Ecclesial Ministry: The State of the Questions* (Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 1999).

<sup>24</sup> *Co-Workers*, 407.

<sup>25</sup> *Gaudium et spes*, # 40.

<sup>26</sup> Russell Shaw, *Ministry or Apostolate: What Should the Catholic Laity Be Doing?* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 2002).