

UNPACKING THE EMMAUS SERIES

HOW IS CHURCH MINISTRY CHANGING?



Written by John Thornhill SM
Designed and produced by Patrick Lim

THE EMMAUS SERIES



Questions Catholics ask on their journey of Faith

HOW IS CHURCH MINISTRY CHANGING?

SESSION 1

Note: In order to present the material of this DVD in two parts, Chapter 1, 'Vatican II Reaffirms the Call of the Baptised', is divided between the two sessions. Viewing of Session 1 ends 27 minutes and 57 seconds into the DVD, at the graphic of 'Mary Major Basilica. Session 2 starts from that point.

Introductory readings

Two readings from the New Testament concerning the ideal of unselfish service to which we are called by the Saviour.

Reading 1

Gospel of Mark (10:35-36, 41-45)

James and John the sons of Zebedee approached Jesus. 'Master' they said to him, 'We want you to do us a favour'. He said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?' They said to him, 'Allow us to sit one at your right and the other at your left in your glory' ...

When the other ten heard this they began to feel indignant with James and John, so Jesus called them to him and said to them, 'You know that among the gentiles those they call their rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. Among you this is not to happen. No; anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man himself came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for man.

Reading 2

Gospel of Luke (22:24-27):

An argument also began between them about who should be reckoned the greatest; but he said to them, 'Among the gentiles it is the kings who lord it over them, and those who have authority are given the title Benefactor. With you this must not happen. No; the greatest among you must behave as if he were the youngest, the leader as if he were the one who serves. For who is greater: the one at table or the one who serves? The one at table surely? Yet here am I among you as one who serves! ◇

Questions opening up the topic

Groups have a Buzz Session – in the spirit of Sympathetic Listening described in the booklet 'Getting Started' pp. 14-15 – sharing reactions to the following questions:

Questions

- ◆ Since the Second Vatican Council, rank and file Catholics are being called to a more active role in the life of the Church. What are some of the positive results from this development?
- ◆ Are there also some negative outcomes?

Viewing of DVD

NOTE: Viewing of Session 1 starts from beginning of the presentation and ends 27 minutes and 57 seconds into the DVD, at the graphic of 'Mary Major Basilica.'

- ◆ Introduction
- ◆ Chapter 1:
Vatican II Reaffirms the Call of the Baptised
(ends 27 minutes 57 seconds into the DVD)

Sharing of reactions to the presentation

Groups have a Buzz Session – in the spirit of Sympathetic Listening described in the booklet 'Getting Started' pp. 14-15 – sharing immediate reactions to the presentation:

Question

- ◆ What has struck you as enlightening, inspiring, or even puzzling?

A reading related to the theme

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *of Vatican II*

The document expresses a teaching that leaves behind the elitism that has tended to characterise the outlook of Catholics since the Middle Ages.

The Lord Jesus, the divine Teacher and Model of all goodness, called each and every one of his disciples to holiness of life, regardless of their situation ... He himself is the Author and Promoter of this holiness of life. For he sent the Holy Spirit upon all people that he might inspire them from within to love God with their whole heart ...

The followers of Christ are called by God, not according to their accomplishments, but according to his own purpose and grace. They are justified in the Lord Jesus, and through baptism ... they truly become children of God and sharers in the divine nature ...

It must be recognised as beyond all doubt, that all the faithful of Christ - whatever their rank or status - are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity. ♦

Final reflective sharing

This final sharing of personal responses to the questions given below is the most important phase of the session, and should be entered into generously, in the spirit of the Sympathetic Listening described in the booklet 'Getting Started' pp. 14-15.

It may begin with a brief period of silent reflection, which is followed by two stages:

- 1. An informal Buzz Session in which each participant is able to express their response to each question – questions should be discussed separately;*
- 2. The sharing is brought to a conclusion, with each participant expressing, in a few words, what is their personal response to each question – in view of all that has been discussed in the session.*

Questions

- ♦ Does what we have seen help you to appreciate the complex challenge faced by today's priests, as they enter into today's process of renewal?
- ♦ Do you think the role of the priest in the Church's life is in danger of being obscured?

HOW IS CHURCH MINISTRY CHANGING?

SESSION 2

Introductory reading

First Letter of Peter (1:3; 2:4-5, 9; 5:1-4)

This passage speaks of the spirit in which ministry was exercised in the Church of the apostles.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into a heritage that can never be spoilt or soiled and never fade away ...

He is the living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen by God and precious to him; set yourselves close to him so that you, too, may be living stones making a spiritual house as a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices made acceptable to God through Jesus Christ ... you are a chosen race, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation a people made God's personal possession, to sing the praises of God who called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light ...

I urge the elders among you, as a fellow-elder myself and a witness to the sufferings of Christ, and as one who is to have a share in the glory that is to be revealed: give a shepherd's care to the flock that God has entrusted to you: watch over it, not simply as a duty but gladly, as God wants; not for sordid money, but because you are eager to do it. Do not lord it over the group which is in your charge, but be an example for the flock. When the chief shepherd appears, you will be given the unfading crown of glory. ◇

Questions opening up the topic

Groups have a Buzz Session – in the spirit of Sympathetic Listening described in the booklet 'Getting Started' pp. 14-15 – sharing reactions to the following questions:

Questions

- ◆ In the first session we reviewed the developments that, for many centuries, have affected the relationship between clergy and laity. Has this given you a more optimistic understanding of the Church's present situation?
- ◆ Do you welcome the prospect of a more active part in the Church's life?

Viewing of DVD

NOTE: *Viewing of Session 2 starts from 27 minutes and 57 seconds into the DVD, at the graphic of 'Mary Major Basilica, and continues to the end of the presentation.*

- ◆ Chapter 1:
Vatican II Reaffirms the Call of the Laity
(starts from 27 minutes and 57 seconds into the DVD)
- ◆ Chapter 2:
Recovery of a Balanced Understanding of Priesthood
- ◆ Chapter 3:
Official Teaching's Charter for the Laity
- ◆ Chapter 4:
Practical Conclusions

Sharing of reactions to the presentation

Groups have a Buzz Session – in the spirit of Sympathetic Listening described in the booklet 'Getting Started' pp.14-15 – sharing immediate reactions to the presentation:

Question

- ◆ What has struck you as enlightening, inspiring, or even puzzling?

A reading related to the theme

Christifideles laici (1988)

John Paul II's Exhortation on the vocation and mission of the lay Faithful.

The Council (Vatican II) ... has written as never before on the nature, dignity, spirituality, mission and responsibility of the lay faithful (n.2).

In giving a response to the question, 'Who are the lay faithful?', the Council went beyond previous interpretations which were predominantly negative. Instead it opened itself to a decidedly positive vision ... asserting *the full belonging of the lay faithful to the Church and to its mystery. At the same time it insisted on the unique character of their vocation ...* (emphasis in the text) (n.9).

Incorporation into Christ through faith and baptism is the source of being a Christian in the mystery of the Church. This mystery constitutes the Christian's most basic 'features', and serves as a basis for all the vocations and dynamisms of the Christian life of the lay faithful. In Christ who died and rose from the dead, the baptised become a 'new creation' ... Therefore, only through accepting the riches of the mystery that God gives to the Christian in baptism is it possible to come to a basic description of the place of the lay faithful in God's Church (n.9).

All the members of the People of God – clergy, religious and lay faithful – are labourers in the vineyard. At one and the same time they all share in the Church’s common life, and have a part to play in the Church’s mission of bringing salvation to the world. Every one of us - possessing charisms and ministries, diverse yet complementary - works in one and the same vineyard of the Lord (n.55) ♦

Final reflective sharing

This final sharing of personal responses to the questions given below is the most important phase of the session, and should be entered into generously, in the spirit of the of Sympathetic Listening described in the booklet ‘Getting Started’ pp.14-15.

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Questions

- ♦ How can a more collaborative approach be encouraged and developed in our parish communities?
- ♦ What are some practical ways in which we can help priests fulfil their role effectively in our parish communities?

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

One of the most obvious changes in the Church in recent times is the way the baptised ("the laity") are increasingly responsible for the life of our parishes. This is not a temporary measure, to make up for the fall off in the number of priests. History shows that it is a **recovery** if what was taken for granted in the Church of the first centuries, when – under the pastoral authority of the ordained – the baptised shared in responsibility for **all aspects of the Church's life**. The situation we have taken for granted – in which all initiatives have been in the hands of the clergy – developed in the 6th century. It was a result of great changes that took place in the Church's life, after Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, and the barbarian peoples of Europe embraced the faith in large numbers. It was impossible for the clergy to maintain the collaborative relationship with the faithful that had been taken for granted in the small communities of the early centuries - as a result they assumed responsibility for all initiatives in the Church's life, and the baptised were reduced to a purely passive role.

The radical nature of this change – which took place over a few generations – was not recognised at the time. And the situation that it produced continued until the 20th century.

The situation that was long taken for granted influenced **interpretation of the priesthood of the ordained** in the classical theology in the middle ages. It came to be understood exclusively in terms of the special sacramental "powers" given at ordination. This understanding took no account of the relationship the ordained had – as pastors called to preside over the Church's life – to the baptised, and **their** sharing in Christ's priesthood.

In the 20th century, theology recovered **a more balanced view** of the priesthood of the ordained, and its relationship to the sharing in Christ's life of the baptised. Leading theologians are in agreement that the gift of the Spirit given to the Church through ordination must be understood as essentially related to the life of the whole Church "in Christ". Already taught by Pius XII, and clearly affirmed by Vatican II, this understanding has been strongly emphasised by John Paul II, whose teaching makes it clear that sharing in all aspects of the Church's life in Christ – Priest, Prophet and Pastor – is a birthright of all the baptised.

This balanced view takes for granted that the gift of the Spirit received in ordination is essential to the life of the Church. This gift must be exercised in a **truly collaborative style of ministry and leadership**. The working relationship between the ordained and the baptised that prevailed for over a thousand years before Vatican II has profoundly influenced the outlooks of both groups. We must be sensitive to this as we find again the collaborative relationship which was taken for granted in the Church of the first centuries. ◇

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