

# Lay Ecclesial Ministry Program / Programa de Ministerios Eclesiales para Laicos

LEMP / PMEL – Diocese of Las Vegas (2011-2013)

Reading and Writing Assignments – YEAR ONE

2011: [Sept.](#) | [Oct.](#) | [Nov.](#) | [Dec.](#) || 2012: [Jan.](#) | [Feb.](#) | [March](#) | [April](#) | [May](#)

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## Primary Bibliography: Books that will be used throughout this two-year program:

- **Catholic Edition of the Bible**
  - **Documents of the Second Vatican Council.** 1962-1965. – available in various editions, from several publishers;  
full texts online in English & Spanish at [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/)
  - **Catechism of the Catholic Church.** 2nd edition, 2003. – available in various editions, from several publishers;  
full text online in English & Spanish at <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc/>
  - **Catholic Basics.** Series of eight short volumes. Loyola Press, 2002 (will be provided)
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## Reading and Writing Assignments – Fall 2011

Here is a summary of the learning objectives and reading assignments for each session during our first year, along with questions to be answered in the written reflections after each month's session. For direct links to some online readings, see below.

Except for our first session in September, all **readings** are to be done *before* coming to each month's session. Reading selections will be taken from our textbooks (see the initial bibliography above), online sources, or other books available for purchase.

Monthly **written reflections** are due within two weeks after each session, and *emailed* to Dr. Marc Gonzalez at [mglv55@yahoo.com](mailto:mglv55@yahoo.com). Please write *one or two* good paragraphs in response to *each* question listed below, no more than two pages. All papers are typed and include a *brief heading* (name, date, and topic). Please send your completed paper as a *file attachment*, in Microsoft Word rather than in the text of your email.

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## Sept. 17-18, 2011 – Orientation; Introduction to Ministry

### Learning Objectives:

- To begin to understand the biblical and theological foundations for Christian Ministry, esp. within the Catholic Church.
- To appreciate the wide variety of ministries needed and practiced in the Church, esp. by Lay Ecclesial Ministries.
- To realize that “grace builds on nature”; thus human growth, personal development, and spiritual maturity are all necessary for people to be effective ecclesial ministers.

### Reading Assignments:

- No readings in advance; but soon after the session, read "**Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry.**" USCCB, 2005. – available online in both English and Spanish on the website of the “United States Conference of Catholic Bishops” (<http://www.usccb.org/laity/laymin/>)
- “**Encuentro and Mission: A Renewed Pastoral Framework for Hispanic Ministry.**” USCCB, 2002. – online in both English and Spanish at <http://www.usccb.org/hispanicaffairs/encuentromission.shtml>
- As time permits, also read the prior USCCB documents on Lay Ministry listed at: <http://www.usccb.org/laity/laymin/>
  - "Lay Ecclesial Ministry: The State of the Questions." USCCB, 1999.
  - "Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium." USCCB, 1995.

### Written Reflections:

1. In which ecclesial ministries am I currently involved? What are my responsibilities? (in my parish, in the diocese, or beyond?)
2. What has been my overall experience in ecclesial ministry in the past few years? What have been the greatest highlights for me? The greatest challenges? How has my ministry helped me to grow personally?
3. What human qualities and gifts do I have that I can offer in my ministry? In which areas of human development do I need and want to grow in the coming years?

## Oct. 15-16, 2011 – Introduction to Theology (esp. God/Trinity)

### Learning Objectives:

- To be able to define “**Theology**,” and to become familiar with the *main branches* of Theological Studies.
- To become familiar with the main **sources of theology** (Scripture, Tradition, Magisterium, Experience), and to understand the concept of the “*Hierarchy of Truths*” within doctrinal teachings.
- To more deeply understand and be able to explain to others who/what “**God**” is and what the “**Trinity**” is.

### Reading Assignments:

- Study the “Table of Contents” and “Prologue” of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and of the *Documents of the Second Vatican Council*, to get a sense of the contents of these collections and how they are arranged.
- In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, read paragraphs 26-49 and skim par. 142-324 (on God and Trinity).
- “**The Blessed Trinity,**” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1912. – online at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15047a.htm>
- **Elizabeth Johnson**, “Honor your Father and Mother.” U.S. Catholic, 2008. – online at [http://uscatholic.claretians.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=13014&news\\_iv\\_ctrl=0&abbr=usc\\_](http://uscatholic.claretians.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=13014&news_iv_ctrl=0&abbr=usc_)

### Written Reflections:

1. Who is “God” for me, at this stage of my life? What images or titles do I tend to use to imagine, describe, and/or address God? What images of God surprise me, disturb me, and/or challenge me? Why?
2. How best would I explain to a non-Christian what the “Trinity” is and why Christians believe God is a Trinity?
3. As I consider the main sources for our theology (Scripture, Tradition, the Magisterium, and Human Experience), which of these is most influential in my own life right now? Which is least influential? How would I like to grow in developing an understanding of the relationship of all of them?

## Nov. 5-6, 2011 – Biblical Studies (I)

### Learning Objectives:

- To understand the complex historical and literary development of the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments.
- To better appreciate the foundational role of the Scriptures for the Christian Church, including such key concepts as “covenant” and “gospel,” “sin” and “salvation.”
- To become familiar with the basic principles of Catholic Interpretation of the Bible (esp. in contrast to biblical “fundamentalism”), and the use of the Bible in the Church (in liturgy, prayer, theology, etc.)

### Reading Assignments:

- Documents of Vatican II: **Dei Verbum** (“Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation”; 1964)
- **Catechism of the Catholic Church:** paragraphs 50-141 on Revelation & Scripture.
- Margaret Nutting Ralph. **Scripture: Nourished by the Word.** Chicago: Loyola Press, 2002. – chapters 1-3

### Written Reflections:

1. How well do I think that I know the Bible? How often, how much, and in what contexts do I read the Bible?
2. What do I see as the most important differences between contemporary Catholic Interpretation of the Bible and modern fundamentalist ways of interpreting the Scriptures?
3. If invited to teach children in a parish religious education setting, how would I explain the relationship between Revelation, Scripture, and Tradition?

## Dec. 2-4, 2011 – Weekend Silent Retreat

### Retreat Objectives:

- To grow deeper and closer in my relationship to God, and especially to our Lord Jesus Christ.
- To learn about and practice using various methods of prayer, including biblical meditation, Ignatian contemplation, *lectio divina*, consciousness examen, centering prayer, liturgical prayer, etc.

### Reading Assignments:

- **William A. Barry, S.J. *God and You: Prayer as a Personal Relationship*.** Paulist Press, 1987.
- ***Encounter with the Bible*.** American Bible Society.

### Written Reflections:

- No paper this month, but take some time afterward to reflect upon your own experience of this retreat, esp. your encounter with God in prayer.

## Reading and Writing Assignments – Spring 2012

### Jan. 21-22, 2012 – Christology

### Learning Objectives:

- To know about the variety and development of early Christian beliefs about Jesus, as expressed in calling him the “Christ,” the “Son of God,” and many other Christological titles from biblical and post-biblical sources.
- To understand and be able to explain the Christological statements of the canonical Gospels and the early Christian Creeds, and how they present Jesus as “fully human and fully divine.”
- To appreciate the wide variety of Christologies today, how contemporary Christians answer the question about the identity and significance of Jesus Christ.

### Reading Assignments:

- Matthias Neuman, O.S.B. ***Christology: True God, True Man***. Catholic Basics Series. Loyola Press, 2002.
- ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***. 2nd edition, 2003. – Part One, Section Two, Chapter Two: “I Believe in Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God” (**paragraphs 422-682**).

### Written Reflections:

1. How would I explain to my non-Christian neighbor or co-worker why we Christians still claim to be *monotheists* (we believe in only *one* God), even though we also say that Jesus Christ is the “Son of God” and “fully divine”?
2. Which of the four portraits of Jesus in the canonical Gospels (Mt, Mk, Lk, or Jn) speaks to me the most? Why?
3. Who is Jesus *for me*? What images or aspects of Jesus affect my life and my faith most deeply?

## Feb. 18-19, 2012– Liturgy

### Learning Objectives:

- To know the main stages of the development of early Christian liturgy, especially the Eucharist (from the New Testament to the Tridentine Mass of Pope Pius V to the contemporary Mass since the Second Vatican Council).
- To be able to explain the Catholic Church’s teaching about the “four-fold presence of Christ in the Eucharist”.
- To be thoroughly familiar with the structure of the Mass and the basic principles of good liturgy.

### Reading Assignments:

- Documents of Vatican II: ***Sacrosanctum Concilium*** (“Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy”; 1963).
- ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***. 2nd edition, 2003. – Part Two, Section One: “The Sacramental Economy” (**par. 1066-1209**) and Part Two, Section Two, Article 3: “The Sacrament of the Eucharist” (**par. 1322-1419**).
- Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B. ***What Happens at Mass***. Chicago: LTP, 2008.

### Written Reflections:

1. How would I explain to a non-Catholic friend: What is the Mass and why is it so important for Catholics?
2. What are some of the best aspects of the way Sunday Eucharist is celebrated at my own parish? How could the Sunday Masses at my own parish be improved?
3. How does my weekly participation in the Sunday Eucharist affect my own spirituality? In what ways is the Eucharist the "source" and "summit" of my family’s Christian life (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, par. 1324)?

## March 17-18, 2012– Ecclesiology & Ecumenism

### Learning Objectives:

- To know the many definitions and meanings of “church” (local & world-wide, community & institution, etc.).
- To be able to explain in what sense we believe in “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church” (Nicene Creed).
- To know the main theological “models” of the Church and some advantages and disadvantages of each model.

### Reading Assignments:

- **Required:**
  - Morris Pelzel. ***Ecclesiology: The Church as Communion and Mission***. Catholic Basics.
  - Documents of Vatican II: ***Lumen Gentium*** (“Dogmatic Constitution on the Church”; 1964).
  - ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***. Part One, Section Two, Chapter Three, Article 9: “I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church” (par. 748-975).
- **Recommended:**
  - Documents of Vatican II: ***Orientalium Ecclesiarum*** (“Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches”; 1964).
  - Documents of Vatican II: ***Unitatis redintegratio*** (“Decree on Ecumenism”; 1964).

### Written Reflections:

1. If explaining “What is the Church?” to an RCIA group, what points would I cover? What aspects would I stress?
2. How do I usually think about “the Church”? Which theological “model” of the Church speaks to me most deeply?
3. How could the many Christian Churches and denominations move toward greater ecumenical unity?

## April 21-11, 2012 – Sacramental Theology

### Learning Objectives:

- To understand Christ as the primordial sacrament, the Church as the sacrament of the presence of God, and their relationship with the Church’s ritual sacraments
- To know the main stages in the history and development of the sacraments, and why Catholics have seven sacraments (in contrast to the two sacraments accepted by most Protestants).
- To be able to explain what is the core essence of each of the sacraments, in their three main groups.
- To understand the principles for good celebration of the sacraments according to the current liturgical rites.

### Reading Assignments:

- Kurt Stasiak. ***Sacramental Theology: Means of Grace, Ways of Life***. Catholic Basics.
- ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***. 2nd edition, 2003. – Part Two, Section Two: “The Seven Sacraments of the Church” (par. 1210-1690).

### Written Reflections:

1. What difference does it make that Catholics have seven sacraments, while most Protestants have only two?
2. How would I explain to a young couple: How and why is their marriage considered a sacrament?
3. If helping to prepare young children for their First Communion, what would I want to stress the most?

## May 19-20, 2012 – Pastoral Theology

### Learning Objectives:

- To know the main principles of pastoral theology and ministerial practice within the Christian Church.
- To realize the importance of seeing the Church as the Body of Christ, with all its members gifted by God and called to live in relationship with Christ and to participate in Christ's pastoral mission.
- To know how to engage in “theological reflection,” applying theological principles to pastoral practice.

### Reading Assignments:

- Joye Gros, O.P. **Theological Reflection: Connecting Faith and Life**. Catholic Basics. Loyola Press, 2002.
- Documents of Vatican II: **Apostolicam Actuositatem** (“Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity”; 1965).
- Documents of Vatican II: **Gaudium et Spes** (“Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World”; 1965).

### Written Reflections:

1. As I think about some of the best “pastoral ministers” I have ever known, what stands out to me? What aspects of their pastoral service made them good pastors?
2. How do I see God working in those with whom I minister?
3. Identify three “signs of the times” for our own diocese today. Why did you identify these three?

Download a printable copy of the [Assignments for Fall 2011](#) (in PDF format)

Download a printable copy of the [Assignments for Spring 2009](#) (in PDF format)

Go to [Reading and Writing Assignments – YEAR TWO](#)

Return to the [LEMP Homepage](#)

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