

ordination, and the role of the parish council. The group also wanted to pursue the question of the audience for practical theology.

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### ECCLESIOLOGY/PASTORAL THEOLOGY (CTSA TASK FORCE)

- Topic: Communion Ecclesiology and Collaborative Ministry  
Convener: Georgia Keightley, Trinity College, Washington, D.C.  
Moderator: Georgia Keightley, Trinity College, Washington, D.C.  
Panelists: Catherine Nerney, Chestnut Hill College  
T. Howland Sanks, Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley  
John Markey, Denver

At the request of the Bishops Committee on Women in Society and the Church, a task force was organized to prepare a brief study on "communio" as the theological context for collaborative ministry. The convention provided task force members an opportunity to present their work as well as to receive comments, suggestions from CTSA members.

Wanting to produce a study that would assist the Bishops Committee in its discussions and practical planning, the task force proposed to identify criteria for determining how and under what conditions Church ministry actually mediates *communio*. How is *communio* mediated through the visible structures, concrete actions that constitute the Church? What particular ecclesial actions, ministerial structures are most effective at realizing *communio*?

John Markey began by recalling Congar's insight that the community is precisely the effect of the action of the Spirit calling forth the service (*diakonia*) of every person and coordinating these charisms (which is itself a charism) into a single life, a communion (*koinonia*) of service of the whole community to the world on behalf of the kingdom. On this basis, "collaboration" and "ministry" are virtually synonymous terms. The only real question is the mode of collaboration of various ministries and this will largely depend upon the task to be done, the end to be achieved.

Hal Sanks noted *Christifideles laici's* emphasis on *communio's* organic character. In understanding the Church as a living, functioning body, two

principles emerge for thinking about collaborative ministry. According to the principle of functionality, ministries are functions created in response to community needs. And, since the needs of the Christian community are also functions of its mission, all ministries must always be functions of this mission. The principle of vitality evaluates ministries in regard to their contribution to the Church's growth, its capacity to carry out its mission in the world. This principle also points to the need to discriminate and prioritize the various ministries, thus suggesting that some ministries are more essential to the community's life and existence than are others.

Georgia Keightley highlighted five criteria (unity/diversity, enculturation, collegiality, participation and coresponsibility, subsidiarity) offered in the final report of the 1985 synod said to pertain to the structures of communion. She also took note of the seven constitutive elements of communion identified in the 1996 Statement of the U. S. Bishops Committee on Hispanic Affairs.

As a means of assessing the different criteria, Catherine Nerney made the 1995 CLSA study, "The Canonical Implications of Ordaining Women to the Permanent Diaconate," a test case. In her careful analysis and correlation of document and criteria, Nerney showed, for example, that ordaining women to the diaconate could be seen as a viable manifestation of communion based on the principles of enculturation, subsidiarity, and participation. Nerney also indicated that while ordaining women deacons may be a cultural imperative in some parts of the Church, this does not need to become universal practise in order to preserve church unity, that in fact such diversity is actually integral to the kind of unity defined as communion.

Those attending the session responded very positively to the task force's work. Other criteria as well as other models, resources were suggested. Finally, it was recognized that the study raises other important questions: Is ecclesial ministry best construed in a broad or narrow sense? What is the relationship of the ordained to the nonordained ministries? Is/should there be a discrete theology of the diaconate?

These and all the responses will be very useful to the task force as it continues its work.

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