

Roma locuta est, causa finita est: the end of a Concourse debate

by Jeff Ziegler

It is a tribute to the timeliness of *the University Concourse* that one of the disputes carried on in its pages has been resolved by a new document of the Apostolic See. Last year, a cordial discussion arose concerning the proper role of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. If I recall correctly, no one questioned the liceity of the use of extraordinary ministers in situations in which there are markedly greater numbers of the faithful than is habitual at a given parish Mass (e.g., a Confirmation or First Communion Mass). But is it licit or desirable, writers in these pages asked, for extraordinary ministers to distribute Holy Communion habitually at Sunday (or even daily) Mass?

Writers of manifest good will answered this question differently. One side believed that the word "extraordinary" implies that the use of extraordinary ministers should not be habitual. The other side turned to the Instruction *Immensae Caritatis* (On Facilitating

Reception of Communion in Certain Circumstances), issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments on January 29, 1973, which authorized the use of extraordinary min-

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isters "whenever the number of faithful wishing to receive Communion is so great that the celebration of Mass or the giving of Communion outside Mass would take too long" (I,c). Opponents replied that the phrases "so great" and "too long" were often being interpreted too broadly. Proponents added that the advantages of distributing Holy Communion under both species are so great as to merit the use of extraordinary ministers at every Mass.

I was unconvinced by the proponents' last point. Ordained minis-

ters can distribute Holy Communion under both species by intinction, as is

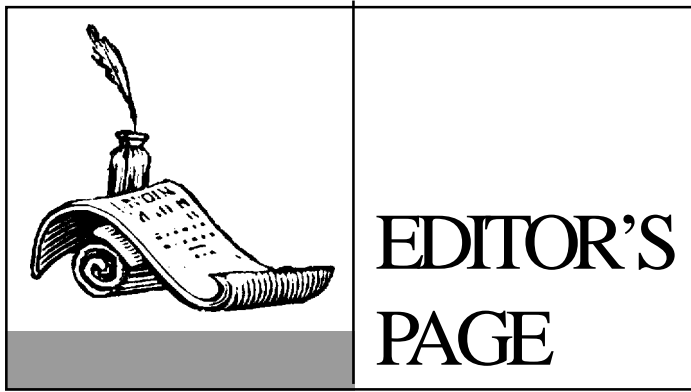
done at weekday Masses at Saint Matthew's Cathedral in Washington; and besides, the Instruction *Sacramentali Communionem* (On the Extension of the Faculty to Distribute Holy Communion under Both Kinds), which was issued by the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship on June 29, 1970, authorized the reception of Holy Communion under both species at weekday Masses over two years before extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist were contemplated. Still, I sided with the proponents of the habitual use of extraordinary ministers because I believed that local pastors of souls, as the ones closest to the situation, are best suited to make prudential judgments about how to interpret the phrases "so great" and "too long."

I was wrong.

On August 15, 1997, the Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests (hereinafter Instruction) was issued jointly by the Congregation for the Clergy, the Pontifical Council for the Laity, the Congregation for the Doctrine

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but assume that the limits the Church puts on Reason must cripple and demoralize Catholic minds. But the truth is, as Newman put it so perfectly in the *Apologia*, that “The energy of the human intellect ‘does from opposition grow;’ it thrives and is joyous, with a tough elastic strength, under the terrible blows of the divinely fashioned weapon [of Infallibility], and is never so much itself as when it has lately been overthrown.”

It is not only a truth of our Faith that the limits of Church teaching are good for us; it is a fact of our experience. We are not depressed, but enlivened and rejoiced over the authoritative pronouncements issuing from the Vatican, even when they mean we have to change our own opinions. A modest instance of it can be seen in this issue of the *Concourse*. There is a sense of gladness in Jeff Ziegler’s unhesitating admission that he was wrong about the use of extraordinary ministers.

This is because declarations of the Church have less the effect of a narrowing of the range of our thinking than proving to us that our thinking was too narrow to comprehend the whole truth of the matter; that there was an aspect we hadn’t considered, a richness we hadn’t recognized, a depth we hadn’t plumbed. In other words, there is more to the whole question than we knew; more wisdom to be learned, more blessing to be received.

If it is true, as the document cited by Mr. Ziegler seems to indicate, that some of our liturgical practices have had the unintended effect of undermining our ability to realize the greatness and dignity of lay vocations, then what it chiefly means practically is that changing those practices will result in a deeper understanding and appreciation of that mystery. A clear and simple means of appropriating more of the truth has been put into our hands. Thus, we have reason to rejoice, whatever side of the debate we might previously have favored.

All this is of course not to say that such debates are pointless. On the contrary, it is in part by observing the efforts of the faithful to understand and live by her teachings that enables the Church to penetrate truth more deeply and to proclaim it more confidently and clearly for the good of the whole body.

Therefore, though one of our cases might be closed, let’s not stop deliberating till the others are too.

Kathleen van Schaijik

The freedom of stricture

Monday morning I read an internet news story about the pope’s naming 22 new cardinals. With an air of irrepressible dismay, the author noted: “With the new nominations the Pope has named some 88 percent of the ‘cardinal electors.’ This increases the possibility that his successor will be a conservative in his own image who will not change controversial Church teachings”—as if the possibility had ever been otherwise; as if, up until now it was likely that the next pope would have changed Church teachings. Such egregious ignorance of the nature of the papacy and the facts of ecclesial history is too common to be noteworthy in itself, but it does provide fresh opportunity for grateful reflection on one of the mysteries of our faith, which is so impossible for the world to comprehend—namely, the freedom and joy that comes from having an infallible interpreter of religious truth in the world.

That it is an interpreter of truth and not a maker of truth is, of course, the all-important point that the world cannot seem to grasp. A pope has less power to change the teachings of the Church than a meteorologist has to change the weather.

But here I am less concerned with what powers the Church does not have than with one of the powers it does have, viz. the authority to restrict our reasoning, to make declarations about what is and what is not consistent with Revelation and conducive to sanctity, and occasionally to put a definitive stop to our deliberations. This, too, is cause for alarm in the world, which cannot help

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We will consider printing submissions anonymously or under a pen-name; however, in general we wish to encourage open, “face to face” discussion. In either case, the editors require the full name and phone-number of the author of each opinion.

Continuing the Distance Education conversation

Distance Education: Is it good enough?

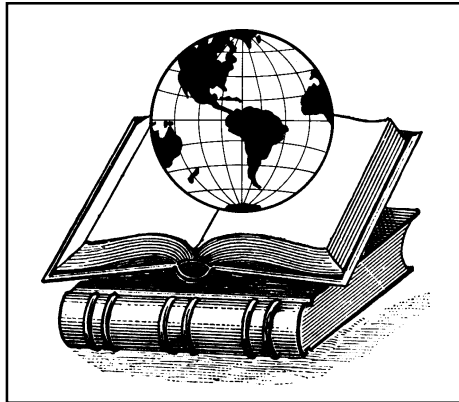
by Jim Fox

Opponents of distance education degrees have effectively demonstrated that a classroom experience combined with personal mentoring offers the most excellent form of education. However, what is in dispute is not whether DE is ideal, but whether it is good enough to merit a Franciscan University degree, and whether it is better than the alternatives of no education or a pernicious education.

Whether It Is Good Enough

Perhaps the most illuminating part of the exchange between Dr. Crosby and Dr. Miletic is their discussion of reading St. Augustine. Here they debate how much is learned from the texts and how much is learned from the teacher. Dr. Crosby says that without the teacher's personal presence the student learns far too little, and at least implicitly suggests that the student has more to learn from the teacher than the texts. Dr. Miletic says that when we read St. Augustine he challenges our thinking, we learn his values, and we develop intellectual habits by carefully following his arguments. Dr. Crosby says reading Augustine is enriching. He also says the difference between teaching via audio tape and the traditional classroom method is like the difference between reading Augustine and personal interaction with Augustine. Maybe so. But Augustine is dead, and most of us will not be blessed to have the likes of Augustine teach us in the classroom.

Further, the teacher of Augustine has rather less to teach than Augustine himself. What teacher would dare to say that what the student learns from him is equal to what the student learns



from reading the works of Shakespeare, St. Thomas, Plato, Cato, Aristotle, Virgil, St. Paul? Or the words of Jesus Christ, the very Word? So we read their works, keeping in mind that when a man wishes to communicate for all posterity the breadth, depth, and nuances of his mind or someone else's, he commits his thoughts to writing.

Having said all this, I am nevertheless well aware of the value of teachers. DE supporters fully realize that teachers play a critical role in the educational process. In fact, if DE is about anything, it is about extending the teaching of the teacher beyond the walls of the traditional classroom.

The crux of the issue is whether the teacher need be personally present to the student to teach him well. Critics of DE say that the intellectual virtues since time immemorial have been best cultivated by discipleship and the Socratic method, which is extolled in our Philosophy of the Curriculum. DE supporters, Dr. Crosby charges, "overlook...the personal element that is thereby captured is only a small fragment of the personal element that is available to our resident students."

I think most DE supporters would agree with Dr. Crosby that a significant portion of the personal dimension of education is not conveyed through DE. But DE supporters maintain that what is conveyed is far more than the

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Oral traditions and distance education

by John F. Crosby

Anne Lodzinski Schmiesing makes a real contribution to our discussion on Distance Education degrees by bringing up the concept of *oral tradition*. Just after reading her letter I found in the works of Cardinal Newman a little-known piece entitled "What is a University?" in his book, *The Rise and Progress of Universities*. In it Newman explains the teaching and learning at a university precisely in terms of oral tradition. I would like to share with the readers of the *Concourse* some of the insights of this unsurpassed master of Catholic university education.

Newman writes of "that which nature prescribes in all education, the personal presence of a teacher, or, in theological language, Oral Tradition." He goes on for a page or so to speak primarily of religious teaching and catechesis; this passage should be of particular relevance to our discussion since this is exactly the focus of the DE degrees that are being considered. He says:

It is the living voice, the breathing form, the expressive countenance, which preaches, which catechises. Truth, a subtle, invisible, manifold spirit, is poured into the mind of the scholar by his eyes and ears, through his affections, imagination, and reason; it is poured into his mind and is sealed up there in perpetuity, by propounding and repeating it, by questioning and requestioning, by correcting and explaining, by progressing and then recurring to first principles...

See Crosby

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insignificant fragment Dr. Crosby makes it out to be. DE programs in general and our DE supporters in particular have focused their efforts on finding innovative alternatives to traditional educational and mentoring methods, precisely to make up for the diminished personal element.

The first step was the decision to use audio-taped lectures. The thinking was that although a man's words, his volume, his tone, his inflections, his erudition, his reasoning, his ideas, his questions and his teaching, may strictly speaking convey only a small fragment of him, they convey an awful lot of what he thinks. Think how much depth and richness is communicated by listening to a radio broadcast. It is the same for the DE student listening to audio tapes, except that they listen to lectures when they are most ready to listen well, and can stop the tape at key points to consider the questions and ideas presented.

The next step was the development of extensive class outlines prepared with the oversight of the professor. Keep in mind, the DE student doesn't merely read Augustine, he is taught

Augustine. In DE, the teacher, who is presumably steeped in Augustine, points out critical passages, demonstrates the logical consequences of Augustine's thought, challenges students to answer his questions at length, forces through juxtaposition the reckoning of Augustine with subsequent theology. Students are taught in DE through active listening, papers, tests, e-mail and phone conversations with the professor, and perhaps most importantly, by pondering the questions and ideas of their college classes for years.

Indeed, it is generally agreed that DE classes are good enough for undergraduate and graduate college credit, whatever else may be needed for a degree. Dr. Crosby himself teaches a DE class. Of course the sum is greater than its parts, so as a final step for a degree program, the most recent proposal from the theology department for the MA degree includes a requirement of six credit hours to be taken on campus. The minimum residency requirement per three-credit course would be three weeks.

"Admittedly some learning

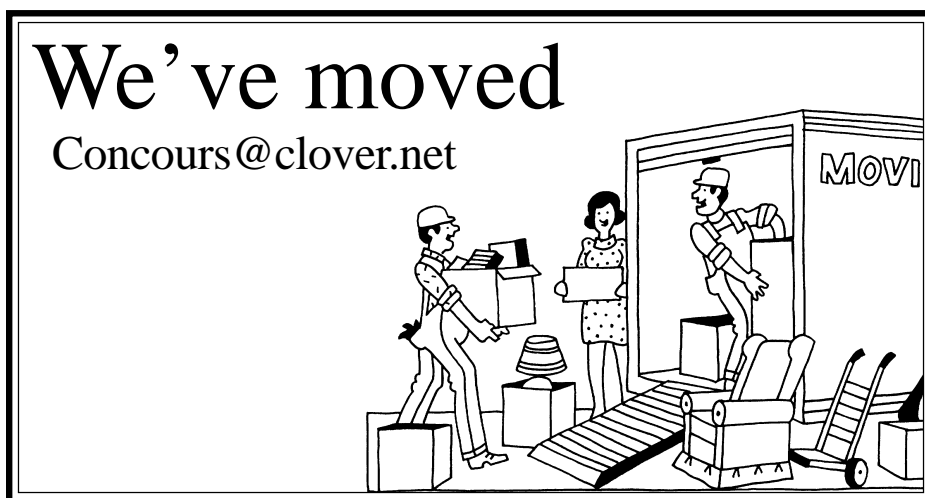
through DE is possible even for college credit, but this isn't enough," DE opponents may still say. "We are talking about the fullness of learning available while at a University." I know of no study that proves a DE student's education is somehow too educationally deprived to be worthy of a degree. Only theories have been offered to demonstrate this alleged disqualification. No actual evidence from experience has been offered that would prove this deficiency: not from experiences teaching DE, not from a single study of DE, not from the experience of a single professor here or elsewhere. In fact, all the evidence offered by DE supporters, by DE students, and by DE professionals supports the proposition that DE classes are good enough.

"OK," you may say, "but it isn't as good as being here for most of the classes." Granted. No one pretends that the *je ne sais quoi* of the classroom, campus and relationship with the professor-that physical, metaphysical and spiritual interaction between unique human persons-can be reduced to some particulars; that some mechanism can fully make up for their absence, or that there would be any meaningful way to measure the success of technological substitutes. For this reason, DE advocates at FUS agree that DE students should receive a different degree from resident students. To distinguish DE degrees from on campus degrees, DE students would not receive a degree in theology, but rather in theological studies.

DE vs. a Bad Education

Principles of education ought not be divorced from the realities of the world. The kind of education that a student might receive elsewhere-particularly in theology or philosophy-is misleading at best. When combined with discipleship and mentoring, it is patently pernicious. Theology and philosophy programs in most established institutions today strive to bring students to a profound level of doubt about any and all truth, save perhaps an

But some want us to say, "Sorry you don't want to drink the water there, but we can't bottle our fresh spring water, so you'll have to come here or drink nothing."



ill-defined and parentless political correctness. I'll cite just one example. At my own alma mater, Georgetown, "an institution in the Jesuit tradition," Diana Hayes holds the position of associate professor of systematic theology. Ms. Hayes is a prominent figure in Call to Action, an allegedly Catholic organization which, for all intents and purposes, systematically opposes just about everything the Church teaches. Is this kind of mal-education really to be preferred to DE?

Let Them Drink Steubenville Water

Mr. May, a DE student, pointed out in his letter to the Concourse that many simply could not get a degree were it not for DE. They have jobs, families, and civic responsibilities. They are thirsting. But some want us to say,

"Sorry you don't want to drink the water there, but we can't bottle our fresh spring water, so you'll have to come here or drink nothing."

DE students are not sacrificing an on-campus education at Franciscan University to get an education through DE. The DE department has abundant data to support this point. Isn't it enough that we will be providing a good education for those who otherwise might not get it?

Conclusion

Through Distance Education we can serve the father of five on the parish council, the mother of three who wishes to raise her children in faith, the nun in the convent who wants to know her faith better, or the salesman like the one in my office the other day who is

putting kids through college. If nothing else, let's think more about them. A great chasm exists between the uneducated and the distance educated. It is the chasm between ignorance and truth. Finding ways to offer education to the uneducated isn't enshrining mediocrity; it's rising beyond our comfortable traditions, overcoming restraints, and striving to bring the truth to the student, so that the student-having learned to seek and discover the truth-can become the teacher and bring others to the truth. DE isn't perfect. But educating those who would otherwise be uneducated or mal-educated it is definitely good enough. ■

Jim Fox is Executive Director of University Relations.

Crosby

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Clearly, if this is the way religious education occurs, if this is the way oral tradition is passed on in a university, then we should not expect much from audiotapes, which will filter out most of the modes of communication mentioned here by Newman.

Let us listen to Newman developing his thought:

No book can convey the special spirit and delicate peculiarities of its subject with that rapidity and certainty which attend on the sympathy of mind with mind, through the eyes, the look, the accent, and the manner, in casual expressions thrown off at the moment, and the unstudied turns of familiar conversation. The general principles of any study you may learn by books at home; but the detail, the colour, the tone, the air, the life which makes it live in us, you must catch all these from those in whom it lives already. You must imitate the student in French or German, who is not content with his grammar, but goes to Paris or Dresden.

In this last sentence Newman is comparing the learning that should take place in a university with the learning of a language. You can study French or German out of books for years; you can supplement your reading with audiotapes as much as you like: you will never learn to speak the language naturally until you go among the native speakers and immerse yourself in the spoken language. With this Newman wants to say that you can study theology or any other university subject out of books all you want, you will never really get initiated into your area of knowledge until you live in a community whose oral traditions convey that deeper knowledge that corresponds to speaking a language fluently.

Newman offers another helpful analogy for understanding the role of oral tradition in education. He says that "the Houses of Parliament and the atmosphere around them are a sort of University of politics." "I cannot but think that statesmanship is learned, not by books, but in certain centres of education [such as Parliament]." He explains: "The bearings of measures and events, the action of parties, and the persons of friends and enemies, are brought out to the man who is in the

midst of them with a distinctness, which the most diligent perusal of newspapers will fail to impart to them." In other words, in the world of Parliament you will find certain oral traditions; if you live in the midst of them and imbibe them, you will learn about English politics in a way in which you could have never learned about it from books or audiotapes. The same holds for the study of theology; a good university will be a center of oral traditions that cannot be substituted for by books and tapes.

In the same volume of Newman we find a paper on university life at Athens. "It was what the student gazed on, what he heard, what he caught by the magic of sympathy, not what he read, which was the education furnished by Athens." Newman then imagines the following encounter of a young student in Athens:

His eye is just now arrested by one object; it is the very presence of Plato. He does not hear a word that he says; he does not care to hear; he asks neither for discourse nor disputation; what he sees is a whole, complete in itself, not to be increased by addition, and greater than anything else. It will be a point

in the history of his life; a stay for his memory to rest on, a burning thought in his heart, a bond of union with men of like mind, ever afterwards. Such is the spell which the living man exerts on his fellows, for good or for evil.

It is clear that such an encounter, from which Newman says the Athenian student derived an all-important part of his education, can hardly occur when you are connected with your teacher only by audiotapes and email.

I can hear what some of my colleagues and students will want to say to me now: they will say that our resident students never encounter quite so awe-inspiring a presence as Plato must have been, that none of us are Plato's and none of us can provide our students with such an encounter as Newman imagines. True enough; and yet what Newman says about the "spell which the living man exerts on his fellows" applies to us too. If we love what we teach we too can cast a spell on our students and give them through our presence what they cannot get in any other way. But we will be largely prevented from giving of ourselves like this through the audiotapes on which the proposed DE degrees would be based.

And finally this remarkable statement from Newman: "It is

scarcely too much to say that one-half of the education which young people receive is derived from the tradition of the place of education. The genius loci [spirit of the place], if I may so speak, is the instructor most readily admitted and most affectionately remembered." Can you tape a "spirit of the place" so that anyone hearing the tape partakes of that spirit and its instruction?

And so I would say to Richard May, who in the last issue of the *Concourse* made about as good a case for DE degrees as can be made: you are making the best possible use of your tapes and books, indeed I have reason to think that you are no typical DE student at all, and that we cannot make projections on the basis of your extraordinary commitment to your DE studies; but the thing of oral tradition so important to Newman, this not even you are receiving, not even you can be imbibing. For the most industrious study habits in a student cannot obliterate the inherent limitations of audiotapes. You should have nothing but respect for a university which regards its oral traditions as so important a source of learning that it cannot bring itself to confer university degrees on students who have never had a chance to participate in them.

I would just add that Mr. May's plea for a DE degree from Steubenville should not make us think that he can get a good Catholic DE degree only if we provide him with one. Sometimes the advocates at Steubenville of DE degrees have given the impression that if we do not offer them, then good Catholic people like Mr. May will be eaten by the theological wolves, as if there were no one left in the Catholic world who might help them. Fortunately Franciscan University is not quite so indispensable for the church in America. For example, there is Ralph McInerny's International Catholic University, which now offers an M.A. using videos and featuring some of the best Catholic minds in the country. Mr. May can get the degree he needs from this DE institution.

I might also mention the distance education M.A. in theology offered by

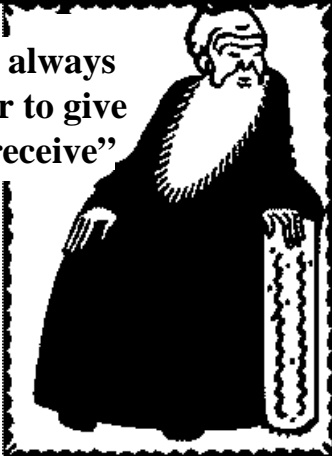
the University of Dallas. That university's Institute of Pastoral Studies, no less orthodox than Franciscan University's theology department, sends its faculty to centers throughout the country for intensive weekends of teaching (thus accommodating the work schedules of people like Mr. May); after several years of such study the student has completed the requirements for the M.A. This kind of outreach, which sends to the students not the taped voice but the living person of the teacher, avoids almost all the objections that have been raised to the FUS proposals.

I must say I cannot understand why this so much more personal model of distance education was not at least considered at the beginning of our interest in DE; for some reason our DE imagination has never reached beyond audiotapes. We put on conferences in other parts of the country: why can we not put on degree programs in the same places? Perhaps it is not too late to consider using this more personal model.

I thank Mr. Nick Healy for his thoughtful contribution to the DE discussion. He is perfectly right that we have to find new ways of letting even our students in Steubenville come in contact with our oral traditions as embodied in the faculty. One of the advantages of this DE discussion, as I see it, is the way it forces us to recognize all the levels of our teaching, including the level of personal influence and of oral tradition, and to take stock of the quality of our teaching at these levels. I also agree with him that whatever we do to enhance personal education here on campus could also be done to enhance personal education at off-campus sites. I would just say that, if we were to use the model just mentioned, then the "roving mentors" envisioned by Mr. Healy could be our own faculty; they could be the ones giving direction to the discussion groups of which he speaks. ■

Dr. Crosby is Professor and Chair of Philosophy

"It is always better to give and receive"



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Eucharistic Ministers

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of the Faith, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the Congregation for Bishops, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts. Two days earlier, it had been approved *in forma specifica* by the Supreme Pontiff. It was published in English in the November 19, 1997 edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*; it is also printed (with at least one typographical error) in the November 27, 1997 issue of *Origins* and is available (with several errors) on the web at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/LAITY.TXT>.

According to the Instruction, which draws upon Sacred Scripture (especially 1 Corinthians 12) and the rich doctrinal patrimony of the Second Vatican Council, "The scope of this present document is simply to provide a clear, authoritative response to the many pressing requests which have come to our Dicasteries from Bishops, priests and laity seeking clarification in the light of specific cases of new forms of 'pastoral activity' of the non-ordained on both parochial and diocesan levels" (Foreword). "The object of this document is to outline specific directives to ensure the effective collaboration of the non-ordained faithful in such [extraordinary] circumstances while safeguarding the integrity of the pastoral ministry of priests... The correct application of these same directives, in the context of a living hierarchical *communio*, is advantageous to the lay faithful who are called to

develop the rich potentiality of their specific identity and the ever greater willingness to live it so as to fulfill one's proper mission" (Conclusion; emphasis in original).

That is the crux of the document: clergy and laity have distinct vocations and missions. Each vocation has its own particular beauty. By virtue of apostolic succession, the clergy are called

to teach, govern, and sanctify the People of God; by virtue of baptism, the laity are called to imbue the secular order with the spirit of the Gospel. At times, because of a grave shortage of clergy, it might be necessary for the laity to assume roles normally reserved to the clergy; but such situations, according to the document, should be extraordinary and temporary. To act otherwise is to demean the inherently glorious vocation of the laity; it is as if the rose were to say to the daisy, "You are beautiful only insofar as you look like me," or as if the head were to say to the hand, "You are not an active member of the body, unless you perform

the same tasks that I do."

The Instruction deals with many issues, from the proper meaning of the word "ministry," to the apostolate to the sick (Practical Provisions, Article 9: "Since they are not priests, in no instance may the non-ordained perform anointings either with the Oil of the Sick or any other oil"), to collaborative structures like diocesan pastoral councils. The document warns, "Though being born in very difficult and emergency situations and even initiated by those who sought to be genuinely helpful in the pastoral moment, certain practices have often been developed which have had very serious negative consequences and have caused the correct understand-

ing of true ecclesial communion to be damaged. These practices tend to predominate in certain areas of the world and even within these, a great deal of variation can be found" (Foreword).

Among these practices are several improper uses of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion; one of these improper uses is "the habitual use of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion at Mass." I reproduce Article 8 (The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion) *in toto*, lest anyone accuse me of quoting out of context. Italics are in the original document; I have put the germane passages in boldface type.

The non-ordained faithful already collaborate with the sacred ministers in diverse pastoral situations since "This wonderful gift of the Eucharist, which is the greatest gift of all, demands that such an important mystery should be increasingly better known and its saving power more fully shared."

Such liturgical service is a response to the objective needs of the faithful especially those of the sick and to those liturgical assemblies in which there are particularly large numbers of the faithful who wish to receive Holy Communion.

§ 1. The canonical discipline concerning *extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion* must be correctly applied so as to avoid generating confusion. The same discipline establishes that the ordinary minister of Holy Communion is the Bishop, the priest and the deacon. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are those instituted as acolytes and the faithful so deputed in accordance with Canon 230, § 3.

A non-ordained member of the faithful, in cases of true necessity, may be deputed by the diocesan Bishop, using the appropriate form of blessing for these situations, to act as an extraordinary minister to distribute Holy Communion outside of liturgical celebrations *ad actum vel ad tempus* or for a more stable

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period. In exceptional cases or in unforeseen circumstances, the priest presiding at the liturgy may authorize such *ad actum*.

§ 2. Extraordinary ministers may distribute Holy Communion at Eucharistic celebrations only when there are no ordained ministers present or when those ordained ministers present at a liturgical celebration are truly unable to distribute Holy Communion. **They may also exercise this function at Eucharistic celebrations where there are particularly large numbers of the faithful and which would be excessively prolonged because of an insufficient number of ordained ministers to distribute Holy Communion.**

This function is supplementary and extraordinary and must be exercised in accordance with the norm of law. It is thus useful for the diocesan Bishop to issue particular norms concerning extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion which, in complete harmony with the universal law of the Church, should regulate the exercise of this function in his diocese. Such norms should provide, amongst other things, for matters such as the instruction in Eucharistic doctrine of those chosen to be extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, the meaning of the service they provide, the rubrics to be observed, the reverence to be shown for such an august Sacrament and instruction concerning the discipline on admission to Holy Communion.

To avoid creating confusion, certain practices are to be avoided and eliminated where such have

emerged in particular Churches:

- extraordinary ministers receiving Holy Communion apart from the other faithful as though concelebrants.

- association with the renewal of promises made by priests at the Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday, as well as other categories of faithful who renew religious vows or receive a mandate as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion;

- the habitual use of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion at Mass, thus arbitrarily extending the concept of "a great number of the faithful."

The Instruction could not possibly be more clear: "the habitual use of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion at Mass" is "to be avoided and eliminated" because to use extraordinary ministers habitually (i.e., every week or every day) is to extend arbitrarily the concept of "a great number of the faithful." The plain meaning of Article 8, then, is that "particularly large numbers of the faithful" are markedly greater numbers than are habitual, and that "excessively prolonged" is a length of time markedly longer than is habitual.

To emphasize its authority, the document closes with these words: "All particular laws, customs and faculties conceded by the Holy See *ad experimentum* or other ecclesiastical authorities which are contrary to the foregoing norms are hereby revoked" (Conclusion).

At this point, I paraphrase a comment made by the Archbishop of Vienna in a lecture here last year: ecclesiastical documents are windows to the truth, not bricks with which to clobber others. Opponents of the practice should expect

that a reasonably short period of time will elapse before this document becomes known, studied, accepted, and implemented by the pastors of the Church in the United States. I, for my part, do not presume to tell the competent ecclesiastical authority of any diocese, parish, quasi-parish, or chapel how to implement the provisions of this document. Both proponents and opponents would do well to imitate the sincere love for Christ that has led many laity to become extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

According to the Instruction, the laity can express this ardent love by participating in the new evangelization. In participating in this day-to-day apostolate, rather than in unnecessarily assuming roles proper to clerics, the laity find their own distinct glory. "This enterprise opens vast horizons, some of which have yet to be explored, for the lay faithful. The faithful can be active in this particular moment of history in areas of culture, in the arts and theatre, scientific research, labour, means of communication, politics, and the economy, etc. They are also called to a greater creativity in seeking out ever more effective means whereby these environments can find the fullness of their meaning in Christ" (Foreword). "In these areas [evangelization and sanctification], the lay faithful of both sexes have innumerable opportunities to be actively involved. This is possible through bearing consistent witness in their personal, family and social lives by proclaiming and sharing the Gospel of Christ in every situation in which they find themselves, and by their involvement with the task of explaining, defending and correctly applying Christian principles to the problems of today's world" (Ibid.).

Is it licit for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, duly deputed by the Ordinary, to distribute Holy Communion habitually at Sunday (or even daily) Mass? No. Rome has spoken; the case is closed. ■

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