

Elements of a Strategy for Total Ministry in the Metro New York Synod

“There has to be a better way of organizing the ministry of the Church than merely spreading clergy ever more thinly over the ground and lumping parishes together.”

A quote from ***A Better Way– A Ministry Strategy for Derby Diocese***

1. **The Purpose of the Synod**

The Great Commission and the Great Commandment

2. **Our Vision of Total Ministry for the Synod**

A Christian community committed to making Christ known to all people by equipping and empowering every person for the exercise of their ministry in the world.

3. **Ministry in Metro NY Synod**

The fullest expression of ministry is exercised where people live and work, not in church. Our mission is to engage with God’s world as God’s agents for his Kingdom.

4. **The Ministry of the Baptized**

Baptism marks the beginning of Christian discipleship, and all disciples are called to ministry in Christ’s name.

The baptized are called to:

- love people and relate to them justly and compassionately
- worship and pray, individually and with others
- witness by sharing their faith in everyday living
- serve God by using their gifts to benefit others, especially the needy

5. **The Ministry of the Ordained**

Ordination is a vocation for a particular ministry for which God calls and the Church selects, trains, and deploys. The role of clergy is to exercise a servant leadership of caring oversight that will enable the ministry of the baptized.

Clergy, because of their training and competence, are called to offer:

- representation
- liturgical leadership
- preaching
- sacraments
- unity and reconciliation
- theology
- teaching
- care
- counsel and advice

6. **The Ministry of Rostered Deacons**

The ministry of deacons is to assist the community of believers in the exercise of their ministry by serving as enablers and models for the rest of the community of the baptized. They need to be trained and deployed in ways that are of benefit to the whole Church.

7. The Collaborative Ministry of the Whole Church

The ministry of salvation is exercised by the whole people of God in a collaborative fashion, as a communion of persons which, like the communion of the Holy Trinity, enjoys mutual equality but also distinction of identity and diversity of function. Mutual inequality or a blurring of identity and function between clergy and lay people is to be resisted.

8. A Strategy for Ministry

Although the Great Commission is given to the whole Church throughout the world, it needs to be worked through on a local level in each particular context. Total Ministry is a way of thinking about fulfilling that mission.

9. Establishing Local (Total) Ministry

By establishing Total Ministry, the whole ministry of the whole Church is offered in that locale. How it develops locally is a local decision as each parish determines its priorities and forms of ministry. Some parishes will have the resources to carry out this mission on their own. Others will need to form coalitions with neighboring churches, even across denominational lines with our ecumenical partners.

10. Implementing Total Ministry

In some parishes Total Ministry is already being implemented, while in other areas entire conferences may work together as a single parish to accomplish their mission. Shared oversight and administration may enable more to be done with less resources, thereby freeing resources for mission in other areas.

A more complete proposal is made in a document called "A Proposal for Total Ministry Development in the Metropolitan New York Synod ELCA."

A critical role the bishop's office will play is to keep the Synod mission-focused and to encourage leaders who share the Synod's commitment to use their gifts toward that end.

11. Authorizing and Commissioning

In the same way that the bishop shares responsibility for the people of God with a pastor called to a particular place, the pastor shares responsibility with the baptized in that locale.

By using a special covenant for recognizing a "Total Ministry Parish," providing a Commissioning Service for Local Ministry Teams, and offering

various courses to certify and authorize specialized ministries in the Church, the Synod is able to support the strategy for implementing Total Ministry throughout the Synod wherever it is welcomed by the leadership of local parish communities.

12. Review of Total Ministry programs

Periodic review of the ministry being carried out is the responsibility of each local Ministry Team. In addition, the bishop and his staff can exercise oversight by assisting the clergy by holding Ministry Reviews. This review looks at the Total Ministry of the parish rather than focusing on the work of the clergy in isolation. Consultation teams can also assist with such processes.

13. Synodical Support and Oversight

Through the bishop's office, the unity of the Synod is reinforced as Total Ministry is developed and carried out by the people of God. The Synod's Total Ministry Development Team will provide ongoing assistance for local parishes, organize an extensive education and training program for both clergy and lay people using the skills of the people in the Synod itself wherever possible.

The input of the Synod's deans and Conference Steering Committees will assist greatly in the carrying out of the strategy for Total Ministry in the Synod as a whole.

Adapted from ***A Better Way– A Ministry Strategy for Derby Diocese***
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