

FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

During the days ahead reflect on the following quote from Saint Basil the Great:

The bread you do not use is the bread of the hungry. The garment hanging in your wardrobe is the garment of the person who is naked. The shoes you do not wear are the shoes of the one who is barefoot. The money you keep locked away is the money of the poor. The acts of charity you do not perform are the injustices you commit.

- ✧ How might you accept the challenges this quote presents?
- ✧ Make a list of opportunities for ministering to others. How might you become actively involved in such ministry?
- ✧ How have you been equipped to minister to others? What unique talents and gifts do you possess? How might each be used for ministry?



Through baptism we become co-workers and fellow ministers with Jesus Christ. In fact, the stability and growth of the Christian community depends on the ministry of the laity as well as the clergy.

The words minister and ministry are not borrowed from other traditions. On the contrary, these terms—and the concepts they define—are found and used throughout the entire Bible, particularly in the New Testament: “See that you fulfill the ministry that you received in the Lord” (Col 4:17).

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
PLEASE CONTACT:**



THE CHALLENGE OF LAY MINISTRY



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AS OFTEN AS YOU DID THIS...

In the scriptural sense, a *minister* is not just a member of the ordained clergy, but rather, a person who *offers service to others*, or who *relieves, assists, or supplies others* with the necessities of life.

Everyone in the New Testament had a ministry:

- ✧ The angels ministered to Jesus in the wilderness (Mt 4:11).
- ✧ Luke 8:2 mentions the women disciples who ministered “out of their means” to Jesus during His lifetime. By fearlessly approaching His tomb after the crucifixion, they continued to minister to Jesus even in death.
- ✧ Acts 1:17 notes that the apostles had a ministry, while Jesus called Paul to ministry in Acts 20:24.
- ✧ Members of the family of Stephanas, according to Acts 11:29, devoted themselves to “the ministry of the saints,” and others sent relief to the Christians living in Judea.
- ✧ Finally, Jesus Christ is the supreme example of ministry, for He came “not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mt 20:28).

...YOU DID IT FOR ME.

Ministry is at the very center of Christian life.

In His parable of the Last Judgment, Jesus teaches that He will judge us on the quality of our ministry to those in need:

I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you ministered to me, in prison and you visited me... As often as you did this for one of the least of my brothers, you did it for me (Mt 25:35, 36).

Ministry, then, is the use of one’s gifts and talents for the welfare of another in need. The emphasis is on action, as Saint Peter writes: “*As each has received a gift, minister it to one another*” (1 Pet 4:10).

HOW DO WE MINISTER TO OTHERS?

Often, without knowing it, we minister to others. Perhaps our ministry takes the form of visiting the sick or the elderly. It may be found in the care we take to assist the needy, the homeless, the poor, or the forgotten. Or it may be revealed through the sharing of our time and talents for the growth of our parish or the wider community in which we live. And, of course, there are those countless occasions when we minister to others by sharing a kind word, flashing an encouraging smile, or offering simple, practical, and loving advice.

In so many instances, then, ministry means the conscious use of one’s talents for the needs of others without personal, material, or social gain.

SERVING GOD BY SERVING OTHERS

Jesus Christ came into the world to save us by serving us. He calls us to continue His saving ministry by serving others, “in order that in everything God may be glorified” in us (1 Pet 4:11).

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES ON MINISTRY

Matthew 9:9; 25:35, 36, 44

John 8:31, 32

Acts 6:4

Romans 11:13; 12:4, 5

1 Corinthians 3:9

2 Corinthians 4:1; 5:18; 6:3

Ephesians 4:11-16

Colossians 3:17; 4:17

1 Peter 4:10, 11

