

# **St. Brendan's Parish, Muirhouse, Motherwell**

## ***The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelising mission of the Church***

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**Review [Part 5] prepared by the lay supervisor of the social media of the Parish and revised and approved by Fr. Ness**

### **Appointments and Pastoral Ministry**

#### **Forms of assigning pastoral care**

If due to a shortage of priests the Bishop may entrust the pastoral care of a Parish to a deacon, to a consecrated religious or layperson, or even to a group of persons (e.g. a Religious Institute or Association). Those entrusted with the pastoral care of the community will be directed by a priest who will act as a "Moderator of Pastoral Care", with the powers and functions of a Parish Priest.

This would be an extraordinary form of entrusting pastoral care, due to the impossibility of appointing a Parish Priest or a Parish Administrator, and would be a temporary measure. It is not to be confused with the ordinary active cooperation of the lay faithful in assuming their responsibilities. It should be seen as a means of providing pastoral care.

It would be preferable to appoint one or more deacons over consecrated men and women or laypersons for directing this kind of pastoral care, and the coordination of pastoral activity organised in this way falls to the priest who is appointed as the Moderator by the diocesan Bishop. The other members of the faithful are defined as having "a share in the exercise of the pastoral care of a Parish".

Any person of good will – even the unbaptised – may occasionally collaborate in the daily activities of the parish. However some members of the faithful accept responsibility for specific service within the parish community for a length of time in such roles as catechists, altar servers, and charitable workers.

It is important to use the correct terminology in describing the roles undertaken by these people, whether they are deacons, consecrated men and women, or lay faithful. This is to maintain a clear distinction between ministerial priesthood (the ordained priest) and the universal priesthood to which all baptised Christians are called. So titles such as "pastor", "co-pastor", "chaplain", "moderator", "coordinator", "Parish manager" are to be used only by priests. In the same way, the aforementioned faithful and deacons must not be described as "entrusted with the pastoral care of the parish" or "presiding over the parish community" as these designations belong solely to the ministry of the Parish Priest. Suggested alternative designations include "Deacon Cooperator", "Pastoral Cooperator", "Pastoral Associate", "Pastoral Assistant" or "Coordinator of (a particular sector of pastoral care)"

Canon Law permits that lay MEN may be appointed to serve as Lectors [Readers] or Acolytes [Ministers of the Eucharist] on a permanent basis. Lay persons can *temporarily* fulfill the function of reader. Lay persons can also perform the functions of commentator or cantor, or other functions; however, the term “extraordinary minister” must only be used when a lay person is called to fulfil supplementary functions to the priest or deacon in specific circumstances permitted by Canon Law.<sup>1</sup>

“These laypersons must be in full communion with the Catholic Church, receive a formation adequate to the function that they are called to perform, and maintain a personal and pastoral conduct that is exemplary, making them convincing in carrying out their service.”

**The Bishop may entrust to deacons, consecrated men and women and lay faithful, under the direction and responsibility of the Parish Priest, other duties such as:**

- 1°. **The celebration of the Liturgy of the Word on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation**, when “participation in the Eucharistic celebration becomes impossible because of the absence of a sacred minister or for another grave cause”. This is considered an exceptional eventuality, recourse to which is made only in circumstances of true impossibility and always taking care to entrust these liturgies to deacons, if they are present;
- 2°. In exceptional circumstances, **the administration of Baptism**;
- 3°. **The celebration of funeral rites**

***The lay faithful may preach in a Church or oratory, if circumstances, necessity or a particular case calls for it.*** However, these individuals **may not give the homily during Mass**. Moreover, “where there is a lack of priests and deacons, the diocesan Bishop can delegate lay persons to assist at marriages”, if the Bishops’ Conference is in favour and “after obtaining the permission of the Holy See”.

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<sup>1</sup> Can. 230 §3. When the need of the Church warrants it and a priest or deacon is lacking, lay persons, even if they are not lectors or acolytes, can also supply certain of their duties, namely, to exercise the ministry of the word, to preside over liturgical prayers, to confer baptism, and to distribute Holy Communion.

Can. 943 The minister of exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament and of eucharistic benediction is a priest or deacon; in special circumstances, the minister of exposition and reposition alone without benediction is the acolyte, extraordinary minister of holy communion, or someone else designated by the local ordinary; the instructions of the bishop are to be observed.