

### A Pastor's Perspective on Certification



By Fr. John Kunz  
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Mankato, MN

I have had a couple of my staff members seek and reach certification as Lay Ecclesial

Ministers. In discovering this I noticed that more and more there was a level of competency that was being demanded by our parishioners. They want resource people who have really studied theology and had training in Church issues. The process of becoming a Lay Ecclesial Minister is certainly demanding, but not oppressive. The teachers are excellent and provide good background.

The candidates get pulled into this process and grow in understanding but also in integrating the faith in their daily lives. It is truly a spiritual journey for them. In essence, they seem to become more faithful Church members, but tremendous resources to the parish. It's exciting to watch this growth happen.

I also believe it has become something advantageous for the careers of these ministers. It gives them Church approval for their training, which fosters acceptance by places of ministry beyond parish life. I find it to be one of the more exciting teachings the bishops have published. It is beginning to provide lay people with the training they desire and need for their role in the future faith life of the Church.

### Alliance Offers Draft

The Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers (ACLEM) in August proposed a working draft of revised standards for certification. Organizations collaborating in ACLEM include the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC), the National Association for Lay Ministry (NALM), National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM), the National Conference for Catechetical Leaders (NCCL), and the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM).

ACLEM has proposed that there be four standards rather than five, helping them to align with standards for priestly formation. Many certified leaders can attest to the repetition and overlap which exist between standards one and two and standards four and five in the present document. Much of the overlap has been eliminated in the proposed draft. Another improvement offered by the draft is a more tightly worded set of specialized competencies for the Catechetical Leader. Specialized competencies for Director of Liturgy and Director of Music Ministry also are proposed in the recent draft. The topics of the four standards are: I. Human Maturity, II. Spirituality, III. Intellectual Competence, and IV. Pastoral Formation.

"Servitium" is the newsletter for Certified Lay Ecclesial Ministers in the State of Minnesota. According to Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, servitium means ministry. We all feel called to ministry and are living out this calling in a special way by being certified as Lay Ecclesial Ministers specializing as parish catechetical or youth ministry leaders. This newsletter will hopefully support and enhance this special call you feel to ministry. Please read on. If you would ever like to submit an article for this newsletter, please e-mail Peter Noll at pnoll@mnc.org.

### Apply for Renewal

If you received your certification in 2005, you have just a few months to apply for your renewal. The deadline is March 1, 2010. As you know, 100 hours of continuing education, addressing at least three competencies must be documented for renewing your certificate. In the spring or summer of 2009, you should have received renewal application forms electronically. If you can't put your hands on them at the moment, please call your diocesan certification administrator listed on this newsletter. We are hoping for 100 percent renewal of certified leaders who are still ministering in the participating dioceses of Minnesota.

### Certified LEM Association

The project to connect CLEMs is underway. If you are willing to be connected electronically, send a short summary of your ministry involvements, along with an electronic photo to: [arichard50@gmail.com](mailto:arichard50@gmail.com). The first step will be an electronic directory of our Certified Lay Ecclesial Ministers in Minnesota. This directory will be e-mailed to all participating members and also placed on our part of the updated MCEA website. The certified people are the most valuable asset we have in sustaining and growing the certification process. Be part of important interactions and meet others with whom you are sharing a commitment to lay ministry.

Here's a sample directory listing; please remember to send a photo with your directory entry.



Mary Beth Nygaard – certified in 2005  
St. John the Baptist, Mankato Minnesota  
Diocese of Winona  
Email: [mhn@hickorytech.net](mailto:mhn@hickorytech.net)  
Phone: 507 387-6928

I have been employed in ministry since 1991, and have done Youth Ministry, Faith Formation, and Social Justice. At this time I am most passionate about Social Justice, and have been instrumental in starting a parish outreach to the poor in our downtown community. I also enjoy keeping up with the trends in Faith Formation and working on various opportunities for adult formation that enhance the learning of our intergenerational programming. I received my undergraduate degree from Macalester College and a Certificate in Youth Ministry from the Center for Ministry Development.

#### Diocesan Certification Administrators

Certification Consultant  
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Diocese of Winona  
Mark Nuehring  
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## Connections across the state...

### Diocese of Crookston

#### Certification Administrator Deacon Dan Hannig

Deacon Dan Hannig reports that there are currently seventeen lay people active in the Pastoral Leadership Program. Four of them are near diocesan certification. One of the courses (Hermeneutics/Bible Interpretation) this season is being taught by a professor in California via webcast using Skype on the internet.

### Diocese of Duluth

#### Certification Administrator Brian Pizzalato

In mid-October Pope Benedict appointed Rev. Paul Sirba, current Vicar General of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, as Bishop of Duluth. The bishop-elect was born in 1960 and ordained a priest in 1986. We ask God's blessings on him as he is installed as shepherd of the people of Duluth Diocese on Dec. 14. Brian Pizzalato reports that Duluth certified two more lay ministers in 2009. (See article below.)

### Diocese of New Ulm

#### Certification Administrator Karla Cross

Karla Cross reports that JoAnn Borchert, current chair of the state certification board and certified lay ecclesial minister of the Diocese of New Ulm, was present with her at the September 26<sup>th</sup> diocesan fall Faith Formation Day in Redwood Falls, to answer questions regarding MCEA certification. At the event, themed "Why Study Church History," which attracted 120 people, four individuals expressed interest in becoming certified lay ministers and requested application materials. Ongoing New Ulm ministry formation opportunities this year include a partnership with the University of Dayton Virtual Learning Community for on-line courses and the first year of a two year lay ministry program that continues to be offered in partnership with St. Mary's University, Winona, and held in Redwood Falls.

### Diocese of St. Cloud

#### Certification Administrator Brenda Kresky

A Portfolio Workshop held June 16 at the Pastoral Center in St. Cloud attracted several St. Cloud candidates plus one from Crookston. Brenda Kresky, diocesan certification administrator, reports that a significant number of people are looking for a renewal workshop to assist them in improving their ministry preparation.

### Diocese of Winona

#### Certification Administrator Mark Nuehring

Mark Nuehring, certification administrator, reports that eleven students in Winona's Institute for Lay Ministry will be discerning whether or not they will seek certification. Todd Graff, ILM director, has collaborated to make sure all Institute participants know about certification. Winona offered a workshop on portfolio building to candidates on May 21 in Mankato. Three candidates and two potential candidates attended.

"As in the national realm, those serving as lay ecclesial ministers in the six dioceses of Minnesota serve in diverse capacities and have diverse levels of formation. The variety of roles in which they serve ranges from volunteers to paid professionals. The parish settings served by lay ecclesial ministers range from small, rural parishes in northern, central and southern Minnesota, to large, urban parishes in the twin cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis. They also have diverse amounts and levels of theological education and ministerial formation, ranging from having no formal education or formation to having graduate degrees in theology or pastoral ministry."

From MCEA Certification Candidate Handbook  
December 6, 2006, p. 8.



### Partners in Ministry and Certification

Certified earlier this year, Bob and Sandi Arola have been involved in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults ministry since 1989, serving as sponsors, catechists and leaders in four parishes in Duluth. Currently they serve as RCIA leaders at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Rosary in Duluth.

Sharing their faith, knowledge and love for the Church with adults in the classes is their favorite part of the ministry. "It is such a joy to see our participants grow in their relationship with Jesus and His Church" says Sandi.

Archbishop Dennis Schnurr and Brian Pizzalato, diocesan certification administrator, encouraged Bob and Sandi to seek certification. According to the Arola's, the Diocese of Duluth offers an excellent program of catechesis and theology for catechetical leaders seeking certification.

Bob and Sandi found the certification process a very positive experience. "We gained a deeper knowledge of Catholic theology to hand on to our students. During our years in RCIA ministry, we have gained a deeper appreciation for the difficulties and struggles people have as they make the journey of faith into the Church. Our faith grows deeper as we share it," say Sandi and Bob.