

**August 2005**

## **Introduction to Total Ministry**

### 1. What is Total Ministry?

Total Ministry is a way of enabling the Ministry of All the Baptized. It is based in our theology of baptism, where we affirm that each baptized Christian is called to use their God given gifts for ministry. In the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota, a team of leaders is called within a congregation or a cluster to work together. In some dioceses, such a team is called a “ministry support team,” indicating that these leaders seek to involve as many members of the congregation as possible in various forms of ministry. Total Ministry is also called Shared Ministry, Collaborative Ministry, Team Ministry, or Mutual Ministry.

### 2. Is Total Ministry only for small congregations who can't afford to pay a seminary trained priest?

No. Some congregations or clusters who engage in Total Ministry in the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota may have seminary trained priests only as mentors and supervisors. Others may continue to have a full or part time seminary trained priest who works with the team. The team works with the seminary trained priest to further the mission and ministry of the congregation or cluster. Many people who are engaged in Total Ministry have come to believe that God may have gotten the church's attention because of financial difficulties, but God did get out attention in order for us to pay attention to our baptismal vows.

### 3. Where did the concept originate?

It has its roots in both the Old and New Testaments. Here are a few passages you can read.

- a. Numbers 11: 10-30- God tells Moses to appoint 70 elders
- b. Mark 3: 13-19- Jesus appoints the Twelve
- c. Luke 10: 1-9- Jesus appoints 70 for Mission
- d. I Corinthians 12: 4-13- One body with many gifts
- e. Ephesians 4: 1-13- Gifts given to equip the saints for ministry

Total Ministry is a way of living out the Baptismal covenant, found in *The Book of Common Prayer*, pages 304-305.

The renewed vision of the Ministry of all the Baptized is emphasized in the Catechism, found in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 855, in the section on “The Ministry.” The first question asks, “Who are the ministers of the Church?” The answer is, “The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons.” “Lay persons” are intentionally listed first. The second question is, “What is the ministry of the laity?” “The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work

of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.”

4. What other Dioceses utilize Total Ministry?

In the Episcopal Church in the United States, Total Ministry (which may be known by other names as mentioned earlier) is used in the Dioceses of Alaska, Nevada, Northern Michigan, North Dakota, Montana, Colorado, South Dakota, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, Western Kansas, Western New York, West Virginia, and several others. In the Anglican Church of Canada, it is used in Rupertsland, Calgary, Qu’Apelle, Kootenay, and many others. It is also utilized in other parts of the Anglican Communion, including in England, Scotland, New Zealand and Australia, in Dioceses too numerous to mention here. In some Dioceses in England it is used in urban areas as well as in towns and villages.

5. Who authorizes the use of Total Ministry?

The Canons of the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. provide for the licensing of a variety of Lay Ministries and for ordination to the diaconate and priesthood persons who are identified by their congregations and who study locally. The Bishop, Standing Committee, and Commission on Ministry in each Diocese set the guidelines for their Diocese in accordance with the national Canons. In The Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota commissioning is offered for several other ministries as well.

6. What are the Licensed and Commissioned Ministries?

The Canons provide for licensing Preachers, Eucharistic Ministers, Eucharistic Visitors, Worship Leaders (formerly called Lay Readers), and Catechists. Other equally important ministries that do not require licensing as such (but for which training and commissioning are offered) may include an Evangelist, a Team Coordinator, an Administrator, a Christian Education Coordinator, a Youth Leader/Advisor, Pastoral Care Ministers, an Intercessor, a Liturgist, a Stewardship Coordinator, and Musicians. In the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota, the team must include an Evangelist.

Other ministries are recognized, but need not be commissioned members of the team, such as Acolytes, Lectors, Altar Guild, and Outreach Coordinators.

7. Where does ministry take place?

Ministry takes place in each Christian’s life situation, at home, at work, at school; in service to the world; and within the church. It is an adventure with God.

8. Aren’t we already doing a lot of this?

Yes, certainly! Thanks be to God!