The Next Generation of Pastoral Leaders:
Their Chips Are All In
A Closer Examination of the Current Reality

A report developed by the **National Association for Lay Ministry**
and the **National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association**

EMERGING MODELS
OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

A Joint Project, Funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc.

National Association for Lay Ministry

Conference for Pastoral Planning and Council Development

National Association of Church Personnel Administrators

National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association

NCYAMA

National Federation of Priests Councils

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

We would like to express gratitude to the following organizations and individuals for their help in the development and completion of this project:

In memory of Dr. Dean Hoge who passed away in September 2008 shortly after completing the initial research and report on young adults for the Emerging Models Project.

Introduction

At the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, countless numbers of laity who entered Church ministry in the wake of Vatican II are retiring, and a new generation of young lay ecclesial ministers has come of age.

In order to better understand and make the most of this ministerial and generational transformation, the Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership Project set out to discover the state of young adults in Church ministry in the Twenty-First Century. The Project initially called a symposium in November 2010 at which young adult lay ministers from across the United States were given opportunities to articulate their hopes, fears, joys, and struggles of serving in the Church. This three-day gathering in Washington, D.C. surfaced valuable information about the experiences of young adults working in the Church, especially in terms of issues surrounding cultivating and sustaining a healthy intergenerational workplace.

After the symposium, the Project leaders looked at the intergenerational data from two studies, *The Changing Face of U.S. Catholic Parishes* (2011) and *Perspectives from Parish Leaders: U.S. Parish Life and Ministry* (2012), both conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University and commissioned by the Emerging Models Project.

The following report consists of four parts:

First, an essay, "What Would Young Adults Do?," which explores the new generation of ecclesial ministers from the perspective of major issues raised at the symposium and further supported by the CARA data. Statements by the symposium participants are used to help illustrate the issues.

The following seven key insights were gleaned from both the symposium and the broader young adult initiative of the Emerging Models project, and are included in the first part of this report:

1. A hindrance to better intergenerational workplace collaboration often involves the very words that generations use to describe one another.

2. There are significant differences between today's young adults and those of prior generations, especially in terms of workplace styles, monetary expectations, and technology use.

3. Pathways to ministry have changed, and today's young adults respond to God's call in new and different ways.

4.   There are two distinct generations that make up today's young adult population: "Generation Xers" and "Millennials." While each of these enjoys a rich cultural mix, this diversity is not similarly reflected in the Catholic workplace.

5.   Today's young adult pastoral ministers seek community both in their workplace and with young adult church workers elsewhere. They also want the Church to seriously upgrade its outreach to young adults so that it can become more attractive to and enlivened by them.

6.   Young adult pastoral ministers want to be mentored by older church workers. But they also want a workplace where, in addition to wisdom being passed on, their ideas are welcomed.

7.   Young adult pastoral ministers want to be valued and appreciated for their work and for their deep commitment to the Church. As one symposium participant put it, "their chips all in" when it comes to the ministry.

Second in this report, there is a presentation of the research on young ecclesial ministers that was done by CARA in 2011 and 2012, which also includes some analysis and lingering questions that arise from the data.

Third, we offer reflection papers from four symposium participants, which give the reader a first-hand perspective of the state of young lay ecclesial ministers today. These essays offer us four distinct outlooks on the reality in the church and some suggestions for moving forward.

Finally, we conclude this report by offering seven major recommendations that the Project leaders offer the Catholic Church in the wake of this multi-year initiative on the experiences, challenges, and opportunities of young adult lay ecclesial ministers.

Part I: What Would Young Adults Do?

Background: Surfacing Challenges

In the U.S. Catholic Church workforce, unresolved generational differences can adversely affect mission effectiveness. Problems can occur when multiple adult generations[1] working side-by-side in parishes, dioceses, and Catholic organizations fail to adequately understand, appreciate and support each others' perspectives and values.

For this reason, the *Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership* project made one of its primary initiatives an examination of the youngest cohort of lay ecclesial ministers, namely, those who are in their 20s and 30s. As recent studies have shown,[2] this generational cohort is perhaps the least likely to advocate for itself. So the project was designed, in part, to help give it a voice that would not only be heard but also taken seriously.

Hearing what today's young lay ecclesial ministers have to say is important because if their concerns are not adequately understood and addressed, the Church could find itself losing them. And if this happens, its efforts to reach young adults and to recruit new leaders would become increasingly difficult. As theologian Edward Hahnenberg[3] noted, "If our goal is to promote Church leadership of tomorrow, we ought to be asking how we foster Church involvement today."

It is vitally important that church leaders fully understand the issues that are important to young adult lay ministers. After all, they are the ones who normally invite young adults into ministry and are expected to mentor them along the way. But given that their own ministerial formation was of a different place and time in the Church's life, they may fail to see what needs to be in place to adequately motivate and inspire young adults in both their ministry and their spiritual lives.

More than Labels

In recent years, there has been considerable discussion on what parameters constitute "young adulthood." For our purposes, we have adopted the definition provided by the United States Catholic Bishops in their 1996 pastoral letter, *Sons and Daughters of the Light*, namely, that young adults are "people in their late teens, twenties, and thirties; single, married, divorced, or widowed, and with or without children."[4] Within this context, adults born between1963 to 1980 are generally known as "Generation X," and those born between 1980 and approximately 1995 and referred to as the "Millennial Generation."

Religion sociologists, theologians, and practitioners have done significant work in recent years on the spiritual dimensions of young adults.[5] Some of them characterize young adults as experiencing a type of "extended adolescence." Others, such as psychologist Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, contextualize young adults within an "emerging adulthood." Still others speak of them as being "spiritual but not religious," "eclipsed," "selective adherents," "indifferent," "private," or "tinkerers." Obviously, the topic of young adulthood is far from settled.

This fact was emphasized in an address by Fr. Robin Ryan, C.P., who served as director of the Catholics on Call vocation discernment program at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago:

> I have given a number of talks about young adults and faith in various settings during the past five years. And, to tell the truth, I find that these talks are getting more difficult to write. You would think that the opposite would be the case… The reason I say that is because the more I speak with young adults, and the more studies I read, the more I realize that *this is a topic of significant complexity*.
>
> I suspect that in the talks I gave five years ago, my descriptions of young adults were simpler and more all-embracing and, for that reason, they may have been easier for people to digest. And this is true, I think, of much of what we read on this topic. One sometimes reads blanket descriptions of young adults, or Millennials, or the post-Boomer generation, that sum up things very neatly in a list of characteristics. I think that we have a tendency to want to find the comprehensive formula for understanding and relating to young adults: "This is what they are like." But we need to remember that young adults – like middle-aged and older adults – are complex and often quite divergent in their views about most things, including faith, spirituality, and the Church.[6]

What this means is that a certain sense of humility and open-mindedness must accompany efforts to better understand young adults in the Church and, more specifically, in the Church workplace.

The *Emerging Models* Project

In 2003, the *Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership* project was funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. as part of its "Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Grant Program." The program provided funding to organizations that would establish projects to enhance pastoral leadership in parishes and congregations across the country. This first phase of *Emerging Models* was a joint effort shared by six national organizations. In 2009, Lilly Endowment Inc. funded a second phase of the project, which is being led by five national associations, including the National Association for Lay Ministry (NALM), the Conference for Pastoral Planning and Council Development (CPPCD), the National Association of Church Personnel Administrators (NACPA), the National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association (NCYAMA), and the National Federation of Priests Councils (NFPC).

The place of young adults in pastoral leadership in the Catholic Church in the United States was, from the outset, an integral part of the *Emerging Models* project. As the project coordinators surveyed the national pastoral landscape, they were struck by the lack of church leadership under the age of 40. As Fr. John Cusick and Dr. Kate DeVries put it: "In the not-too-distant past, the backbone of Catholic Church life, from parishes to organizations to ordained and professed religious, was people twenty-five to forty-five years old. On most levels of the church today, the leadership is still held by that same group – not the same age group, but the same people now twenty or thirty years older."[7]

If *Emerging Models* were to address pastoral effectiveness of the Church in the coming decades, it needed to take a hard look at the lack of young adults in both the pews and in Church leadership. In order to do this, phase one of the project (2003-2009) was designed to look at young adults' pathways *into* ministry; the second phase (2009 - 2012) focuses on young adults' experiences *within* ministry.

The first phase involved research by the late Dr. Dean Hoge of Catholic University of America and Dr. Marti Jewell, former director of the *Emerging Models* project, that culminated in the publication, *The Next Generation of Pastoral Leaders: What the Church Needs to Know* (Loyola Press, 2010). Their research found that, while the numbers of young adults in their 20s and 30s entering seminary, religious formation, or graduate ministry programs were low, a significant percentage of them with active faith lives had at one point seriously considered becoming a priest, religious, or lay ecclesial minister. However, that early interest eventually subsided due to either a lack of invitation to leadership or the attractiveness of other career options. For this reason, Hoge and Jewell suggested that more overt invitation strategies, greater empowerment of the laity, and an increase in the number of young adult ministry opportunities in parishes and dioceses could do much to improve the number of young adults in church leadership.

As this data was discussed by young professional church ministers, especially at the 2008 National Ministry Summit in Orlando, Florida, they characterized their situation in church ministry not only in terms of the need for better recruitment but also the need for a professionally and ministerially fulfilling work environment. This reaction laid the groundwork for the second phase of the project, which would focus on the reality and retention of young adults currently engaged in church leadership. Another way of looking at these two phases of the project would be to say that Phase One helped to "open the front door" for young adults interested in pastoral leadership and Phase Two helped to "close the back door" by helping them stay professionally and ministerially fulfilled.

To accomplish this second aspect of the Emerging Models project, a national symposium was held at the Washington Theological Union in Washington, D.C. November 2010. This event gathered 40 lay young adult men and women from across the United States working in various professional ministry roles and from a variety of Catholic contexts, including parish, diocesan, and educational institutions.

The goals of the symposium were to:

- Identify and understand the pathways into pastoral leadership that young adults might take in today's world;

- Hear and discuss the reality and the needs of young adults currently engaged in pastoral leadership in the Church;

- Consider the development of support systems and retention strategies that address the needs of young adults working for the Church.

To achieve these goals, the symposium participants reviewed the work of the first phase of the project, comparing the data from *The Next Generation of Pastoral Leaders* with their own experiences. They also received additional information on the culture and faith development of their age cohort, on vocations, and on intergenerational workplace strategies. Through dialogue, theological reflection, and personal assessment, the participants generated helpful information and recommendations about their role as young ecclesial ministers.

What did we learn?

As noted in the introduction, seven core insights emerged from the symposium and were further supported by the research data that emerged throughout the initiative. Each of these seven findings will be expanded upon here, supported by statements from the 2010 symposium attendees and endnotes with supporting data from the studies conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) in 2011 and 2012. As will be seen, the statements demonstrate a wide spectrum of opinions among the participants.

Finding 1

A hindrance to better intergenerational workplace collaboration often involves the very words that generations use to describe one another.

Much of the research about today's young adults has been filtered through the lenses of older generations. Indeed, the very name chosen for the *Emerging Models* initiative on young adults –*The Next Generation of Pastoral Leaders* – reflects the perspective of older church workers who wondered about who would succeed them. The title seems to imply that young adults are not yet church leaders but will become so at some future point in time. But the reality is that they are already contributing and leading. The need is for this fact to be recognized.

The consistent use of "us-and-them" terminology runs the risk of erecting generational barriers that can impede the benefits derived from the creative interplay of differing perspectives. [8]

Participants' Comments

"There is a need for translating work and cultural experiences of young adults today within the Church itself.   The opportunity for frequent misunderstandings limits the ability to foster the role of young adults serving the Church."

"All adults in the Church – the staff leaders and the other adults in the faith community – should respect the questions/concerns of young adults and meet them 'where they are'…' Engage the intellect of these younger adults and respect their knowledge, education, and faith…even when it involves doubts or questions."

"Bringing generations together and making all feel appreciated, gifted, and welcome is greatly needed to help us all be open to learn from one another."

"Young adults in ministry often experience resistance to their perspectives and have no structured way of including their voices in parish and local church decision-making. Steps should be taken to ensure that structures of leadership in parishes and faith communities include substantial input of young adults in ministry."

"Because we are a multi-generational Church, we need to engage in intentional, horizontal, multi-generational dialogue to draw on the gifts and experiences of each generation. We need to increase this kind of communication… if we are to survive."

Finding 2

There are significant differences between today's young adults and those of prior generations, especially in terms of workplace styles, monetary expectations, and technology use.

Workplaces have undergone dramatic changes in recent years, and so have workers.

Indeed, the symposium participants emphasized that, whether in a secular or sacred workplace, generations differ in their attitudes toward inter-office relationships, collaboration, work expectations, human resource policies, and the use of technology.

When financial expectations, work styles, and technological abilities of younger workers rub against strongly held contrarian views of older workers, tensions can rise and ministries can suffer. For this reason, church leaders should make a concerted effort to understand and allay such threats to ministerial effectiveness through the use of enhanced staff communication and consensus-building strategies. [9]

Participants' Comments

"We need sound human resource policies, just and ethical hiring processes, realistic compensation... and up-to-date technology for easy access to information about ministry."

"Adequate attention must be given to human resource needs, based on the changing face and changing needs of ministry. This includes careful attention to financial-development needs and providing for those needs. A particular issue that has arisen with professionalization in ministry is the lack of opportunity for ministerial career advancement and the inability to make better use of transferable skills to other ministries."

"We look at employment as a justice issue. We cannot keep functioning with [and allowing] the same cycle of unjust wages."

"The Church should highlight faith statements, faith actions, and the gifts of individuals from each generation so that we can foster relationship and dialogue."

"Sometimes the secular world does a better job of focusing on how work is meaningful than the ministry world. The secular world can be innovative, allowing employees to make changes and be successful, which often feels more 'meaningful' than just getting by in church work".

Finding 3

Pathways to ministry have changed, and today's young adults respond to God's call in new and different ways.

As the symposium participants reflected on their vocational call and journey to ministry, they discovered that their respective pathways were quite diverse, especially when compared to those of older generations. For example, being a parishioner at a parish was the most frequent and direct way of becoming a minister there. But for the symposium attendees, that was less the case.

Many of them had responded to a vocational call by first receiving a degree in theology or pastoral studies before acquiring their first ministry job.

Some participants described how they felt being taken less seriously or treated with disrespect simply because they had come from outside the parish as compared to other members of their staff, often from older generations, who had been longtime parishioners and volunteers. [10]

Participants' Comments

"The understanding of the term 'vocation' must be updated and must be presented with a fresh perspective that incorporates a contemporary theology of "call" (and its application to lay ministry in general), so young adult leaders in ministry can present these perspectives to other potential young adult leaders."

"There needs to be a better appreciation of the theology of baptism as a starting place for both the call to ministry and the understanding of "accountability" in ministry and the Christian life (see Romans 8 and 1st Corinthians 11 and 15)… We need to improve the comprehensive and theological understanding of vocation and calling to help   these young adults who are discerning"

"The faith community should be seeking us out instead of waiting for young adults to step up".

"When young adults enter the workforce, they want and need to be listened to."

"Young adults see jobs as more than just "work" but as a time of contribution to society. Their place of employment is a place to connect with friends and engage in activities, especially when moving to a place where they don't know anyone yet."

Finding 4

There are two distinct generations that make up today's young adult population: "Generation Xers" and "Millennials." While each of these enjoys a rich cultural mix, this diversity is not similarly reflected in the Catholic workplace.

Rich diversity exists within today's young adult population. According to sociologists, those in their 20s and 30s today actually constitute two distinct demographic populations, which they commonly classify as "Generation Xers" (born between 1963 and 1980) and "Millennials" (born between 1980 and 1995). Although separated by relatively few years, these two cohorts often display very different approaches to life, faith, and the workplace due to the rapidly shifting cultural differences that impacted their formative years.

In addition, the Catholic population under 30 in the United States is highly Latino, but the composition of church workers, including Generation Xers, remains predominately Anglo.

There are, moreover, more single and childless young adults than ever before as they increasingly tend to postpone marriage and have children later in life. But here, again, parish staffs are populated by people who come from more traditional family situations. As young adults bring new forms of diversity into the church workplace, learning how to effectively manage and utilize them for the good of ministry will be both a challenge and an opportunity for church leaders. [11]

Participants Comments

"Young adults are vastly different. It is difficult to lump all young adults into any one category".

"It's good to distinguish which generation we're talking about because differences do exist, even within the categories of 'youth' and 'young adult.' "

"The term 'young adult' is painfully inaccurate. There is even a divide between some of us here. We need to stop using such a big brush, and throwing Gen Xers and Millennials together. I am still left wondering about the conflict between us all – and what is yet to come."

"Statistically ... the Church is changing demographically. More parishioners are Hispanic or of another ethnicity or race. It seems the Church will need to increase the diversity of staff to meet all needs as best as possible."

"Diversity training and language-learning opportunities are two examples of additional factors that should be identified in the national standards for various ecclesial ministries."

Finding 5

Today's young adult pastoral ministers seek community both in their workplace and with young adult church workers elsewhere. They also want the Church to seriously upgrade its outreach to their young adult peers.

The young adults who gathered for the 2010 symposium in Washington seized the opportunity to form a new "community" among themselves, especially through the use of social media. Indeed, when it comes to social media, young adults tend to blur the lines between their professional and personal lives. And since many of these younger ministers often work without the benefit of other colleagues their age, they rely on these tools during the workday to stay connected with friends and colleagues outside the office. Such behavior can clash with older generations' expectations and policies about the use of social media in the office.

Young adults emphasize the critical importance of faith networks with others their age to their own personal spirituality and ministerial well-being. With one foot in the "church culture" and another in the highly secularized culture of their peers, these young church workers feel pulled in opposite directions by relationships that mean a great deal to them. Studies have shown the importance to younger generations of peer networks.[12] When young ecclesial ministers experience their peers distancing themselves from religion, they may feel an uneasiness that can frustrate their ministry work. They further despair when they see churches consolidate or eliminate ministries to young adults. A vibrant Catholic young adult outreach is not only important to the future of the faith, but it is vital to the well-being and retention of its youngest pastoral ministers presently with us. [13]

Finding 6

Young adult pastoral ministers want to be mentored by elder church workers. But they also want a workplace where, in addition to wisdom being passed on, their ideas are welcomed.

The symposium participants felt that in some church circles there exists a misconception that as young adult ministers they desire to cast off the wisdom of the past and to be part of a church populated by people who think just like them. But they contended that the exact opposite is true. They said that while their frustrations may run high at times, especially when their ideas are ignored, they aren't ready to bolt for the door.

They long for mentors instead of taskmasters, and they look for dialogue instead of directives. Many of them said that while they have never had a mentor in their professional church work, they strongly desire to learn from the older generations before they are gone. [14]

Participants' Comments

"Solid mentoring will help us realize the dynamic movement of the Spirit – moving and changing throughout our lives and generations. Through training and mentoring, we can learn the gifts of faith that different life-stages bring."

"The most important thing is to create and foster an environment of listening…. Where there are multiple generations, there needs to be dialogue, sharing, and mentoring. Listening, therefore, needs to go both ways."

"The struggle is that young adult ministers encounter a messy community and get disillusioned. With the tendencies of this generation to not commit, they take "flight." However, when young adults have someone to process things with and invite them deeper into it, they will stick with it because that encounter will authentically be with Jesus."

"We are a mixed bag. Like many of my peers, I can take some of the old, some of the new, and combine it with a bit of my own uniqueness."

"There should be a focused and sustained model of ongoing development among young adult pastoral ministers in dioceses, or other communities, for their personal, professional, and spiritual development. This should be built up by existing young adult ministers, at least initially."

Finding 7

Young adult pastoral ministers want to be valued and appreciated for their work and for their deep commitment to the Church. As one symposium participant put it, "their chips all in" when it comes to the ministry.

One of the symposium's more poignant discussions was about the participants' feelings of being under-used and under-valued by the Church to which they have given their lives.

They frequently see their advice go unheeded and their gifts and abilities untapped because of prejudice against their age, experience, or educational background. While their numbers may be smaller than those of previous generations, they are nonetheless making a major contribution to the Church's ministry in a wide variety of Catholic institutions. And unlike many of their peers who have disconnected from the Church, they remain passionate about their faith and deeply committed to a vocation of ministerial service.

They pleaded that they not be treated as those "not yet arrived" or "on the fringe," but rather as an equal adult partner whose "chips are all in." [15]

Participants' Comments

"We want to be taken seriously because we feel we have important things to offer the Church, but we don't feel like we're being heard. We are craving the respect we feel we deserve."

"As young adults, we would like to know that the Church invests in us…. Let us know we can have a future in the leadership of the Church. We want to be a part of that now."

"Young adults sense a calling from God to their ministry. Today's young adult pastoral ministers see their ministry as a profession… and not just a job…."

"Do you want a large community of young adults in your pews and in your workplaces? Then open a space to young adults. Believe they can be your accountants, your business managers, your nurses, your ministers, as well as other positions of leadership in the Church."

Part II: Research Data & Analysis

Young Adults as Lay Ecclesial Ministers in Catholic Parishes
A wide spectrum of young adults are serving as lay ecclesial ministers in parishes across United States. In fact, there are more young adults serving in Catholic parishes as lay ecclesial ministers than there are vowed religious sisters or brothers in parishes. Indeed, there are four times as many parish-based young adult lay ecclesial ministers as there are religious brothers in the United States.

There are also countless other young adults serving outside of parishes in Catholic schools and other institutions. Surely, this indicates just how significantly young adults are filling professional ministerial roles in the U.S. Catholic Church. These data and other important information about Catholic young adults surfaced in *The Changing Face U.S. Catholic Parishes,* a research report of the *Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership* project. The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) conducted the research in 2010 – 2011 on behalf of the *Emerging Models* project. In their 2012 study, *Perspectives from Parish Leaders: U.S. Parish Life and Ministry*, CARA also highlighted some specific issues related to and reactions of young adults in lay ecclesial ministry, some of which will be shown here.

> **"The total number of lay ecclesial ministers serving in parishes is estimated to be about 38,000, with only 6,800 believed to be forty years of age or younger."**

Age of Parish Lay Ecclesial Ministers
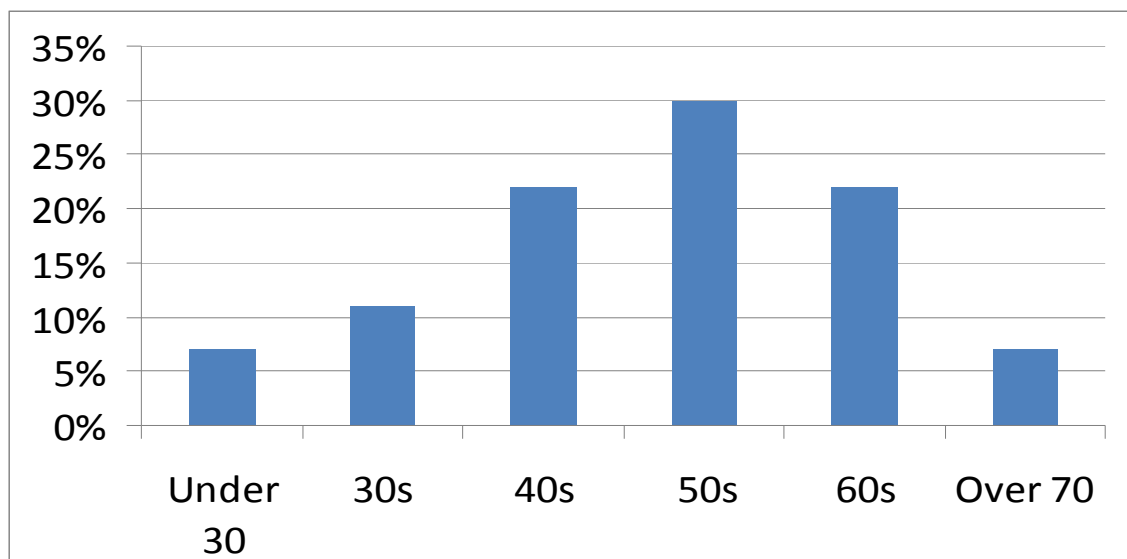
Age
According to the research, the total number of lay ecclesial ministers serving in parishes is estimated to be about 38,000, with only 6,800 believed to be forty years of age or younger (18%). Not surprising, about a third of young adult ministers serve in youth ministry (37%). Others serve in catechetical (24%) or liturgical/music ministries (18%), with the rest serving in other

Regional Distribution of LEMs Under Age 40

roles, such as pastoral associate (7%). Parish youth ministry has traditionally served as an entry level position for young adults who later move into other ministries or ministerial settings. [16]

It should be noted that in various studies the age of what constitutes a "young adult" has been a moving target, especially in defining the Millennial Generation. Some studies, such as *American Catholics Today* by William V. D'Antonio, James D. Davidson, Dean R. Hoge, and Mary L. Gautier (Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), give the Millennial age range as those born between 1979 and 1987. The Pew Research Center, in its 2010 study, *Millennials: Confident. Connected. Open to Change.*, state that this generation was "born after 1980." However, with CARA's recent research in *Perspectives from Parish Leaders* (2012), they define Millennials as those "born 1982 or later."

Because of this diversity, the data on this generation can vary by as much as three or four years from study to study. This may not seem significant but it could influence the responses of this generation and those in the Post-Vatican II group (also known as "Generation X" in other surveys).

Figure: Regional Distribution of LEMs Under Age 40 — West 18%, Northeast 19%, Midwest 43%, South 20%

Race and Ethnicity of LEMs Under Age 40

Figure: Race and Ethnicity of LEMs Under Age 40 — Hispanic or Latino(a) 12%, Black or African American 1%, Asian or Pacific Islander 4%, Non-Hispanic White 83%
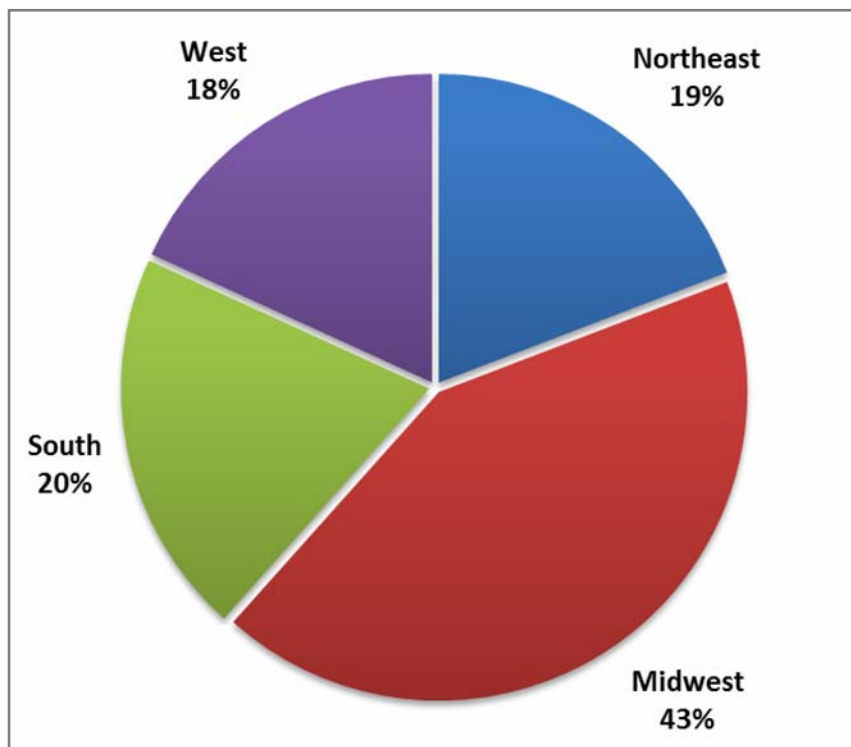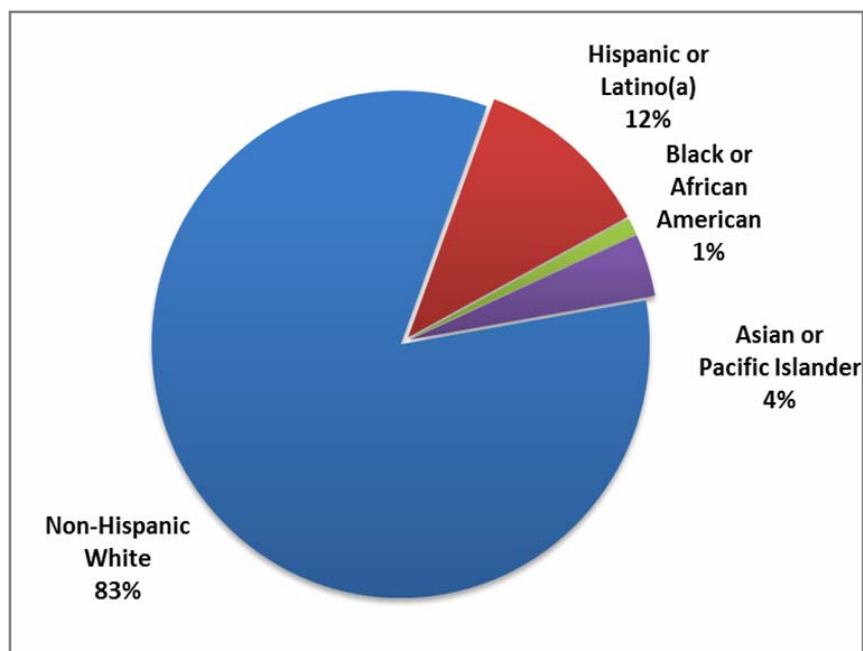
Geography

Geography also plays a role in whether Catholics experience young adult lay ecclesial ministers working in their parishes. While 18% of lay ecclesial ministers are under 40, they serve

in only 9% of U.S. parishes. They are more likely to serve in large parishes with 1,300 or more families and annual budgets of one million dollars or more. This means that almost half of parishes with young adult ministers have more than one of them on staff. As the adjacent graph shows, young adult lay ecclesial ministers are twice as likely to serve in the Midwest as in any other region of the country.

Race and Ethnicity
Race and ethnicity of young adult lay ecclesial ministers more closely reflect those of other lay ecclesial minister than they do the general Catholic population. Since the younger Catholic population tends to be more Hispanic than is older generations, it is noteworthy that only 12% of young adult parish lay ecclesial ministers are Hispanic. Overall, having ministers that reflect the Catholic population remains an important challenge for the Catholic Church in the United States.

Ministries and Pathways
When asked about their primary role in the parish (that is, more than sixty percent of their work), Millennials are primarily involved with sacramental preparation (23%), religious education and ministry with youth (18% and 15%, respectively), and young adult ministry (8%).[17] What are lacking in these figures, compared to the rest of the lay ecclesial leaders, are roles such as parish administration, budget and finances, liturgy and music, evangelization, and stewardship and development – all of which are among the highest ranked roles of the general population of parish ministers, most of whom are older.

This indicates that parishes expect young adults to work exclusively with those of their age and younger, leaving other, more 'adult' jobs, to the more experienced people on staff. The data may serve as evidence of the sentiment (expressed in Finding #1 in Part I) that adults in their 20s and early 30s do not feel treated as 'adults' in the parish or unable to perform the duties of other 'adult' roles.

Parish Leader History of Enrollment in a Ministry Formation Program by Generation
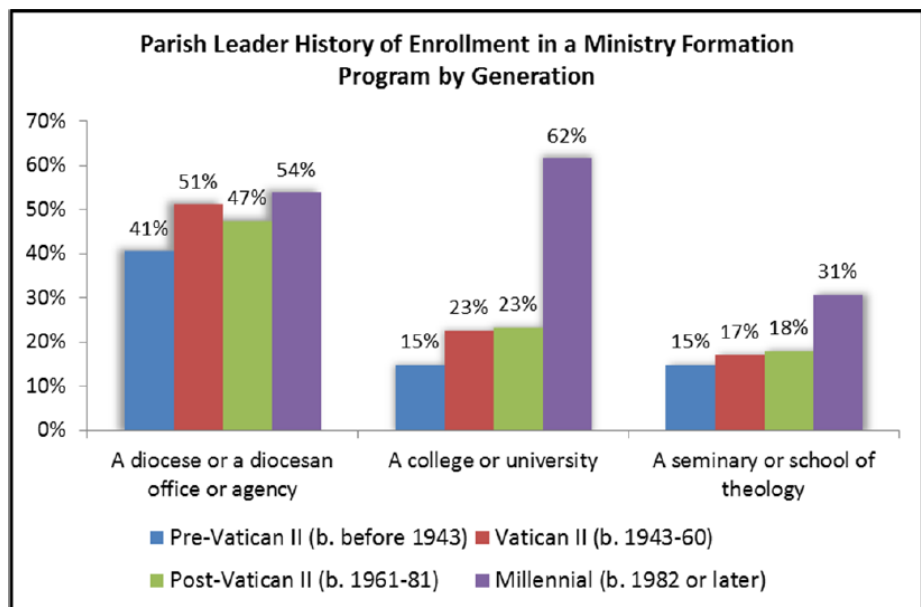
Yet, at the same time, these young adults are not ill-trained for the tasks ahead. In fact, Millennials come to the job more educated than any other generation. As the graph above indicates, 62% of Millennials have been enrolled in a college or university-level ministry formation program, while less than a quarter of all other generations have the same credentials.[18]

What they lack in life experience they certainly make up for in their training, whether in a seminary, college or university, or diocesan program. Compare this to the general pathway to ministry among older generations.

While volunteerism in the parish at which a lay ecclesial minister works seems to be the primary pathway into ministry for Pre-Vatican II and Vatican II parish ministers (72% and 71%, respectively, as the chart below indicates), this is not the case for the majority of young adults (only thirty-one percent for Millennials)[19]. Coupled with the information on educational formation, these figures point to a significant difference in the pathways into ministry across the genera-

Did you start ministry or service at this parish as a volunteer?
Percentage responding "Yes"
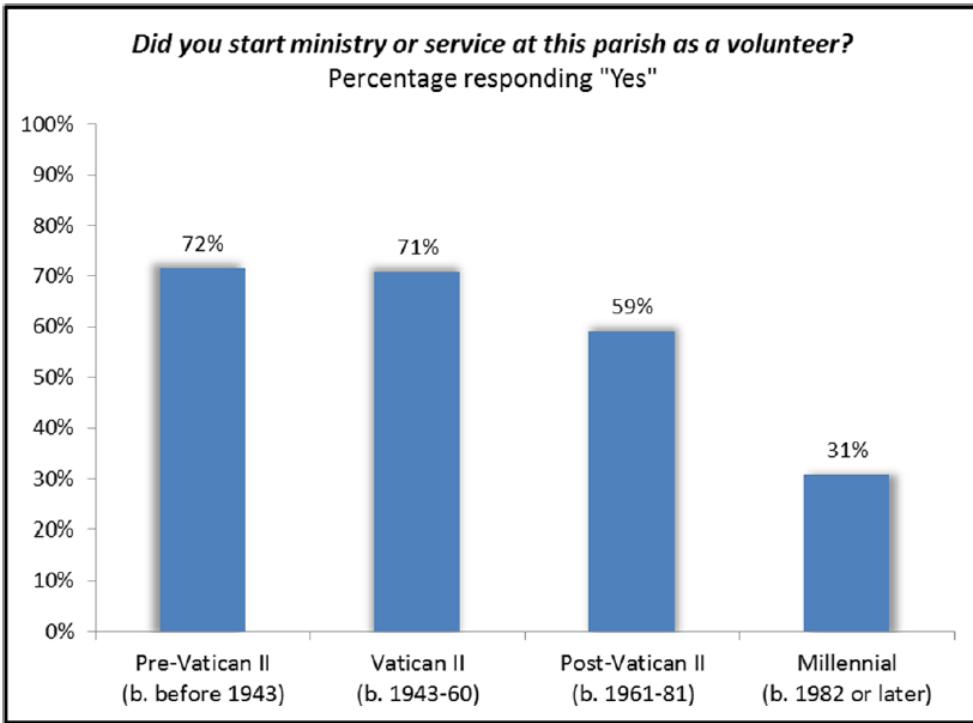
tional lines. It should also be noted that Post-Vatican II and Millennial generations had a strong desire to enter church ministry as a youth (65% and 92%, respectively), suggesting that the seeds were planted for ministry in the church at a much earlier age. [20]

Young adults, then, are more likely to enter service to the Church after a positive experience in youth or young adult ministry, with the completion of or enrollment in an educational training or degree program rather than through parish volunteerism (see Finding #3 in Part I). Perhaps the assignment of roles is one indicator of the inequality of treatment of young adults on staff compared to their elders on staff. The diversity of pathways not only causes some friction in the workplace, but also in the jobs that everyone is given.

Feeling Overwhelmed
One of the most striking responses in the 2012 CARA report was just how stretched and overworked young adults feel in their ministry in the Church. Up to 39% of Millennials feel very overworked, compared to just 8% of Pre-Vatican II church workers, which is quite a significant difference (see chart, next page). [21]

What is lacking, in their estimation, is time for friends and family, personal prayer and spiritual reflection, as well as their hobbies and special interests outside of the workplace. The more

young adults express frustration over being overwhelmed, the more likely burnout is to occur. If one is concerned with the exodus of young adults from Church employment, a major factor has to be their feeling of being overworked and underpaid, as only forty-four percent of all church workers feel satisfied with their wages.

I often feel overworked in my parish ministry or service
Percentage agreeing "Very much"

Generation	Percentage
Pre-Vatican II (b. before 1943)	8%
Vatican II (b. 1943-60)	16%
Post-Vatican II (b. 1961-81)	22%
Millennial (b. 1982 or later)	39%
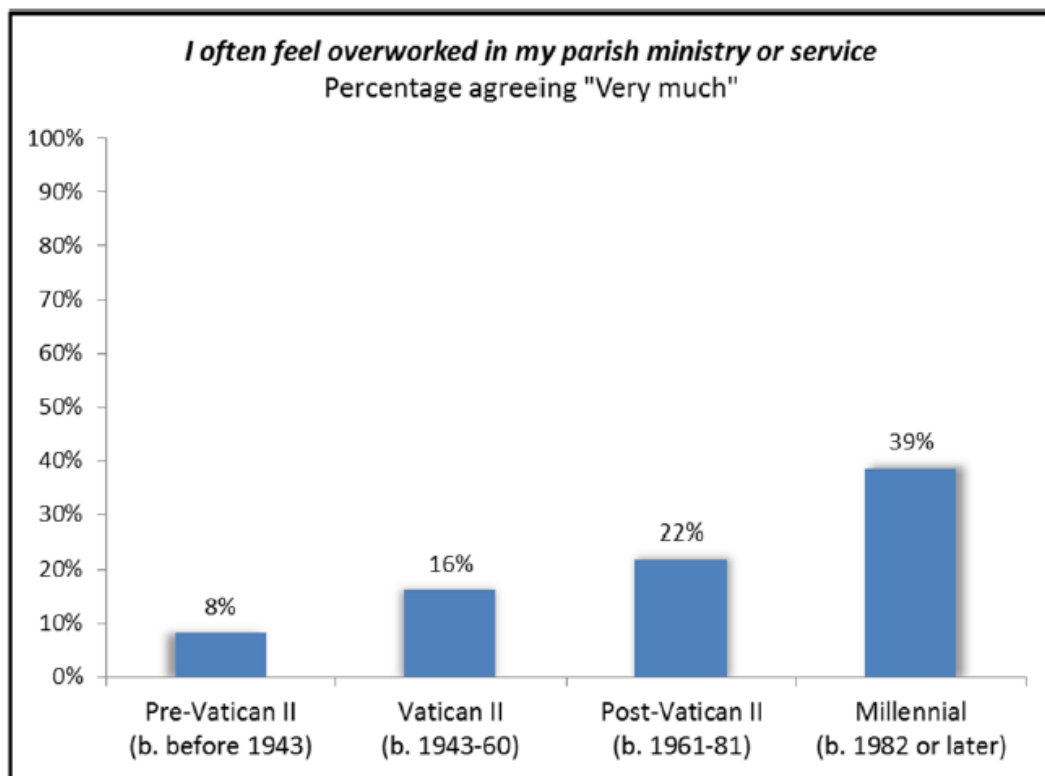
Young Adult Perspectives on Parish Life

On the whole, most church workers are generally satisfied with the parish for which they work. By contrast, however, young adults only give their parishes a fifteen 15% "excellent" rating compared with around 50% for older ministers. [22] This seems to indicate their general satisfaction with the job, but not willing to give their employer a complete pass on every-

	Your overall satisfaction with the parish		
	"Good" or "Excellent" combined	"Excellent" only	"Poor" or "Fair" combined
Gender			
Male	91%	49%	9%
Female	92	51	8
Generation			
Pre-Vatican II (b. before 1943)	90	46	10
Vatican II (b. 1943-60)	91	50	9
Post-Vatican II (b. 1961-81)	91	57	9
Millennial (b. 1982 or later)	100	15	0
Volunteer/Paid			
Not paid	91	54	9
Paid	92	46	8
Ecclesial Status			
Diocesan priest	94	47	6
Religious priest	100	67	0
Permanent deacon	95	52	5
Religious sister	100	53	0
Religious brother	100	50	0
Lay woman	91	51	9
Lay man	89	48	11

thing. Reactions like these are further echoed in subsequent, more specific questions where young adults were generally more negative on the assessment of their church.

Millennials, by far, have a much more negative view of their parish's hospitality and sense of welcome: 54% "poor or fair" versus 16% "poor or fair" over all generations. [23] This, coupled with their low opinion of their church's evangelization efforts (23% of Millennials consider their parish's programs as "excellent),[24] is a clear sign of what they perceive as major weaknesses in the Church's mission. Even more stunning is the young adult assessment of the parish's welcoming ministries. 46% of Millennials, compared to 15% of the overall respondents, said that there was little or no effort put forth in welcoming new parishioners. [25]

Perhaps these evaluation scores reflect the degree to which young adult church workers and their peers have or have not been the recent recipients of welcoming. In either case, their relative newness to the parish may equip them to more accurately assess this particular aspect of parish life than older coworkers.

Still, the significant discrepancy between the generations' assessment may also reflect differences in language usage and cultural dispositions between generations. For example, those who have been charged with welcoming or evangelizing may be using tactics that, while suitable to them, simply do not work on a postmodern population. Interestingly, though, according to the study, the work of evangelization does not seem to fall to young adults, and therefore, their evaluation of others' evangelizing work may also stem from a frustration that others (usually their older colleagues) are doing a job which they feel more qualified to do.

Related are two questions on the parish's outreach to young adults and to inactive Catholics – which both resulted in very low marks among Millennials. Only 15% of Millennials feel their church is doing a significant job of ministering to their peers while an overwhelming majority of 60% say their church

Evaluate parish success: Ministering to young adults			
	"Somewhat" or "Very Much" combined	"Very Much" only	"A little" or "Not at all" combined
All Respondents	56%	30%	44%
Generation			
Pre-Vatican II (b. before 1943)	65	44	35
Vatican II (b. 1943-60)	53	25	47
Post-Vatican II (b. 1961-81)	58	31	42
Millennial (b. 1982 or later)	40	15	60

Evaluate parish success: Outreach to inactive Catholics			
	"Somewhat" or "Very Much" combined	"Very Much" only	"A little" or "Not at all" combined
All Respondents	43%	11%	57%
Generation			
Pre-Vatican II (b. before 1943)	46	14	54
Vatican II (b. 1943-60)	42	11	58
Post-Vatican II (b. 1961-81)	43	11	57
Millennial (b. 1982 or later)	25	0	75

is doing "little to nothing." What makes these numbers even more frightening is that upwards of 44% percent of Pre-Vatican II Catholics, many of whom are in a position to allocate the funds and resources to this type of ministry, feel that the church is doing quite a bit for the young adults. [26] For those in their 20s and 30s to say that their own parish is not addressing the needs of their own demographic, while older generations feel perfectly fine with the reality, is certainly a major concern, one echoed in Finding #5 in Part 1.

Regarding inactive Catholics, a population segment that often includes a number of people in their 20s and 30s, most church leaders view their parish's outreach efforts as poor: only 11% of all respondents said that their church did a lot for this group. But what is most striking is that not a single Millennial young adult felt their church was very successful in this work and 75% gave their parish little to no credit for developing such a ministry. [27]

Taken together, these are not good evaluations of a Church whose very existence is supposed to be wrapped up in the work of evangelization (as Pope Benedict XVI said in his recent address to the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization, "The Church exists to evangelize" [28] Young lay ecclesial ministers, who still have one foot in the Church and another foot in the world, are those whose lived experience testifies to how well the Church is performing at its evangelizing tasks. If these men and women report that our work in these areas is poor, it is a concern not just for them but for the whole Catholic Church.

Educational Assessment
One very interesting observation in the data was the Millennials' assessment of "efforts to educate parishioners in the faith." Only 38% responded affirmatively that their parish educates successfully, compared to the significantly higher evaluations from Pre-Vatican II and Post-Vatican II church workers (50% and 53%, respectively). [29]

What makes this data fascinating, especially since Millennials, generally, are more negative in their assessment of parish ministries, is that "Millennial Generation parish leaders are especially likely to be involved… in sacramental preparation…religious education for youth…youth ministry…and young adult ministry." [30] So their negative evaluation is actually a critique of their own work. One has to wonder, then, why they have given such low marks to an area of parish life in which they are so invested. Or are the Millennials evaluating the parish's previous success (or lack thereof) in this area, an issue that they themselves are hoping to rectify? There is simply not enough data to conclude one way or another, but its complexity is certainly open to debate and, most especially, further observation and analysis.

Technology and Collaboration
It is well known that young adults under 40 are the most attuned generation to the digital landscape in which we now live. It almost goes without saying then that, compared to other generations, Millennials are providing most of the content to their church's website (77%), that they are using their mobile devices in their ministry (46%), and that they are networking with colleagues and parishioners with tools like Facebook (39%) in their service to the parish. [31]

Despite their own involvement integrating technology into ministry, they still rate their parish's engagement with media and technology fairly low (only 31% say their church uses these tools with any degree of success). Many seem to feel that there is much work that still needs to be done in this area, including the encouragement of older generations to make better use of the digital tools now available to them. [32]

If yes, do you provide any content for the website for this parish?
Those responding "Yes" by generation

	Pre-Vatican II (b. before 1943)	Vatican II (b. 1943-60)	Post-Vatican II (b. 1961-81)	Millennial (b. 1982 or later)
	30%	51%	60%	77%
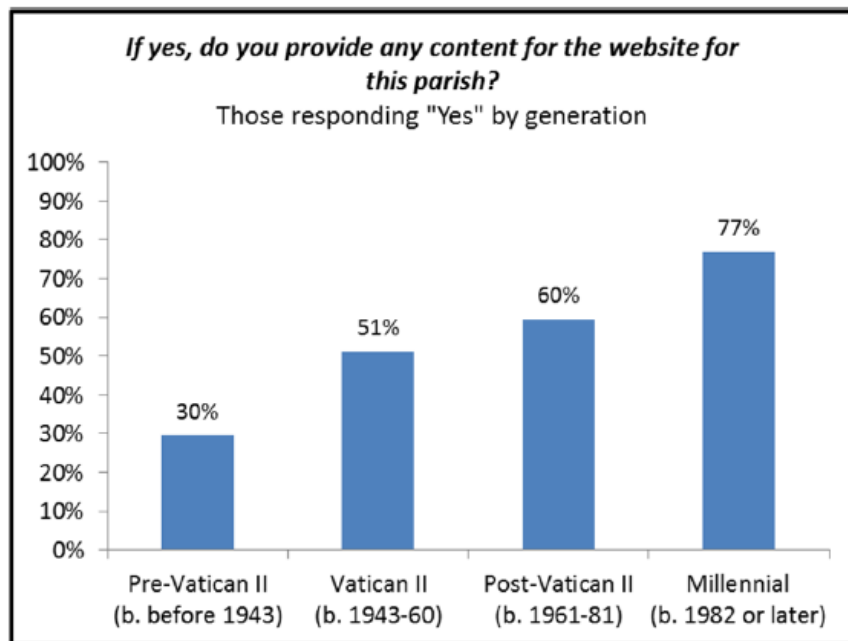
Another trait of Millennials, in some respects related to their comfort with social networking, is their ability to collaborate and work in group settings. So when asked about how well their parish collaborated with other Catholic communities in the local area, up to 61% gave their church very low marks. This seems to correspond to the trend among young adults that prefer less parochialism and a more global mindset in their personal and professional outlook. Collaboration among Catholic parishes, then, is seen as something of great importance to the Church as many young lay ecclesial ministers take seriously the "universal" meaning of the word "catholic." However, there does seem to be a striking difference of opinion on this question across the generational lines: only 28% of those in the Pre-Vatican II generation felt that collaboration was poor among Catholic parishes. [33] Perhaps this disagreement stems from the various interpretations of "collaboration." Young adults might understand the meaning of this word quite differently than their elders, which also means that the nature of inter-parish collaboration may change over time as Millennials take on more positions of leadership within the Catholic Church.

Conclusion

When looking at the overall data on young adult lay ecclesial ministers, the picture is definitely mixed. On a positive note, there are more young adults under 40 serving in our parishes than previously realized (though it is mostly those in Generation X). However, the number of church leaders under 30 is still quite low, and increasingly, these younger young adults can be quite negative towards the reality of parish life and the impact of its mission.

Even with the data where young adults felt their parish was "somewhat" successful in a certain area, caution should be used in how young adults define the word "somewhat." To some, this term can mean something much more negative than older generations might read into it. For them, to be "somewhat" successful at a ministry isn't a complement. Instead, it can be a fairly unflattering assessment. A number of Millennials probably want to give the Church the benefit of

the doubt by not dismissing it outright (indicated by "little" or "not at all"), but they aren't willing to give the Church a pass altogether.   Like any population, a common understanding of the word "somewhat" is the same of all respondents, but it is an aspect of this study that we should take into consideration when reading the data and these terms.

Why do we see such a negative reaction to various aspects of parish life among Millennials? Quite possibly, it is result of their not feeling included in the decisions impacting various ministries, or that their ideas are often neither sought nor, when offered, considered. Another reason may be that, through social media and other experiences, young adult church workers are more connected to inactive or fallen away Catholics, and see the church reflected in their eyes. They may hear the distrust, skepticism, or frustration with the Church from friends and family, and realize that their very workplace is not meeting the needs of those closest to them. These experiences may subconsciously affect their worldview and place in the Church. We cannot say for certain why young adults expressed such negativity throughout the CARA study, but it is there. Parishes must be aware of their perspectives just as much as those of older generations.

In addition, there are issues remaining that concern the parishes in which young adults are able to serve (mostly larger Midwestern parishes with adequate resources).   There must be some way to address the fact that so *few* parishes (as the chart to the right shows [34]), especially smaller ones across the country, are hiring lay ecclesial ministers under 40 or even 30 years of age.
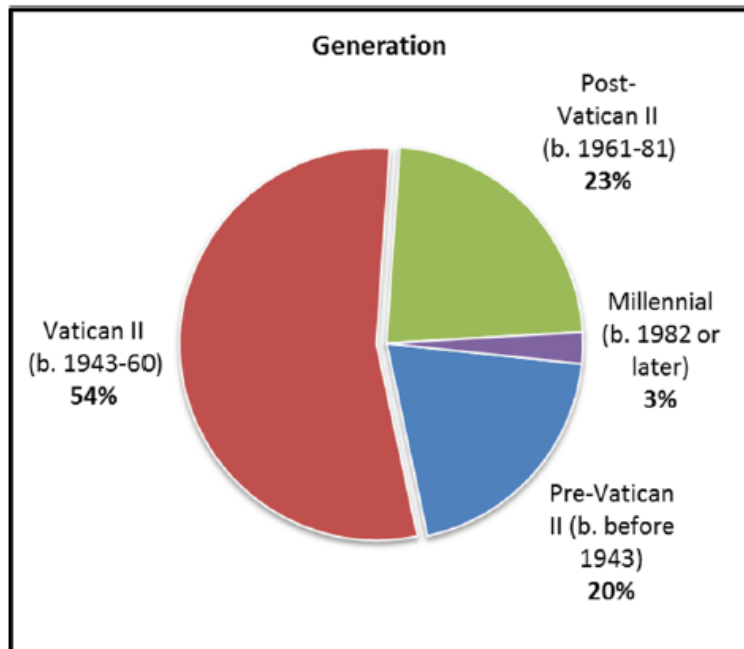
There is also a major concern with overworking and underpaying the young adults who have been given a career in church ministry, as well as not supporting them personally or professionally in their work. While stress and overworking are generally higher among young adults, should the Catholic Church, an institution that prides itself on promoting human dignity, be like other secular workplaces and deprive their young ecclesial ministers of adequate time for family, friendships, Sabbath rest, and personal prayer? Again, this is something that must be addressed soon, lest the Church face even greater burnout rates among its youngest leaders.

Welcoming and embracing all young adults, from inactive Catholics to the very men and women who stand before us on our parish and diocesan staffs, are important not only to the health and vibrancy of lay ecclesial ministry - but also to our mission as a Church in a postmodern world.

Part III: Symposium Participant Reflections

Four participants of the Next Generation Symposium, held in November 2010 at Washington Theological Union in Washington, D.C., were asked to write an observation of the experiences they had with their peers, adding in their own personal reflections where appropriate. Each of these men and women are young lay ecclesial ministers, both Generation Xers and Millennials, from diverse ministries and geographical locations around the United States.

Preparing for the Next Generation of Ministry Leaders – Julianne Dolon Stanz

Julianne Donlon Stanz is Director of Adult Faith Formation for the Diocese of Green Bay in Wisconsin, has served in leadership roles for NCYAMA and NCCL, and serves as a consultant to the USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis and an adjunct faculty member of Silver Lake College of the Holy Family.

Emerging Adults in the Workplace – Margaret Vogel

Margaret Vogel worked as Youth and Young Adult Ministry Coordinator for the Diocese of Cleveland at the time of the symposium. She is currently active in creating more accessible religious systems and engaging faith communities for young adults, researching the gap between disaffected Catholics and the Church.

The Catholic Church and the Generation X Minister – Matthew Schwartz

Matthew Schwartz teaches ecclesiology and Scripture at Boylan Central Catholic High School in Rockford, Illinois. At the time of the symposium, he was the Director of Religious Education for the Diocese of Rockford. He is also an adjunct faculty member in the Institute of Pastoral Studies at Loyola University Chicago.

Emerging Adults and Their Place in Church Ministry – Craig Gould

Craig Gould has worked as the Coordinator of Youth Ministries at St. Mary Catholic Church in Alexandria, Minnesota, and at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota.

Editors Note. The views presented in the following papers are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership Project.

Preparing for the Next Generation of Ministry Leaders
Julianne Donlon Stanz

Summary of issues raised:

At the *Next Generation of Pastoral Leadership Symposium,* the following issues were raised by the participants:

1. Leadership structures within the Church
2. The parish culture
3. Formation programs mentoring and support for young adults
4. Strategies for young programming
5. Technology
6. Compensation

These six issues are developed below in terms of A) their challenge, and B) their opportunities.

1. Leadership Structures within the Church.

A) The Challenge:

While the Catholic Church officially articulates a strong desire to reach out to and include young adults in the life of the Church (See *Sons and Daughters of the Light,* United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C. 2010), the reality is quite different for those who attended the *Next Generation of Pastoral Leadership Symposium.* Their experience is that diocesan and parish leaders are often not receptive to young adults having leadership positions within the Church.

As Marc DelMonico stated, *"Young adult ministers often experience resistance to their perspectives, and there are no structured ways of including their voices in parish and wider Church decision-making."* The sentiment that current leadership structures within the Church are unsatisfactory and must be reevaluated for the 21st century was echoed by many of the young adults present. The general consensus is that we have a 20th century Church unable to compete with a 21st century world in terms of reaching out to, employing, and utilizing the gifts of young adults. It is clear that young adults feel that the leadership of the Church does not understand, value, or prioritize young adults within the life of the Church. According to participants, the Church's stated desire for having young adult ministers is not adequately reflected in its hiring practices, formational efforts, or programming for diocesan and parish leadership.

The old adage that the Church works not in years but in "eons" is a highly troubling one for young adults whose culture experiences change as a constant. *"Because the fullness of our Church is an eschatological hope and not a concrete daily reality, leaders of the Church cannot assume that young adults will be patient or persevere in waiting for necessary change. Young adult leaders may*

be "all in," but without a reciprocal commitment they will find other avenues to serve the Kingdom of God outside the Roman Rite. More transparent leadership can help young adults feel engaged in the process of ecclesial pilgrimage," stated Margaret Vogel.

Also problematic, according to participants, is the issue of diversity; not only ethnically and culturally, but also in the unbalanced ratio of females to males in Church leadership. The U.S. Catholic population is becoming more diverse, yet this diversity is not reflected within the ranks of Church leaders. In both dioceses and parishes, those in positions of leadership tend to be Caucasian and English-speaking. Leadership diversity needs to be systematically considered across all ministries, and, in particular, in the recruitment of young adult ministers. While men tend to hold upper management positions in dioceses and parishes, women comprise 80% of ecclesial ministers and are present in large numbers as volunteers, teachers, catechists and pastoral staff. In this regard, cautioned Megan McDonald, *"Large numbers of women working in the Church can lead to an over-feminization which not only deters young male involvement but also makes programming more 'feminine' and monolithic."*

B) The Opportunity:

The symposium attendees noted that because young adults are increasingly absent from the life of the Church, invitational efforts must be strengthened so that they are more intentional, diverse, broad-based, and they effectively draw people into the heart of the Church. And because young adults are generally not well represented in Church leadership, steps should be taken to ensure that there is substantial input from them in developing and implementing parish and other faith community ministry.

The problematic trend of reducing national, diocesan, and parish budgets and staff in young adult ministry and its outreach needs to be reversed**.** It is difficult to encourage young adults to consider ministry as a vocation or profession when resources for their roles are not adequately allocated. Ministry budgets are not just a statement of finances but, as many participants noted, "a theological issue and one of social justice." The current trend to reduce budgets, staff, and resources risks having young adults not investing in a Church that they see not investing in them. This pertains not only to finances but also to the advocacy for young adult ministry as a serious and legitimate ministry within the Church.

Because Church vitality is frequently connected with male presence, there is a strong need to target and recruit young adult men to be active in the Church and a major part of its leadership. This can be done by utilizing the action/mission-based gifts that traditionally draw in young men. Moreover, active encouragement and recruitment of young adult male leaders from diverse backgrounds and cultures should be a priority. This will result not only in providing different voices and perspectives in parish life and ministry but also help attract more young men and youth to the Church. The hope is that an expanded diversity will be evident not just in upper level management but also within the broader spectrum of diocesan and parish-based ministries where

there are far more women than men. This will invigorate the community by building fellowship for the young women who are already in attendance and keep youth connected as they form their Catholic identity with a strong male presence of faith.

The face of the Catholic Church in the United States has changed from a largely homogenous, Caucasian, English-speaking one to a multicultural Church where its diversity is, regrettably, not often acted upon. The earlier-noted USCCB document, *Sons and Daughters of the Light*, reminds us that young adults *come from diverse cultural, ethnic, educational, vocational, social, political, and spiritual realities. This diversity is reflected in the large number of people from various nations coming to this country whose median age is in the early to mid-twenties.* For this reason, seeking and training multicultural leaders is imperative in order to truly and completely witness to the Body of Christ.

Cross-generational training within dioceses and parishes must also be a priority. Society and the workforce are constantly evolving, and multiple generations work side by side within this changing context. Given that these generations have varying perspectives and approaches to their work, it is important that the focus needs to be less on their differences and more on there commonalities. Stephanie Alsides suggested that, *"to discourage young adults from feeling unappreciated and not listened to, training and open communication within the workplace would help everyone embrace and learn to accept ideas from all ages."*

2. Parish Culture

A) The Challenge:

The parish is the context in which young adult ministry is generally conducted. Yet parishes tend to remain isolated from one another, and with limited budgets and staff they struggle to minister to young adults . The majority of those who participated in the symposium often spoke of their parish experiences in terms that were less than complimentary. They identified the following issues as being particularly problematic:

- Poor hospitality and fellowship.
- A limited range of opportunities and outreach offered to young adults.
- Poor receptivity on the part of parish staff and parishioners toward young adults and small children.
- Bland, mundane liturgies.

The welcoming of and hospitality towards young adults tends to be sporadic and disconnected. Even in parishes where the pastor demonstrates a strong commitment to young adults, parishioners may remain suspicious and even hostile to young adults who are on the parish leadership team or who participate actively in the parish.

The lack of opportunities for young adults to dialogue and converse with other young adults at

the parish was identified by many as a serious obstacle to building strong young adult ministry programs and welcoming young adult ministers into the Church. The lack of mentoring in the faith was a common theme among all the participants. So was the absence of role models who are well educated in the faith and passionate witnesses for the Kingdom of God. As Charles Gardner noted, *"if people hear cream being preached but only skim milk being lived out, they will become disenchanted with the faith; therefore we need to provide positive role models that bear witness to the life changing aspects of the faith. These witnesses will be attractive to youth and young adults and inspire them to inquire more into the faith. I learned this directly from a man who works in my parish and is a living witness to the Gospel and who inspires me."*

There are few intentional mentoring opportunities for young adults when they first assume employment in the Church. An ongoing challenge identified by many participants was the lack of welcome they received from the parish leadership team. Collaboration between the parish staff was identified by several participants as being negligible, and in some cases, "dysfunctional." As Annette Driscoll observed*, "it sounds as if we all struggle with co-workers and dysfunctional behaviors. If we want more young adults to join the workplace at a parish or archdiocesan level, there needs to be a movement for healthy and spiritual/prayerful working experiences."*

Also mentioned were problems stemming from differing levels of professionalism among parish staff. A common theme among participants was about unqualified parish staff that had "fallen into" their positions. They were sometimes hostile toward young adults who had chosen ministry out of a sense of vocation and who tended to be better educated and more highly qualified for ministry than they were.

By contrast, campus ministry programs were often identified as being dynamic centers of young adult ministry. Participants were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences on campus. The reasons for this included:

- Strong programming and outreach.
- Relevant and dynamic liturgies.
- A positive and open attitude on the part of those in leadership.
- Intentional welcoming and hospitality.

It is clear that the parish and the campus ministry programs have much to offer each other; but too often, they remain isolated and distant.

B) The Opportunity:

A parish where all ages are welcomed and appreciated creates an atmosphere of trust and openness among parishioners. Intergenerational activities emphasize the unique gifts of each life stage and highlight the Spirit's dynamic movement in shaping lives through each generation. Lifelong formation is the key according to Charles Gardner *"because the lack of young adults in-*

volved in Church participation, ministry, and leadership, is a symptomatic problem of lack of per-
sonal ownership of the faith from a young age. We need to better include children in ministry posi-
tions (such as Mass servers/lectors) as well as better education/catechesis. When children feel a
sense of belonging in a parish community, understanding the importance of Eucharistic prayer as
the center of the community, and see how the Eucharist can change lives, there will be better par-
ticipation in the Church as they mature."

An "attitude of gratitude" from the parish towards those working in ministry is essential if young adult ministers are to be meaningfully invested in their lay leadership.

Expectations for all those involved in parish ministry need to be clarified. Because young adults are often considered lacking in experience, they tend to be treated with condescension by staff members who may be threatened by their gifts, education and energy. Openness to change and new ways of doing things is a necessary prerequisite to combating an attitude of, "we have always done it this way." Indeed, if parishes want good ministers, they should consider hiring young adults who, by virtue of their education, professional skills and more likely innovative perspectives, can transform its programs. Katherine Angulo astutely remarked that *"if you hire people that have expectations, the Church ministry is going to grow. If you only hire people to be "warm bodies" they are not going to develop new programs, find creative ways to complete their ministry, or be invested."* It is essential today that qualified ministers be hired at the parish level, and those without the necessary education must be given opportunities to grow in their level of understanding through effective coaching and mentoring.

Indeed, opportunities for spiritual companioning and mentoring should be an important feature of parish life. Young adults have the ability to engage their peers and provide a powerful witness to the faith. Because young adults often feel isolated in ministry, there is a need to create peer-to-peer mentoring and relationships between young adults and older/skilled adults. This can be achieved by identifying members within parish and diocesan communities that can mentor young adults, thus mitigating high turnover rates among younger parish ministers.

There needs to be a greater attempt to provide seamless transitions and connections between the youth program, the young adult and campus ministry programs, and back to the Church. If this is not achieved, young adults will continue to see the Body of Christ as being basically disconnected from their daily life.

3. Formation Programs

A) The Challenge:

For symposium participants, the topic of formation sparked intense conversation and generated the most ideas. Although the challenge of equipping young adults for parish ministry can appear daunting, those at the symposium offered many creative ways for helping parishes welcome

young adult ministers and young adults into the Church. In their view, formation programs in which generational differences are not addressed risk leaving young adult ministers feeling some separateness in their workplace. Since pastors and older parish staff do not share the same culture or vision as young adults, they may each find themselves speaking different languages to one other, especially when the "generation gap" is significant. Many participants added that because the leadership of the Church is largely unfamiliar with the strengths, challenges, diversity, and leadership potential of young adults, this knowledge gap can contribute to misunderstanding and miscommunication at the parish and diocesan levels.

Funding professional development opportunities continues to be a challenge. Young adults may not be attracted to positions in ministry due to the educational demands of diocesan and parish positions, which are not often balanced by just pay and benefits. Many young adult ministers expressed a desire for further professional formation; but with spiraling student loans for advanced degrees and no increase in financial support from the parish/diocese, they felt that it was futile to continue their education.

Of special concern to the participants is the need for pastors and lay ecclesial ministers to grasp fully the theological, philosophical, administrative, pastoral and spiritual nature of their vocations. A realistic and deeper look at vocation is urgently needed to help young adults understand its complications. Those in ministry often have unrealistic expectations of their work simply because they do not fully understand the meaning of vocation.

B) The Opportunity:

Clearly, for those ministering in young adult ministry, this is a time of unparalleled opportunity and possibility. However, because young adult ministers indicate that they often feel neglected, ignored and inconsequential, there needs to be relevant and effective formation programs to recruit, train, sustain, and encourage young adult ministers. *"Solid theological catechesis must be the foundation of lay ecclesial programs in order to dialogue with an educated Catholic population seeking honest and relevant questions about their faith"* noted one participant. Training in diversity, language, and conflict resolution were also mentioned as being important components of lay ecclesial formation programs.

Opportunities for ongoing professional development must be provided to help young adults deepen their faith and ministry. As Katherine Angulo states, *"As young adults, we like to know that the Church wants to invest in us. Take us to conferences; help us to grow in our credentials; let us know that we can have a future in leadership. We want to be a part of it. I am a Hispanic female with an MA in Pastoral Ministries, and I sometimes wonder how far I am going to be able to go in the Church because I am ready; and I want to be part of it, but is the Church ready for me?"* Because intellectual formation is so necessary, the Church needs to help and encourage young adults to connect with appropriate college and post-graduate degrees and necessary certifications for ministry. The Church also needs to help them find ways to pay for their education.

To stem the loss of young ministers from our Church we must provide them with apprenticeship and mentoring programs. According to one participant, mentoring young adults interested in and entering ministry is the key to a long and healthy career in ministry, . A noted characteristic of young adults is that they tend to become disillusioned and "flee" when they encounter problems. However, a mentor could help those so inclined to process such experiences and encourage them to dialogue with Chris about their struggles. The result would be increased support and encouragement for young adult ministers. This process would also affirm and utilize the wisdom of older ministers and thereby reduce tensions that might arise between the generations.

Young adult ministry peer support groups are an effective means of sharing practices, approaches, and nourishment in spirituality and professional life. Opportunities for new and experienced young adult ministers to interact, pray together, and uplift each other would increase awareness of young adult ministry and help alleviate the pressure of parish staff to be the major source of support for one another.

Young adults draw energy and innovation from one another, and peer networking would help to sustain and generate ideas, energy, and vitality. In order to combat unrealistic expectations of ministry, internships where young adults can "try out" ministry is important. This could be done on the diocesan and parish levels. Reaching out to campus ministry programs would provide a rich stream of interns for the parish. Lay ecclesial ministry fairs could be held on campus in order to encourage ministry as a viable career.

Vocation as a pathway to ministry needs to be explored more deeply in formation and mentoring programs for young adults. In the popular mind, vocation often refers to the priesthood and to religious life. One group at the symposium identified the Sacrament of Baptism as a good starting place for an understanding of vocation that is inclusive and affirming. Mark Moitza identified vocation stories as a *"building bridge for leadership."* A voice must be given to recognize, foster and encourage Catholics to examine the multiple "calls" of vocation and challenge the Church to find ways to support and mentor those calls. As Mark observed, *"this honoring of vocation calls (in faith, relationships and work) helps to translate among generations the multiple experiences of responding to God's call. It honors the Body of Christ and the many parts of that body called forth to be Christ in the world."*

The transitional nature of young adult ministry can be more effectively utilized through formation programs which recognize that ministry for young adults often takes place for a limited period of time and provide them with specialized skills.

As Margaret Vogel notes, *"Because many young adults in ministry are still mobile and not necessarily staying in one parish or service for a lifetime, they need to be trained in Church-[planting] or ministry-[planting] skills so that pastors can safely invest in them for a period of three to five years without losing the ministry when the young adult transitions to another place."*

4. Strategies for Young Adult Programming

A) The Challenge:

Young adult ministers are keenly aware that having a "young adult program" does not constitute young adult ministry. Many expressed frustration with parish social events and programs that were sporadic, poorly marketed, irrelevant and ill attended. Having a concerted parish vision that is intentional, deliberate and cognizant of the needs of young adults remains an ongoing issue. Often the key to implementing strong programming for young adults relies upon the support of the pastor, the pastoral team, and a receptive parish. The goal of young adult ministry is not to form clubs or groups of young adults that gather around common issues. Rather, the goal of young adult ministry is to integrate young adults into the life, mission, and work of the Catholic Church. And, in this regard, it would seem that our dioceses and parishes could use a "tune up."

"Thinking outside of the box" for young adult ministry can raise tensions within parish leadership. Creative, dynamic, and sometimes offbeat approaches are often not welcomed by conservative communities. Still, as previously noted, these potential problems can be effectively addressed through good formation and effective intervention programs.

Parish programs that do not take advantage of "key moments" of return such as baptisms, marriages, funerals, etc. are losing precious opportunities to minister to young adults. What is needed is a concerted effort on the part of the pastoral team and parish community to shift the ministry paradigm from one that is children-centered (with senior adult worship) to one that is young adult and adult-centered.

Marketing and promotion are huge issues for young adult ministers. A paltry budget does not afford resources for marketing, which is frustrating to young adults because they understand the importance and benefits of good marketing strategies. Parishes that rely primarily on the bulletin to promote their events are likely to find that young adults will remain unresponsive and detached from the parish. Effective marketing utilizing techniques from the corporate world such as "guerilla" marketing can be tremendously effective. Explaining these techniques to the pastor and parish staff is important so that all can be on board.

An additional concern to young ministers is a parish's reluctance to engage in the strategy of relationship-building and personal invitation to events and programs simply because "we just don't do that around here."

B) The Opportunity:

Young adult programs must have the support of the pastor, the parish team, and the parish. A parish that places importance on building relationships, being authentic, genuine and relational will find young adults responding more positively to program offerings. One young adult who wished

to remain anonymous noted that *"it is essential to remember that programs are an entry, relationships are the return. Quality programs are important but quality, genuine response is priceless."*

Specific programs mentioned by attendee Widian Nicola include, *"creating programs that open the door for conversation (Theology on Tap), relationship building (group dinners), conversion (healing Masses, retreats, praise and worship), and service (within the community and to those who live on the margins) will increase opportunities for involvement in ministry."*

Autonomy must be given to the young adult minister to make decisions regarding programming that is responsive to the needs of young adults. Forming a team of young adults to help with programming unburdens the young adult minister from taking on all of the work and also creates "buy in," excitement, and energy among young parishioners. As our culture rapidly shifts from one trend to the next, young adults respond quickly to action and are adept at multi-tasking. So, providing new and innovative programs for them is an attraction rather than a deterrent. Service opportunities, too, afford young adults additional means for ongoing conversion and growth in holiness. But it is clear that young adults would rather participate in service than talk about it.

Several young adults noted the importance of "planting seeds" during informal conversations with other young adults. Young adult ministry may be a ministry where watering and enjoying the fruits of those "plantings" takes years. Follow up and evaluation once programs are implemented is very important. Care and consistency is communicated by a parish that takes the time to follow up and respond to the needs that young adults express. Another participant who wished to remain anonymous observed that *"showing Christ from beginning to end is what moves the process of conversion along. This is a form of evangelization, but even more simply, it is making human connection which is at the heart of the Gospel."*

5. Technology

A) The Challenge:

The world is changing rapidly in response to global trends, such as the increasing use of technology, global mobility, and instant communication. The religious landscape of the United States is being reconfigured by long-term, fundamental changes. The Pew Forum Study of 2007, for example, noted marked differences between the generations in how young adults and adults wish to be involved in their religion and the means by which they seek answers to their spiritual questions. The explosion of social networking presents tremendous opportunities as we seek to reach out in creative ways to young adults, but it also presents challenges. At the heart of social networking is a desire to foster the kinds of deep connections that occur when common pursuits are shared and discussed. Yet pastors and parish teams are often "out of touch" with the Church's directives concerning the use of the internet to catechize and evangelize. Many of the young adults present at the symposium expressed frustration with the lack of diocesan and parish policies concerning the internet and social networking. Not having formal policies often leads to mis-

communication about what is acceptable and who is responsible for internet and social networking outreach at the parish.

Young adults do not always appreciate being looked upon as the *"parish technological guru"* as one participant stated. It is clear that the utilization of technology is a vital skill in building vibrant ministries that all parish ministers should be trained and supported in. Young adult ministers resent being looked upon as the "free" technology help for the parish when they are neither paid professionals in this respect nor paid additionally for their time in solving the parishes' technology woes.

B) The Opportunity:

Engaging young adults at the parish in helping to build a parish website, Facebook page, or Twitter account would be a tremendous help to the young adult minister. Not only would this tap into the natural gifts of those who are called to this ministry, but it would also contribute to the young adults' sense of pride and ownership in their parish. *"Because young adults' first experience of Church is the Church's website, we need to use multi-technology to present a modern understanding/vision of Church. We can do this by allowing young adults themselves to build web site demos and offer those as examples across parishes and diocese. If this happens, young adults will get a different vision of Church and how they can connect to the Church."* (Craig Gould).

Investment in effective use of contemporary internet-based communication tools needs to be encouraged through consultation with experts in the field. Young adult ministers are not exempt from the desire to update their skills in the areas of technology, digital catechesis, and evangelization. This would encourage young adult ministers to broaden their knowledge base and apply their skills to serving the parish in differing ways.

Many young adults desire a support network bolstered by an online social network for young adults in ministry across the country in order to "vent," bounce ideas off, and feel supported by their peers in ministry. This would contribute to positive morale and encourage problem solving and greater networking among young adult ministers. A forum where questions could be posted and creative programs shared would be a great addition to the NCYAMA website.

6. **Compensation**

A) The Challenge:

All of the young adults present stated that they experienced a call to ministry and saw this call as much more than a profession or career. However, the desire to serve the Church needs to be balanced with just and adequate compensation for the efforts of those engaged in young adult ministry. It is clear that human resource needs continue to be of significant concern among young adults in ministry, including the cost to achieve professional credentials, appropriate and just

pay, benefits, and retirement packages. Many of the young adult ministers expressed dissatisfaction with their level of compensation which varied widely from diocese to diocese and parish to parish. One young adult who wished to remain anonymous shared in a small group setting that *"choosing ministry often means choosing to be the working poor."*

This situation is obviously leading to fewer and fewer young adults choosing to work in ministry. Not only is this demoralizing, but it leads to a more monolithic face of the Catholic Church as young adults are increasingly absent. Several of the women present also expressed verbally their dissatisfaction with human resource policies that did not give generous time off in addition to that provided by FMLA for maternity leave, to take care of a sick spouse or family member, or flexibility regarding child care. One young woman stated that *"the Church preaches that the family is the 'domestic Church,' and yet our policies at the parish are so corporate and provide minimally for the care of the family."*

B) The Opportunity:

Significant attention needs to be devoted to developing human resource structures and processes that are based upon the changing needs of the Church and of ministry. Because many young adults leave ministry or are not attracted to it in the first place because of its long hours and low pay, the Church needs to seriously address how it compensates its professional ministers.

Marty Wild proposed that *"in order to pay for this, the Church needs to admonish its people for not being stewards of their faith financially. Protestant denominations are very good at getting full tithing from their congregations. Catholics complain that their churches don't have the programs that Protestant churches do. But if the Church would articulate a vision of what would happen when tithing is practiced, people would be more inclined to give and sacrifice for the Church.* Lisa Frank also suggested that *"free or discounted memberships for young adults to national associations"* would be an attractive bonus for those in ministry.

Conclusion:

By way of a conclusion and a summary, we offer the following recommendations for growing and enhancing leadership among young adults in ministry in the Catholic Church. Like the comments already shared, these were also generated by the attendees at the 2010 Symposium on the ***Next Generation of Pastoral Leadership.*** We are happy to share them here:

- Provide opportunities for young adults to assume leadership positions within the Church and ***trust*** that they can lead effectively.

- Strengthen invitational efforts so that they are intentional, appropriate for diverse populations, broad-based, and can draw young adults into the heart of the Church.

- Ensure that structures of leadership in parishes and faith communities include the substantial input of young adults (both male and female) in ministry and from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

- Examine and reverse the problematic trend of reducing national, diocesan, and parish budgets and reduction of staff in the areas of young adult ministry and outreach.

- Actively encourage and recruit young adult leaders from diverse backgrounds and cultures as a top priority. Intentionally seeking and training multicultural leaders is necessary in order to truly witness to the Body of Christ.

- Provide cross-generational training within dioceses and parishes to reduce generational tensions and misunderstandings.

- Provide opportunities for growth in faith through dialogue, programs and opportunities for all generations.

- Clarify parish expectations for all those involved in ministry.

- Create formal opportunities for spiritual companioning, internships, and mentoring as an important feature of parish and diocesan life.

- Provide seamless transitions from the youth program, young adult program, and campus ministry program back to the Church.

- Provide up-to-date, strong and relevant formation programs to train, recruit, sustain, encourage, and continually educate young adult ministers.

- Offer opportunities for new and experienced young adult ministers to interact, pray together and uplift each other in order to raise awareness of young adult ministry and to help alleviate the pressure among parish staff to support each other.

- Explore more deeply vocation as a pathway to ministry in formation programs and mentoring programs for young adults.

- Encourage the use of creative, dynamic and "off-beat" programs that take advantage of "key moments of return."

- Provide continuing professional development in areas of marketing and promotions.

- Invest in the effective use of contemporary internet-based communication tools through consultation with experts.

- Develop a support network bolstered by an online social network for young adults in ministry across the country.

- Devote significant attention to developing human resource structures and processes based on the changing needs of the Catholic Church and of ministry.

- Provide for a comprehensive compensatory package for all in professional ministry.

Emerging Adults in the Workforce
Margaret Vogel

Introduction

At the 2010 Next Generation of Pastoral Leaders Symposium, Dr. Faith Mauro-Huse, President of Leadership Enhancement Associates, addressed contextual issues facing young adults in the American workforce. The task of the symposium participants was to relate this information to their experiences as young adults working within the Catholic Church. Both the information presented and the ensuing discussion were fruitful.

Issues that surfaced included: generational tensions within parish or diocesan staffing, distress over the inability to earn a living wage, and disappointment in having a career with little room for advancement. As the session continued, the two generations present in the room, namely Millennials and Generation Xers, recognized their own subtle generational rifts. Finally, in their written reflections, the participants suggested strategies that the Church might employ to more effectively care for its younger lay ecclesial ministers.

Summary of Data:

Dr. Mauro-Huse began by emphasizing the swift rate of change being experienced in modern corporate culture. She began with a startling fact: "The amount of new technical information is doubling every two years…for students starting college; this means that half of what they learn during their first year will be outdated by their third year." She also cited former Secretary of Education, Richard Riley: "The top ten jobs that are in demand this year [2010] did not exist in 2004." How does this rate of change impact different generations as they attempt to forge a career in the workplace?

We work in interesting times! This is the first time in history that four generations are represented in the workforce: Matures/Silent Generation (born 1928-1945), Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Gen X (1965-1975), and Millennials/Gen Y (1976-2001). Fifty-percent of the American workforce is now over 40; 25% is over 50; and 8 in 10 Baby Boomers expect to work past retirement age. Dr. Mauro-Huse cautioned against stereotyping based on age, but stated that each generation has its own essence based upon unique core values, characteristics, personality and has been influenced by different defining events/trends. These differences make bridging the generation gap vital work for any successful 21st century employer.

She shared techniques used by companies to attract, manage and retain younger employees. To be successful, managers must know what motivates younger workers and provide it. Workplace structures must be designed to help younger workers adapt to existing corporate culture. At the same time, Baby Boomer employees must be trained to effectively welcome the talents, skills, and

working styles of younger workers.   So, what are younger generations looking for?

Gen X workers need meaningful assignments. They need personal discretion over how their work will be completed, but they also need to be provided a context for how their work impacts the whole. They have a low tolerance for people who make unachievable promises. Statistically, Gen X members will hold an average of 10-12 jobs during their lives, with an average of 3 years in each job, for a total of 3-4 different careers. Incentives for these workers include: paid time off for volunteer work, direct cash rewards for individual initiative, and having the latest/greatest tools of technology.

Millennials seek personal attention and immediate feedback. They expect to be listened to (not lectured at) and enjoy being given new responsibilities. Like Gen X, they desire paid time off to do volunteer work, along with having a flexible schedule and the latest technology. Unlike Gen X, Millennials are comfortable with individual or team rewards and do best when supervised. Since negative feedback can be emotionally troubling for them, effective managers offer critique while remaining positive. In general, Millennials experience close relationships with their parents and will consult with them for advice. Millennials have high expectations and expect positive changes to happen quickly.

Helping younger worker assimilate the corporate culture begins with their recruitment. As a cor- porate coach, Dr. Mauro-Huse has advised some recruiters to use flash drives instead of bro- chures to introduce younger workers to their corporate values and engage them as potential em- ployees. Other techniques include text messaging important meeting dates, sponsoring recruit- ment on Facebook, and even inviting parents to be present on the first day of work (Merrill- Lynch). Such recruitment practices help younger workers feel engaged and welcomed. After suc- cessful hiring, younger workers need to be effectively oriented within the company. Good orien- tation and training will include helping those of Gen X and Gen Y to understand the group norms of the organization and dispelling faulty assumptions and expectations that they may be harbor- ing, whether of themselves or the organization.

Major Points from Participants:

The symposium participants surfaced initial impressions from a lively, large-group discussion. One example is the high degree of transition typical of young adulthood that is mirrored in their life experiences. While the average American workplace is often the first place to form new friendships for young adults transiting from one city to another, or from college life to 'real-life, this is not true for the typical young lay minister. Their colleagues usually occupy vastly different life stages. Furthermore, since young adult peers are routinely absent from parish life, many con- fessed feelings of loneliness or isolation in their current positions. Thus, the participants rejoiced at simply being in a room with other younger Catholics.

Participants spoke of experiencing inter-generational tension. Several of them believed that

some Baby Boomer colleagues were threatened by their youth, thereby creating resistance to their ongoing progress. Others shared a sense of feeling devalued by older co-workers who judged them as having limited life experience. Indeed, despite their education and training, their decisions were often perceived as inferior because of their youth.

Participants voiced a desire for more mentoring and dialogue on these issues, which one participant expressed this way: "*When young adults enter the work force they need to be listened to. When there are multiple generations present, there needs to be dialogue. There needs to be sharing and mentoring. Listening needs to go both ways.*"

As the conversation continued, there was a subtle shift to another challenge facing effective multi-generational ministry relationships, namely, the pathway to lay ecclesial ministry. Many symposium participants attended college with the intention of serving in ministry. Or, they made that decision shortly after undergraduate school and sought more education. But in the typical Church workplace, these younger workers are often part of a parish team comprised largely of staff persons for whom ministry is either a second career (a retirement job), or the result of long-time volunteer service at the parish. One participant voiced a common frustration, "*I'm a young parent with student loans to pay, which were taken out to earn a degree in ministry. How can I ask for more money when I know my pastor can hire a retired parishioner who doesn't really need a big income, or recruit a volunteer?*" Implicit in this remark is the tradeoff the Church often makes between professional-level ministry and the quality of ministry done by a volunteer. The Church often chooses in favor of reduced professionalism when it fails to set professional standards or to provide appropriate compensation.

Disparities in training and human resource practices were viewed as large hurdles to overcome for young adults considering a lifelong commitment to lay ministry. Unlike the public or private corporate sector, the Church lacks universal guidelines for training, hiring, supervising or firing lay ecclesial ministers. This impacts the quality of ministry but also the ability of younger workers to see lay ministry as a viable professional option. One person summarized this sentiment well: "*The restriction on opportunities to advance within the Church leads to conflict with our bosses who we see as the person restricting our upward mobility. Finally, while we young adults like to play as we learn, we still like to learn and gain skills. Often the Church does not invest in us so we can gain the skills we need.*"

Ultimately the discussion over training and support surfaced issues related to standardized credentials and authority. Frustration was voiced over the lack of portable certifications for lay ministers: "*Each diocese seems to require its own training program, but attending rudimentary training after a move is insulting and a waste of time.*"

Another problem is the potential for conflict when a new pastor or local Ordinary is installed. This change can impact both the young minister and his or her family in ways unique to the Church. While leadership within the corporate world regularly changes without significant fall-out, leadership change within the Church carries the potential of an ideological clash. When this

occurs, the validity of lay ministers, their roles, and their functions are inevitably called into question. Participants expressed that their work was a calling, so these changes –which can become clashes of ecclesiology – are felt deeply and are not easy to overcome.

Overall, younger lay ministers feel vulnerable and undervalued. They have made investments of time, talent, and treasure to work in ministry, but they question whether Church leadership or the lay faithful recognize their commitment. As one participant said passionately, *"I want the Church to know: my chips are all in."*

The reality of committed lay leadership holds implications for the lay faithful, and this fact did not go unnoticed by participants. Particularly in their written comments, participants struggled with how to surface a commitment to lay ministry from the people of God. One participant wrote:

> *There needs to be a reality check that without lay ministers, the Church would lose most of its ministry and programming...Challenging for the Church is the question of even if we accept the reality that lay ministers are needed and good, do we have the resources to attract and retain them? Some of our ability to attract [young adult-age ministers] is tied to the fact that it weighs on good stewardship from the Community of Faith. Leadership is used to having fairly 'free' labor that was supported financially by community. But those same finances aren't enough to finance $40,000 salaries for lay ministers. And [Baby Boomer Parishioners] are also not used to having to pay $40,000 for their ministers...This is a huge gap to traverse in terms of experience of the Church.*

It is clear that examination of this complex issue will need to be taken up in another forum. However, an important take away from this discussion with young ministers is that parishioners must become meaningfully invested in their leadership.

<u>Personal Reflection:</u>

For me, this segment was the most worthwhile of the symposium. In my current work, I serve in diocesan youth and young adult ministry. As such, my work entails the training and support of youth ministers (paid and unpaid) in our area.

Many of the lay ministers we train are young adults, and the turnover is high. The open discussion was particularly important for me, especially as it related to portability of certificates and the viability of meeting long-term career needs. My practical take away from this experience is the power of effective hiring and orientation. As leaders within the Church, we need to become better at this for the sake of our younger workers.

Dr. Mause-Huse called attention to the needs of younger workers, which also exist for young lay ministers. They need to know how praise will be given and told how often they can expect feedback. Pastors must be trained to make time for routine feedback and evaluation. Additionally, the ability of younger ministers to process constructive feedback may also need to be learned.

This is where good mentoring and building strong ministry relationships across generational lines will be key.

Gen X and Gen Y ministers may expect to have instant access to key relationships and responsibilities, but often ministry settings do not support this type of open access. If these are to be earned over a period of time, than that reality needs to be relayed to younger ministers so that they can abide by the appropriate chain of command. Appropriate dress and rules for social networking may need to be clarified, as these can be a point of departure between generations. Younger ministers can be expected to feel frustrated by lagging technology. They need permission to openly share their knowledge and expertise in this area –but not be defined by technical skills alone. As one Gen Y minister stated, *"The high emphasis on technology is good because of the young adult skill level. But does that emphasis keep Church leaders from recognizing and encouraging the many other gifts young adults bring?"*

Older lay ministers and clergy need to be coached to recognize the importance of transferring their knowledge to younger lay ministers. This can be difficult to accomplish if older staff fear becoming obsolete, individually and collectively. However, by focusing on the need for them to be generative and relevant by mentoring younger ministers, this fear can be diffused and their legacy enhanced.

I was also intrigued by the distinctions that bubbled up between Gen X and Gen Y participants. Prior to this session, I had known intellectually that there were older and younger participants in the room, but as some of the younger members began to share their stories, I felt a little conflicted. I sat in the space as a young adult, but my personal pathway to ministry was a combination of stay-at-home parish volunteer, followed by earning a degree in ministry, then eventually finding fulltime employment in the Church. In this way, I had a foot in both pathway worlds. As the discussion persisted, I came to a new appreciation for younger lay ministers who chose this lifestyle early in life. As they shared feelings of being devalued based on their youth, I was forced to admit responsibility for times when I had made quick judgments about a young minister's maturity, and by default their readiness for ministry.

At the same time, I found myself a little jealous that lay ministry was even part of their conscious imagination at the age of 19 or 20. I am only in my mid-thirties, but the quantity, quality and caliber of undergraduate programs in lay ministry simply didn't exist in my younger adult world. Examples of paid lay leadership were not part of my childhood or adolescent experience. I'm sure it existed, but all of the staff members at my home parish were either ordained or vowed religious. Lay people baked cookies, volunteered as parish school resource teachers, and taught in the day school, but that was really about it. Occupying this symposium space, I realized that lay ministry is still in its infancy. I found myself having greater respect for Baby Boomer lay leaders who carved a way for me. As I look around at the Church today, lay leadership feels natural. I assume that structures are in place to nurture it, but after this session and in my personal lived experience, I see there is much work to be done.

This work will require Church leadership and the lay faithful to hold a strong commitment to an ecclesiology which values, supports, strengthens, and deepens the theological underpinnings of lay ministry. Catholic theologians must dialogue with apostolic tradition as well as the lived experiences of current lay ministers to better articulate the role of lay ministry and its future. The people of God must be helped toward an insight that sees lay ministers as a true gift of the Spirit rather than something akin to scab labor employed to fill a vocation shortage. As a whole, lay ecclesial ministers need to help the lay faithful understand that our call places new demands on the Church but also brings great rewards. High quality lay ecclesial ministry is not optional for the future of the Church; it is a requirement.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to accomplishing this work will be to keep our own hearts on fire during turbulent times. Older lay ministers –and I am quickly becoming one – must help younger lay ministers find their footing and their voice. We must value their faith, idealism, and vision for the future. We must guard against cynicism and know when it is time to turn over the torch.

Conclusions

Young adults have unique needs in relation to their employment settings. These needs are similar but also distinct from older generations in the workplace. Needs identified by participants include: a need for peer friendship in the workplace, positive morale, respect for the level of education, skills and life experiences of young adults. Additionally, participants stressed a need for better human resource practices to attract and support younger workers.

There is a need for more appropriate training and skill development for young adult-age ministers. Participants wanted better mentoring opportunities. They stressed a need for better listening and dialogue as a part of growth and development processes. There was also a desire for more intentional training for all Church workers around the concept of bridging the generation gaps. This was also identified as a need to evangelize young adults in general as a means of renewing the Church.

There is distress over the ability or, more often, the inability to earn a living wage within the Church. The participants cited this reality, along with issues of job security and lack of opportunities for advancement, almost universally. These items were identified as barriers to recruitment, present job satisfaction, and long-term employment. Related to these issues, rich thoughts surfaced concerning the Church's growing reliance on lay ecclesial ministry. An unanswered question of the symposium is: *What does the reality of lay ministry –and the household demands of lay ecclesial ministers – mean for the lay faithful, especially as it relates to financial stewardship of their parish community*?

Young adult workers often bring a different "working style" to their place of employment. Young adult workers bring a high desire for teamwork, but also expect autonomy. Young adults are avid multitaskers and often enjoy a high degree of technological competence; but they don't want to be defined by technological skills alone. Young adults regularly use mobile communica-

tion devices and expect frequent feedback.

A small, but notable, number of participants suggested that discussions centered on generational differences per se were not particularly helpful. These participants emphasized a larger need for the Church to focus on broad efforts of inclusion. These efforts should seek to engage Catholics across generational, as well as cultural and ethnic divides.

A few participants passionately voiced the need for a re-vitalized spirit within lay ministers of all ages. These responses noted that joy and vitality present in Church leaders are remarkably effective when engaging young adults both on the staff and in the pews. On the reverse, the opposite effect happens when staff culture feels cynical, or is prone to gossip.

The Catholic Church and The Generation X Minister
Matthew Schwartz

The Catholic Identity of Those Under Forty:

I am a Gen X Catholic working for the institutional Church (an oxymoron, I know).
I am constantly struggling with the feeling that I am working in a Church that is failing a genera-
tion of emerging adults. Many times within the span of a week, I am resolute in my decision that I
will serve the Church or leave the Church. The reason I remain Catholic is because being Catholic
is very difficult for me. I know I could leave the Catholic faith and find a more "comfortable"
Church that panders to my every whim and desire. But I'll be honest; I enjoy the challenge. I re-
main Catholic because it's hard to be Catholic.

Gen X as Catholic Adults:

Kurt Cobain (1967-1994) once stated, *"We still feel as if we're teenagers because we don't follow
the guidelines of what's expected of us to be adults."* He stated this after the release of his band
Nirvana's album *Smells Like Teen Spirit* in 1991, which became the anthem of Generation X.

There are lots of people who think that Gen Xers are a generation without values, who echo the
lifestyle of Kurt Cobain. Raised on a steady diet of supposedly amoral video games, rock idols,
and movies, we are thought of as incapable of judging right from wrong. We are the "MTV Gen-
eration" (when MTV actually played music videos). Our parents threatened us by exclaiming,
"You don't want to flip burgers the rest of your life, do you?" (Thank you, Douglas Copeland).

From birth, Gen Xers grew to distrust every institution. Organized religion is one of those institu-
tions. Church and politics are just two things we grew up to distrust. (Thank you, Richard Nixon).
Baby Boomers challenged authority in the sixties hoping to replace the authority. Jim Morrison of
the 60's rock group *The Doors* famously stated in 1968, "Once you make peace with the authority,
you become the authority." Gen Xers are indifferent about such authority.

Gen Xers were, for the most part, latchkey, day-care, mall-strutting, "Breakfast Club," alienated
and rebellious young Catholics. Yet now they are the parents of young school-aged children.
They are the parents that Dr. Christian Smith, sociologist at the University of Notre Dame, writes
about. And his findings about parent/teen relationships were paralleled in the *Next Generation*
Symposium. Generation X came of age in an era of two-income families, rising divorce rates, and
a faltering economy. Their home life was mom, dad and 2.47 kids. There were three bedrooms,
two bathrooms, a double-car garage, and a dog. Dad showed up at your baseball game in the fifth
inning in his shirt and tie. Many of our parents divorced by the time we were fifteen. Then it was
mom and a new dad (whom you called by his first name) plus your biological dad, his girlfriend,
and her three kids. This is the time when Church "youth groups" thrived. The purpose was to
separate kids from their under-involved and over-worked parents and teach them to love them-

selves. It was a safe place for troubled teens whose family life was turned upside down. Even Kurt Cobain went to youth group.

Many Gen Xers lived through tough economic times in the 1980s and saw their workaholic parents lose hard-earned positions. Thus, today, Gen Xers have become less committed to one employer and more willing to change jobs to get ahead. They adapt well to change and are tolerant of alternative lifestyles. They will take less money in a job if it means more satisfaction in the work place. Hence, they will earn less money than Boomers. Gen Xers are independent, resourceful and self-sufficient. They are ambitious and eager to learn new skills but want to accomplish things on their own terms. In the workplace, Gen Xers value freedom and responsibility. Many Gen Xers display a casual disdain for authority.

Christian Smith, in his book, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers,* affirmed two things that the Catholic Church is still struggling with in terms of today's parent Gen Xers and teens: 1) children's worship and spiritual habits are directly related to the parents' worship and spiritual habits, and 2) young people are a mirror and barometer of their parents.

Smith goes on to say in *Soul Searching*: "The vast majority of U.S. teens are not alienated or rebellious. Most are quite content to follow in their parents' footsteps." Consequently, if we want to know the Catholic identity of Gen X young adults and their impact on the Catholic Church, we need not look any further than their children, and vice versa.

<u>Gen X and Catholic Identity:</u>

Being an active Catholic means something inherently different for this generation of Catholics. They have been socialized and immersed in a culture of choice; and Catholicism is one of those choices. This has major implications for the Catholic Church in America.

Gen Xers grew up "Catholic" apart from the "Church." They did not grow up in a homogenous Catholic culture as previous generations had done. While this may appear to be a negative, it is the greatest strength of this generation. Gen Xers were socialized in groups with peers from birth because their parents were working. They know the power of a welcoming community. They socialized themselves apart from the adult world. As in their childhood, the Church was perhaps one of those communities, but not the only one. Gen Xers are the first generation of American Catholics to be raised Catholic apart from the institution itself.

> One symposium participant reflected: "*The Catholic culture does not exist for us as it did in 1960. But our schools, religious education and youth ministry programs still operate like the political, social and cultural forces upholding the Catholic lifestyle and are alive and well.*"

In other words, for Gen Xers growing up, the Church was simply a place to worship and (maybe) attend school. In sharp contrast to the 1940s & 1950s, the Catholic Church was not the lone social

outlet. The Church did not exist to provide the most basic needs.

> Another participant offered this reflection on the state of the Church today: *"Since there is a decline of the Catholic culture in the United States in which school, church, and social attractions were centered around and promoted by the worshipping community as a whole, a new emergence, or rather, focus, of evangelization needs to take place."*

Since the Church, as it did in the past, did not work to naturalize them, entertain them, find them a job, or marry them, Gen Xers were not equipped with "Catholic goggles" to view the world. However, being Catholic (and going to a Catholic school) was a positive experience of childhood. But many of these young adults have since moved on. Being Catholic was a necessary part of childhood like having braces in 7th grade. Their Catholic upbringing was a part of life that tried to make them better people; and for the most part, succeeded. Now as adults, there has emerged a gentle disregard, though not hostility, toward the Church, among other religious institutions. Being Catholic is like having a positive childhood memory, like a Sony Walkman. Gen Xers welcome the nostalgic feel of Catholic community, but often want little to do with that community.

When looking at the connections to the Church, one of the young adults at the symposium declared, *"We are 'believers' rather than 'belong-ers' to a parish."* We all know that the Church is increasingly threatened by secular society. However, if the Church wants to remain or become relevant, it needs to acknowledge that emerging adults live, work, adapt and thrive in that culture.

Gen X and Mass Attendance:

"There needs to be a re-conceptualization of religious belief and practice by Church leadership," advised one of the symposium participants.

For many Gen Xers, Catholic faith is detached from Mass. Case in point: My diocese was recently involved in the *Catholics Coming Home* initiative. As a person having a peripheral view of the situation, I stated many times that Gen X Catholics may respond in different ways. Specifically I said, "Mass attendance might be the last step in returning back to the Church, not the first." This was met with a gasp. Since when have we reduced "practicing Catholic" to Mass attendance? Is this all the Church really expects of us? Based on their Catholic experiences growing up, it seems that Gen Xers feel that worship attendance has little to do with discipleship or faith identity. So, how did Gen Xers respond to this initiative? The results are inconclusive at best. My sense is that they came back a few times to Mass and then fell back into their normal lives.

Baby Boomers will likely be the last generation of American Catholics who will continue to attend Mass regularly even though their children long since stopped attending. For most Gen Xers, Mass attendance is a faith response, not an obligation. An external event prompts them back to Church: a wedding, a funeral, a baptism, an annulment, and so forth. They are not concerned about music or preaching. They do not need to be entertained. They are nostalgic about their return and quite comfortable in Church, but they often experience no compelling reason to stay. Attendance does

not equal relevance. As in work, they simply want authenticity.

Gen Xers immerse themselves in spiritual enterprises daily and live the Paschal Mystery in their family, work, and life, yet they do not have the language or the Catholic sensibility to know it. To them, mortgage is obligation while Mass *should* be joyful worship. Some Baby Boomers attend Mass as an escape: a reconnection to the divine for a few moments - because in a matter of hours, they will re-enter the secularized world.

Gen Xers need Mass to speak to them about their lives, to help them realize that what they do six days out of the week is intricately connected to who they worship on Sunday and vice versa. They are ripe for that connection.

Two of our diocesan Catholic high schools played each other in the state football finals. In conversation, I stated: "This is going to be the largest gathering of Gen X Catholic Church we have ever seen! What a great moment of Church." The response, part dismissive and part anger was: "That's *not* Church. How can you call *that* Church when Christ is not present in the Eucharist?" I replied, "I'm sorry. I misspoke. I think this will be the *most* Eucharistic gathering of the year." Ritual, sacrifice, and prayer are the daily routine of life, and we are simply unaware that Mass is a mirror of that life. Gen X parents know exactly what is expected of them when their child is a part of the football team. They become a community because they are socialized to be football parents. Everyone going to the game knows exactly what will happen. It is the epitome of the ritual, words, and deeds that our Sunday liturgy is built upon. Do not dismiss this reality; make it sacramental.

We need to connect Gen Xers to the Eucharist. And it is much easier than skeptics might think. We must show them, in the normalcy of life, who God is and how He acknowledges and affirms His presence. We must find opportunities to do this in the ten-minute car ride to soccer practice, the 3:00 a.m. feeding of a child, the loss of a job, the death of a parent, the miscarriage of a pregnancy, the reconnection with an old friend on Facebook, the foreclosure on a home, or the birthday party for fifteen first grader friends of their child.

We must remind them, and ourselves, that there is sacrifice in the daily routine of life, and they are unaware that Mass is a mirror of that very life. The Mass obligation would make more sense if the Mass were seen as Christian mission, and not an end in itself. We need an affirmation of lives gathered; a place to connect people to their own identity as God's incarnated presence. We spend so much time and energy trying to "get people to Mass." Instead, we should equip them with the word, ritual, sacrifice, and community of the Mass made incarnationally present in their daily lives. When they can see what the Paschal Mystery looks like in the daily death and resurrection of life, how much more will Mass mean to them?

Gen X as Parents:

The youth of yesterday are now the young parents of today. Time moves quickly. Too often, however, parents are undervalued as allies in church ministry (especially when many are still

seen as "youth" by some church leaders). Some view parents skeptically, assuming that they would rather leave their child's religious education in the hands of professionals than get involved. But every Church document and generational study adamantly proclaims the opposite. Parents should be seen as partners with the parish in the total development of their children. Gen-X parents are not disinterested in – and certainly harbor no ill will towards – the Church. They are just confused as to why the Church does not more energetically seek to engage them.

As one lay ecclesial minister put it: "*A family perspective of ministry means that there should be supportive ministries for every stage of life (not age); and the quality of those ministries is affected by the degree of total family involvement. Still, experiences of vibrant, dynamic Catholic people are hard to find in local parishes.*"

The Church spends a great amount of time and energy trying to teach our children what it means to be Catholic. Being Catholic is an experience of the faith within a worshipping community. However Gen X parents are often neither involved with nor interested in that community. But they *are* involved with their children, and they are openly blunt about this: most likely thinking: *If you welcome and acknowledge my child, you welcome and acknowledge me.* For example, my own children's pediatrician told me that parents want what is best for their kids, such as health care. He said that the young parents of today will obtain proper care for their children at the expense of refusing health care for themselves.

If their children are invested in certain communal activities, the parents will follow and often eventually take the lead in keeping that connection going. *Soul Searching* affirms this reality. Youth have various communities, such as in sports, school, extra-curricular activities, and friends. Parents inevitable become part of and socialized into these communities.

Too often, I hear the complaint that parents are under-involved in their children's faith development. But on the non-religious level, studies show that quite the opposite is true from this generation of parents. They are over-involved in their children's lives, often to the children's detriment. But in this regard, it is important to note that the Church is the only institution that still operates in their adult lives as it did when they were children. Should we expect a different response from parents when they experience an attitudinal and behavioral Church context that has not matured along with them?

It is often said in church circles: "All they (Gen X parents) do is drop off their kids, go out to get their coffee, and return to pick up their children. And they only register their kids when it's a sacramental year!" To those who say this, I offer two responses as a young adult Gen Xer parent myself: First, sometimes, dropping off my child is the best I can do that week. I made a commitment to raise him or her Catholic, and I am doing exactly what was asked of me. As parents, we do our best to get our kids involved in Church and/or school simply because we feel that it is the right thing to do. Second, what is the alternative? If I stay and become involved, how is that going to work with my other two squirmy kids?

The underlying theme here is that Gen Xers prefer a Catholicism that is permeable and fluid (and flexible). This means that they are more likely to engage in a Catholicism that is technologically portable and theological transparent. Or as one young adult said, "*Individual piety in the context of an anonymous community is more admirable than the relationship between worship and life.*"

Our Catholic school system of late unfortunately contributes to this kind of mentality. Catholic schools were originally founded to serve an immigrant population of working class Catholic families bonded together within a strong faith community. They have now become college prep academies for affluent Catholic and Non-Catholic Americans. Catholic education is now viewed by parents primarily in terms of a financial investment in their children's future and by schools in terms of their academic competitiveness. The Catholic identity and faith formation attributes of the school are frequently a distant third to academic standards and athletic achievements.

There is a paradigm shift occurring within the Church with two competing emphases. One is focused on retention, the other on evangelization. One is focused on believing, the other on belonging. Many Gen Xers put the emphasis on mission rather than retention and on believing rather than belonging. So when it comes to these young adults, the Church needs to decide whether it will try to mold them in the form of older generations or to reach them where they are

Polarization:

The problem of polarization in theology and ecclesiology within the Church resonated loudly in the *Next Generation* Symposium. As one participant put it, *"There's a problem of authenticity. How do we personify the Church when it is often an ugly mess?"* This tension confuses young adults. They desire to be a part of a vibrant, meaningful Church and are not interested in figuring out who is a good Catholic or a nominal one. They are disturbed by leaders and others who easily label people "conservative" or "liberal". The same is true of those who claim to have an exclusive vision of Church. Young adults know that there is more than one way to be Catholic, and that not everything about faith is easily black and white.

> *"It is a Church that too often seems to insulate itself and is concerned with its own survival over risking its resources to preach and live the gospel in the present. The focus of the Church seems to be inward focusing on policies and less about the mission of the Church."*

Much of the theological polarization within the Church surfaces in Catholic blogs and social media outlets. There is a strong call, often under the label of evangelization, from some bloggers that tradition must be preserved. But evangelization is the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ, not going tit for tat with other Catholics about what it means to be a good Catholic. And true evangelization is done in a spirit of love, not hostility. Although it appears that "traditional" Catholicism is on the rise among emerging adults, I strongly suggest that it does not translate into a mature adult discipleship. Although it seems to be in vogue to assent to theological certitudes,

at its core, Catholicism is as much both mystery and the living experience of faith.

One young adult at the Symposium addressed this concern: *"My fear is that our churches will become small, faith-sharing communities with like-minded intellectuals leading them. We need to foster a vision which incorporates community (belonging), prayer/spirituality (centered on God's love) and social change (outward looking). Each and all are necessary to flow into one another."*

Our tradition stretches back 2,000 years, oozing with diverse patterns of practices and ideas, words and deeds, stories and symbols. An idea is being fostered today that says that we must look back to a time when things were pure and simple in order to recapture our true identity. That time never existed; not even in the Upper Room. If we need to go back and try to recapture and preserve a tradition, wouldn't that imply that tradition itself has stagnated? Our tradition is a living one filled with tension and mystery. Why would we need to try and bottle something that is thriving? Why resurrect a Church that existed in a time and culture that is not our own?

> *"The Church is emphasizing one polarizing thing: content of the faith (and calling it 'catechesis'). A more developed exploration of 'catechesis' speaks about evangelization, conversion and transformation."*

The "Spirit of Vatican II," has become a polarizing phrase. For some, it precipitates extreme negativity; for others, liberating enthusiasm. But for most, it means nothing. When probed beyond its crass generalizations, I surmise that the phrase represents for one camp the "bad catechesis of the 1980's" and for the other camp a solution to that same problem. This is an old and paralyzing storyline that stops us from addressing the current state of catechesis for both youth and adults in our Church. Young adult ministers are tired of the blame game. They simply want to move forward with an ongoing improvement of ministry in all its dimensions.

Emerging Adults Working for the Church:

As one lay ecclesial minister put it: "*It is difficult for emerging adult ministers to 'break into' ministry at some parishes because of 'the way things have always been done' and the older ministers who are already there*"

Another lay ecclesial minister stated: "*Young people don't want to be part of something in which they have no voice. But, you don't have to be a professional to be in ministry. If experience is the key, why is age a factor? The 'less smart' you are, the easier it will be to retain a job in the Church.*"

A third lay ecclesial minster said: "*Some things are remaining the same and not adapting to the context and culture of Catholics today, such as programming and how we reach out to everyone. It is facing a lot of challenges but isn't necessarily addressing them.*"

Too often the Church will ponder such a statement and think of a programmatic change that needs to take place. But Christian Smith, author of *Soul Searching* and *Souls in Transition,* thinks that a simple programmatic shift is not enough. "We need to think systemically, not programmatically." …[T]he engagement of teenagers into vibrant lives of faith cannot be manufactured through simple organizational programs."

Too many good, young Catholics leave the faith after they begin to work for the Church. When I started working for the Church, I thought the bottom line for pastoral and financial decisions was discipleship. That was a foolish assumption. Still, there is a bottom line; but the problem is that there seems to be no consensus on what it is.

Let me return to a previous statement: "*Since there is a decline of the Catholic culture in the United States in which school, Church and social attractions were centered around and promoted by the worshipping community as a whole, a new emergence, or rather, focus of evangelization needs to take place.*" But who are the individuals running the parish programs who will initiate and evangelize emerging adults? The same people, most likely, who were doing it in 1985 when today's young adults were children and youth. And if they are not the same people, they are usually those handpicked by the long-term director. In other words, my parents or grandparents still run the show. So where do I fit in? These are the concerns that many Gen Xers and a some of the Millennials had at the *Emerging Models* Symposium in November 2010, and unless some measures are taken to address this issue, they will remain our concerns for years to come.

We close as we began, listening to the voice of Generation X, though this time these are words spoken by the men and women who have come to work for the Church, not Kurt Cobain. These are the Gen Xers who work in hope of a better tomorrow.

> "*Church ladies still run some programs. The 'best and brightest' young Catholics are not choosing ministry. Recruiting is not really an option for ministries but rather just replacing parish folk with volunteers. Those in leadership are older and the only "prereq" is kids and gray hair.*"

> "*The Church perpetuates a cycle of equating wisdom with age alone, not with experience or training.*"

> "*There is some perception that properly trained and educated ministers are a threat to clergy; can't get paid what they deserve; and if young, aren't trustworthy because they don't have the life experience of a 50-60 year old; therefore, they get turned off and leave ministry*".

> "*There needs to be 'midwives' ushering in the birth of some new models of ministry, slowly and through the Church's labor (and the labor pains that come with it!).*"

Emerging Adults and Their Place in Church Ministry
Craig Gould

From the 2010 Emerging Models Symposium, it became clear that *emerging adults* are not easily categorized. They vary in both their experiences and in their understanding of faith and Church. Sociologically, they encompass two separate generations: Generation Xers, born between 1964 and 1980, and the Millennials, born between 1980 and 1995. There is some overlap in the way these two generations approach religious matters, but there are also some key distinctions. Beginning with the distinctions, Generation Xers can be described as growing up with a "Lone Ranger" mentality. They were the "latch key" generation that took more responsibility for raising themselves than many generations before them. As a result, they tend to gravitate towards a stronger sense of structure. The Millennials grew up in many ways as the antithesis of Generation Xers. They were highly scrutinized and overseen by what became known as "helicopter parents." In school they were constantly pushed to work cooperatively in groups, thereby forming a more communal mentality. They also prefer broad, flexible space in which to work as opposed to the more structured environment that Generation Xers prefer.

As for similarities between the two generations, they are more culturally diverse than the demographic cohorts that preceded them. For example, almost 40% of Millennials claim a non-Caucasian heritage.

These younger generations are also distinct religiously from older generations in that they are far less "linked-in" to the Church. Some 20% of Generation Xers and 26% of Millennials identify themselves as being unaffiliated with any religious tradition. Indeed, research shows that even among those who identify themselves as Catholic, 83% report that they do not attend Mass weekly, and 64% report only attending a few times a year or not at all.

How today's young adults are potentially drawn into Church life also differs from previous generations. Today, young adults are more inclined than earlier generations to be attracted by a church community's sense of welcome or inclusion. This takes many forms, of course, but it includes young adults having prominent roles in the community as well as places where young adults can connect with each other outside of worship. These younger generations also seek well-planned and vibrant liturgies. They are less willing to sit through unimaginative liturgies out of a sense of obligation.

On a related note, although it is not immediately known why, there is a direct correlation between congregation size and young adult presence. Finally, when asked what makes their generations unique, both Generation Xers and Millennials cite "use of technology" as the most prominent characteristic. Unfortunately, however, vibrant liturgies that might creatively employ tech-

nology and young adults in visible positions of leadership, are not commonly found.

Research on young adults who work in Church ministry finds that they remain small in number and lack support to both utilize their gifts and to maintain their vocational call. The young adults in the *Next Generation of Pastoral Leadership* symposium identified with these struggles. They spoke of problems of not being invited into Church leadership, of not being supported once they were in leadership positions, of not being shown how to create personal boundaries around their work and allowed to do so, and of not being respected as professional adults.

Young adults are virtually absent from parish leadership, where only 12% of parish staff and volunteers are between the ages of 18 and 39. By comparison, 11% of staff or volunteers are age 70 or above. This means that young adult ministers, for the most part, must look beyond the Church, and especially their workplace, to find community. Such isolation can be especially damaging.

Older generations of ministers tend to be more "homegrown," that is, they minister in the towns and churches, or at least the general area, in which they were raised. Modern young adults, by contrast, have often moved hundreds if not thousands of miles from home to attend college. And they continue this pattern by taking jobs that may lead them still further away from family and friends. Whereas previous generations stayed grounded in their communities for both education and work, this cohort is just the opposite. They may bring with them a wealth of knowledge and training, but they lack a strong supportive community in which to minister. The community they do have is spread out among high school and college friends. And because of social networking, it can even extend beyond national boundaries. But it does not replace these young adults' desire and need for face-to-face contact with their peers.

Acerbating this sense of isolation is the stress that can arise from ministry jobs that are both demanding are poorly compensated. Ministerial jobs often require staff to be available beyond regular working hours and often for long stretches of time. Most secular employers with such expectations will compensate workers accordingly; but jobs in ministry do not.

In fact, because the starting pay is dramatically lower, young adults in ministry find themselves in the unenviable position of working harder and longer yet getting paid less than their secular counterparts, even though they may received degrees from the same institution and incurred equal costs to attain them.

Low salaries coupled with elevated expectations are particularly corrosive to young adults for two specific reasons: first, it harms their ability to maintain connections with their often distant and widespread community; second, it impedes their ability to maintain ministry as a vocation, especially if they are also called to marriage and family. And even when they are included in posi-

tions of leadership and given support, they report being treated as inferior to their coworkers. They also experience their insights and suggestions to be either ignored or viewed as unrealistic by those in authority — even before they have been tried.

When young adults leave the Church or depart from positions of ministerial leadership, the Church loses the many dynamic and valuable gifts that these women and men have to offer. One example is their facility with technology, which can be used to create or enhance community. This is especially the case with youth, who rely heavily on social media and similar applications for staying connected. There are also ways in which technology can enhance prayer and worship, but these might remain unexplored if younger generations are not present to implement them. The global capacity of technology, when combined with the mobility of young adults, also provides them with an outlook that extends beyond their own communities and borders.

This worldwide perspective has created a more socially and environmentally conscious group of young adults, whose passions are often fixed on a global scale. When young adults are part of a Church they bring these unique passions and perspectives to bear on the gospel mission of the community.

The symposium participants made it clear that they consider ecclesial ministry to be a lifelong, professional vocation. And, in keeping with this view, they desire to be treated and compensated accordingly. Their expectation is that if they are going to embrace a calling in a pastoral ministry, the Church will support and help them to become successful in their vocation. They have a passion for the Church, for ministry and for serving God. They simply seek a reciprocal passion and commitment from the Church and the communities in which they labor.

Part IV: Recommendations

Based on the findings, research, and symposium of the Next Generation initiative of the Emerging Models Project, we recommend that:

1. The National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association (NCYAMA) and the National Association of Lay Ministry (NALM) should partner together to develop and offer intergenerational workshops, training, and consultation services for Catholic dioceses, parishes, and organizations across North America. These would be developed to aid local church workers build greater intergenerational cohesiveness on staff, and work towards accomplishing the vision laid out in this report.

2. A nationwide young adult "church workers network" be established which would provide peer support, resources, and networking for Catholic lay ecclesial ministers under 40 years of age (which may be further developed into Millennial and Generation X cohorts, as needed).

3. Diocesan and parish staffs should increase their investment and training in social media and technology for all staff members across generational lines.

4. A concerted effort be made by parishes, dioceses, and other Catholic organizations to increase their outreach and ministry efforts to young adults in general, and to help those in their 20s and 30s on their staff connect to young adult communities and spiritual opportunities in their area outside of their professional ministry in the Church.

5. Dioceses and parishes, along with religious communities, create some form of a lay ecclesial ministry mentorship program to help new and younger church workers grow professionally, personally, and spiritually.

6. Pastors and parish leaders be open to the variety of pathways to ministry that many young adults travel upon; that they not only rely on pulling church leadership from the parish's volunteer corps, but also from diocesan training or ministry certificate programs, graduate or undergraduate programs in theology or ministry, and those with prior experience in professional church ministry.

7. Dioceses, parishes, and other Catholic organizations take this Next Generation Report, along with the data from the 2012 CARA study, *Perspectives from Parish Leaders: U.S. Parish Life and Ministry*, and distribute the information to all members of their professional staff and pastoral council, and that they encourage these groups to discuss the data and findings, how it applies to their local context, and ways to take proactive measures to increase the number of and support the current young adults in lay ecclesial ministry.

End Notes

1. The adult generations in today's workplace can include: Millennials (those currently in their 20s and early 30s, born between 1980 and approximately 1995); Generation Xers (those currently in their 30s and 40s, born between 1963 and 1980); Baby Boomers (those currently in their late 40s, 50s, through mid-60s, born between 1945 and 1963); and the Silent Generation (those currently in their late 60s, 70s, through mid-80s, born between 1925 and 1945). In some circles, those in the so-called "Greatest Generation" (those currently in their late 80s and 90s, born between 1910 and 1925) are also still active in the workplace.

2. Two reports in particular highlighted this less engaged generation of activists: *Engaging Emerging Adults*, a 2010 essay by Casey Clevenger and Wendy Cadge of Brandeis University (http://www.changingsea.org/clevenger.php), and *Trends in Political and Civic Behavior in Emerging Adults*, a 2010 essay by James Youniss from the Catholic University of America with consultation from Hugh McIntosh (http://www.changingsea.org/youniss.php), both of which were part of the Changing Spirituality of Emerging Adults Project (http://www.changingsea.org), organized through the Institute of Policy Research at the Catholic University of America.

3. Hahnenberg, Edward P. "Commentary," *The Next Generation of Pastoral Leaders: What the Church Needs to Know* by Dean R. Hoge and Marti R. Jewell. Loyola Press: Chicago, Illinois. 2010. pg. 153.

4. U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Sons and Daughters of the Light: A Pastoral Plan for Ministry with Young Adults*. USCCB Publishing: Washington, DC. 1997, rev. 2010. pg. 7.

5. Such research and study on young adults include *After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings Are Shaping the Future of American Religion* (Princeton University Press, 2007) by Robert Wuthnow; *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults* (Oxford University Press, 2009) and *Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood* (Oxford University Press, 2011) by Christian Smith; *Seeds of Hope: Young Adults and the Catholic Church in the United States* (Paulist Press, 2008) by Timothy Muldoon; *Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X* (Jossey-Bass, 2001) by Tom Beaudoin; *The Basic Guide to Young Adult Ministry* (Orbis Press, 2001) by John C. Cusick and Katherine F. DeVries; *Googling God: The Religious Landscape of People in their 20s & 30s* (Paulist Press, 2007) by Mike Hayes; and the work of the National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association (http://www.ncyama.org).

6. This presentation was given by Rev. Robin Ryan, CP, on young adult Catholics at the *Moving Forward in Hope* Project symposium, held September 16-18, 2010, at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Illinois, sponsored by the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC).

7. Cusick, John C. and Katherine F. DeVries. *The Basic Guide to Young Adult Ministry*. Orbis Press, 2001. pg. 3.

8. Research conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) for the Emerging Models project and reported in *Perspectives from Parish Leaders: U.S. Parish Life and Ministry* reports that "eighty-five percent of parish leaders agree 'somewhat' or 'very much' that older and younger members of the staff in their parish work well together" (pg. 113); however, only thirty-eight percent of Millennials (b. 1982 or later) agreed "very much." This indicates that older and younger generations are interpreting their relationships quite differently, thus confirming this finding. Millennials accounted for only three percent of respondents in this study; this low number should be taken into account with this finding and in other areas of this report.

9. Salary expectations or satisfaction across generations is not reported in *Perspectives from Parish Leaders*. It is noted, however, that younger parish leaders, Millennials in particular, are more likely to participate in ministry formation through diocesan or college degree programs (pg. 25-26). Millennials reported feeling very much overworked in their parish ministry or service more than twice as often as Baby Boomers, thirty-nine percent and sixteen percent, respectively (pg. 36). This could be attributed to the length of time in the position. While only six and seven percent of Generation X and Boomer parish leaders, respectively, report that the parish does not provide the resources necessary for their ministry, that percentage jumps to fifteen percent for Millennials. Notably, sixty-two percent of Millennials report that their parish very much provides the necessary resource, which is far more in line with the sixty-eight percent of both Generation X and Boomer parish leaders who also say their parish very much provides the necessary resources (pg. 102). Additionally, older leaders are more likely to agree that the parish uses technology and new media effectively than younger leaders (seventy-eight percent of Boomers who agree "somewhat" or "very much" compared to sixty-two percent of Millennials. Generation X leaders fall in the middle at seventy-two percent) (pg. 114).

10. *Perspectives from Parish Leaders* indicates that the average age when parish leaders felt a call to ministry is 29, overall, but 16 for Millennials and 24 for Generation X leaders. The research notes that this may be because leaders in these generations have just now or not yet reached the average age when one feels called to ministry (pg. 42). Millennials are also far less likely to begin ministry in a particular parish as a volunteer (thirty-one percent) than their older counterparts (Generation X, fifty-one percent; Boomers seventy-one percent).

11. In several areas, parish leaders who are Post-Vatican II (who are known in other studies as "GenersationXers") reported significantly different perspectives than their younger peers in the young adult age range, the Millennials. For example, twenty-three percent of Generation X parish leaders reported the sense of community within their parish was "poor" or "fair" compared to only 15 percent of Millennials (pg. 57). In this one example alone, the older cohort of young adults views this question quite differently than the younger cohort.   Other questions in the study also showed a divergence between the older and younger ends of the "young adult" spectrum. Major findings indicate that the majority of parish leaders self-identify as white, and the distribution of ethnicity is related to the age of parish leaders and the composition of the Catholic population within generations (pg. 2). Fifty-eight percent of Millennial and forty-percent of Generation X parish leaders reported that the racial and ethnic make up of their parish is reflected "very little" or "not at all" (pg. 112) in its leadership

12. Two particular studies that touch on the social networking aspect of young adulthood today include: *Friends and Friendships in Emerging Adulthood*, a 2010 essay by Carolyn McNamara Barry of Loyola University Maryland and Stephanie D. Madsen of McDaniel College (http://www.changingsea.org/barry.php), and *Media in the Lives of Young Adults: Implications for Religious Organizations*, a 2010 essay by Jill Dierberg and Lynn Schofield Clark of the University of Denver (http://www.changingsea.org/dierberg.php), both of which were part of the Changing Spirituality of Emerging Adults Project (http://www.changingsea.org), organized through the Institute of Policy Research at the Catholic University of America.

13. Generation X parish leaders are more likely to rate their parishes as being either excellent or poor in providing a sense of community as compared to other cohorts, which gave their parishes slightly less extreme ratings (pg. 57). Millennials are less likely than Generation X leaders to report that their parish is successful at providing social activities and programs (thirty-eight percent and twenty-three percent, respectively) (pg. 82). Generation Xers are also more positive regarding ministry to young adults than are Millennials. Thirty-one percent of Generation X ministers report that their parish is very much successful in ministering to young adults, while only fifteen percent of Millennial parish leaders report the same (pg. 85). Further, both Generation X and Millennial parish leaders indicated that outreach to inactive Catholics needs to be improved, with fifty-seven percent of Generation X and

seventy-five percent of Millennial parish leaders reporting that their parish is a little or not at all successful in outreach to inactive Catholics, a population made up largely of young adults. Younger parish leaders are also more likely to use social media for their ministry, particularly Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter (pg. 118).

14. While other studies on Millennial young adults report their high comfort level interacting with older generations, this study did not specifically investigate this issue. However, with fifty-four percent of Millennials enrolled or previously enrolled in a diocesan agency training program and sixty-two percent enrolled or previously enrolled in a college or university (pg. 25-26), it seems that Millennial church workers are not averse to learning from older teachers, diocesan leaders, and mentor figures who often lead these formation programs. In addition, when asked how they were introduced to lay ecclesial ministry, a good number of Millennials stated that they were encouraged to enter this profession by teachers and professors (forty-six percent) or religious brothers and sisters (thirty-one percent) (pg. 50), again confirming this finding.

15. Eighty-three percent of Millennial parish leaders reported that they "very much" consider their ministry or service a calling or vocation (pg. 52), despite being a small percentage of the overall church workforce.

16. This data is taken from a variety of sources including *The Changing Face of U.S. Catholic Parishes*, by Mark M. Gray, Mary L. Gautier, and Melissa A. Cidade (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, CARA, at Georgetown University, 2011), specifically pgs. 55-61.

17. Gray, Mark M. *Perspectives from Parish Leaders: U.S. Parish Life and Ministry*. Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University. Washington, DC, 2012. pg. 40.

18. Ibid. pgs. 25-26.

19. Ibid. pgs. 47-48. NOTE: To be completely transparent, though, it should be noted that the question asked was "Did you start ministry or service *at this parish* as a volunteer?" (emphasis added) This would indicate that young adults could have begun their service to the Church as a volunteer (like other generations); what is distinct, however, is that the vast majority of Millennials don't volunteer in the parish in which they work before their time of employment, while a significant percentage of older generations do follow this pathway.

20. Ibid. pg. 43.

21. Ibid. pgs. 35-36.

22. Ibid. pg. 54.

23. Ibid. pg. 59.

24. Ibid. pg. 65.

25. Ibid. pg. 71.

26. Ibid. pg. 85.

27. Ibid. pg. 96.

28. Pope Benedict XVI, Homily, Sunday, Oct. 7, 2012 in Vatican City, Rome: http://www.news.va/en/news/pope-opens-synod-the-church-exists-to-evangelize

29. Gray, *Perspectives from Parish Leaders.* pg. 64.

30. Ibid. pg. 40.

31. Ibid. pgs. 117-118.

32. Ibid. pg. 114.

33. Ibid. pg. 77.

34. Ibid. pg. 15.

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