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**THE ROLE OF THE LAY CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL
IN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH
IN MBARARA ARCHDIOCESE (UGANDA)
IN LIGHT OF ITS FIRST SYNOD**

by
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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Canon Law,
Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Canada, in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Canon Law

Ottawa, Canada
Saint Paul University
2000

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The mission of the Church is essentially to build up the Body of Christ and to work for the salvation of souls. This mission pertains to all the members of Christ's faithful, namely the clergy, the religious, and the lay faithful, but each one according to their own condition and office.

The focus of this study is a historical and systematic analysis of the role of the lay members of Christ's faithful in the mission of the Church in Mbarara Archdiocese (Uganda). This is done in light of the first diocesan synod of Mbarara that took place in 1986. The synod was an occasion of self reflection for the diocese and a way of seeking answers that concern its mission to the people of God so as to deepen their Christian life.

The history of the Church in Uganda in general, and Mbarara in particular, testifies to the positive contribution of the lay Christian faithful in the evangelization and growth of the Church in these areas. The lay catechists and lay Christian community leaders have worked side by side with missionaries and priests since the inception of the Catholic faith in Uganda till the present day. The lay faithful's role in the mission and ministry of the Church is more noticeable in those church structures below the parish level that have infrequent visits of priests and yet there is a lively practice of the faith at these levels. The role of the lay faithful in Mbarara is not limited to manifesting Christ to others by the witness of their life in secular work and business and in the ordinary circumstances social and family life. They have been, in accordance with the norms of Church law, brought to actively participate with the clergy in the pastoral ministry of the Church in the archdiocese.

The analysis of the synodal acts shows the part played by the lay faithful in the proclamation of the word of God, their participation in fostering sacramental life in their Christian communities, their role in the administration of the temporal goods of the Church. Their role in promoting the social welfare of the people of God in the Archdiocese of Mbarara is in this study shown as a major component of their mission. The dissertation shows the lay person in the mission of the Church in Mbarara as an evangelizer, catechist, Christian/spiritual leader, parent, educator, and social worker.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to my Archbishop Paul K. Bakyenga of Mbarara, for having sent me to pursue canon law studies. For his financial and moral support I am very thankful.

Sincere gratitude is due to Professor William H. Woestman, O.M.I, for his wisdom, kindness and patience while directing this dissertation.

I acknowledge with gratitude the following people who read parts of this dissertation and offered valuable suggestions: Professor Peter Kanyandago of Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi, Rev. Aelred Daley, Rev. Bonaventure Turyomumazima, and Mr. Enoka Bainomugisha.

I am grateful to Msgr. John Barugahare, the episcopal vicar for the laity of Mbarara Archdiocese for providing valuable information on the mission of the laity in Mbarara. I thank also Rev. Sebastian Tumusiime the secretary to the archbishop of Mbarara for his assistance in sending me relevant documents for this study from the archives of Mbarara Archdiocese.

Sincere thanks are due to Professor Roch Pagé, the Dean, and the members of the Faculty of Canon Law for their support and encouragement during my studies at Saint Paul University.

The Missionaries of Africa, the White Fathers, of the North American Province offered me bursaries that enabled me to complete a major part of my studies at Saint Paul University. To them I am very grateful. Special mention here is made of Rev. Guy Larouche for his friendship and support during my stay in Ottawa.

The priests, staff and parish community of Saint Patrick's Basilica are remembered with gratitude for providing me accommodation during my studies, thus making me feel at home away from home. Special mention is made of Msgr. Robert Martineau, Rev. Stephen Amesse, Msgr. Francis French, Deacon James Scheer, Peggy Gregoire, Penny Schillaci, Patrick Kipp, Berman Guevara, Mr. and Mrs. Brian Geraghty, and Beatrice McNamara.

Lastly, I wish to thank Gilberte Carrière of St. André Avellin, Quebec, for her material and moral support, friendship and constant encouragement.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i>
AFER	<i>African Ecclesiastical Review</i>
AMECEA	Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa
Act	Acts of the Apostles
Ap	Apocalypse
CBHC	Community Based Health Care
CL	<i>Christifideles laici</i>
CMS	Church Missionary Society
Const	Constitution
Cor	Corinthians
CT	<i>Catechesi Tradendae</i>
Deut	Deuteronomy
Gal	Galatians
Gen	Genesis
gen.	general
Heb	Hebrews
Jer	Jeremiah
Jn	John
LAM	Lay Apostolate Movements
Lev	Leviticus
Lk	Luke
Mt	Matthew
n.d	no date
n.p	no page(s)
Pt	Peter
RCIA	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
REC/SR	Recommendation on the Sanctifying Role of the Church
Rev	Revelation

INTRODUCTION

At the third ordinary assembly of the Synod of Bishops held in Rome, 27 September–26 October 1974, the African bishops said:

We must continue to make use, and more use of the laity not just for administration but also for evangelization and pastoral care. And let it not be thought that it is just expedient for dealing with the shortage of priests, but remember rather that it is a part of the layman's function in the Church. (...). More responsibility should be given to the lay people as leaders, not only to relieve the priests from their heavy duties but also so as to let the laity participate more in the life of the Church, thus becoming an integral part of it¹

The issue raised by the bishops is very pertinent to the situation of Mbarara Archdiocese. The diocese is now sixty three years old, with a Catholic population of 797,480, covering an area of 10,980 square kilometres. It presently has 104 diocesan priests working in parishes and other diocesan, national and regional institutions. This situation calls for particular attention on the part of the diocesan authorities if the diocese is to cope with the growing numbers of her members and the disproportionate growth of the priestly ordinations in the diocese. The history of the Church in Uganda and in Mbarara in particular shows the indefatigable role of the lay Christian faithful in the work of evangelization in various places where priests could not reach because they were few in number or even at times not there. There are many outstation churches in various dioceses of Uganda and parishes of Mbarara that pass more than a year without having a priest to visit them. These stations are under the pastoral care of the lay Christian faithful. Their efforts need to be enhanced by the Church authorities. Their willingness to serve is an invaluable resource to the Church if they are well directed.

The dissertation will focus on the role of the lay members of Christ's faithful in the Church of Mbarara Archdiocese and propose ways of involving them more in her ministry as one of the answers to the situation presented above. The dissertation will treat the role of the lay faithful not as a replacement of the clergy's role but as one of partnership in the one mission of the Church.

In 1986, Mbarara celebrated her first diocesan synod. The synod was an occasion of

¹ A. FORNASARI. "New Forms of Ecclesial Community without the Permanent Presence of a Priest," in *The Laity Today*, 23/24 (1977), pp. 81-82.

self reflection for the diocese and a way of seeking answers to the prevailing situation so as to deepen the Christian life of the people of God in Mbarara.² Although the synod was not specifically on the laity, the laity and their apostolate were discussed at length at one of the synod sessions. Their mission and participation in Church ministry were discussed at various synod sessions. The published synodal acts contain many instances where the lay faithful's roles were highlighted. Moreover, of the 150 synod participants 105 were lay people. Their participation in the synod is not only judged by the large number of the attendants but also by the lively discussions and some position papers they presented.

This study will attempt to answer the following three questions:

—What is the position of the lay Christian faithful in the Church?

—How have the lay Christian faithful been involved in the Church of Mbarara?

—How much more can the lay Christian faithful participate in the mission of the Church in Mbarara?

The first question aims at reflecting on the canonical and theological principles concerning the status of the lay Christian faithful in the Church. The second question will examine what has so far been the involvement of the lay Christian faithful in the mission of the church of Mbarara. The third question aims at proposing areas of active involvement of the lay Christian faithful in the mission of the Church in Mbarara.

The study proceeds in four chapters:

Chapter one will explain the major concepts in the dissertation that concern the lay faithful and their role. Church documents and other pertinent writings that reflect on the status, mission, and role of the lay Christian faithful in the Church in general will be analysed.

Chapter two will be a historical assessment of the beginnings of the Catholic Church in Uganda and Mbarara. It will trace the involvement of the lay Christian faithful in the mission of the Church in these areas. The diocesan structures of Mbarara will be studied and shown how they involve the lay faithful. Areas that are particularly related to lay mission and ministry such as Eucharistic centres, catechists, laity council, and lay apostolate movements

² Cf. J.B. KAKUBI, *Opening Speech at the First Diocesan*, Kitabi Seminary, 26 August 1986, p. 1, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

are also subjects of our study.

Chapter three will concern the involvement of the lay faithful in the first synod of Mbarara. The synod, however, was not the first pastoral assembly of Mbarara. It had been preceded by five pastoral conferences. These will also be discussed in relation to the mission of the laity.

Chapter four will be a documentary analysis of the 1986 diocesan synodal acts. These contain the current diocesan law and guidelines concerning the lay faithful's role in the mission of the Church in Mbarara.

The study therefore will attempt to present a spectrum of the involvement of the laity in the mission of the Church in Mbarara since its beginning as a vicariate till the time of its first synod. It is in light of this synod that one may look back into the history of Mbarara to see how much has so far been pastorally accomplished.

The names of Mbarara Diocese and Mbarara Archdiocese are used frequently in this study. These refer to the same ecclesiastical circumscription of Mbarara. Mbarara became an archdiocese in 1999 and so documents before then refer to Mbarara as a diocese. It goes without saying that the first synod of Mbarara took place when Mbarara was just a diocese. It belonged at that time to the ecclesiastical province of Kampala.

This study has been accomplished against some odds. It was difficult to procure some pertinent documents and material information from the diocesan archives of Mbarara. Some documents dispatched through the post office took time to arrive, and others could not be procured from the archives. Some of the documents did not have clear pagination and some were not dated. Despite these hurdles, we are confident that major documentary sources from Mbarara that were necessary to cover this study were consulted.

It is hoped that this study will make a contribution towards the pastoral ministry of the Church in Mbarara, and a practical application of the norms of canon law that were treated in this study.

CHAPTER ONE

THE LAY FAITHFUL IN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The laity, like any other members of Christ's faithful, become members of the Church through baptism. As members of the Church they have a specific role to play in the mission of the Church. This chapter, will in light of the law and teaching of the Church, explore the status of the lay Christian faithful in the Church and their role in its mission.

1.1 —Introductory Concepts

The laity cannot carry out their role, be it the one particular to them in virtue of their baptism or the one deputed to them by the hierarchy of the Church, in isolation. The following concepts contextualize the laity in relation to other members of the Church and identify their area of activity in the mission and ministry of the Church.

1.1.1 —The People of God

The second book of the revised Code of Canon Law has "The People of God" as its title. The concept, though wide as it seems in its meaning, must be seen within a specific context so as not to include every human being among the designated people of God, which is not the intention of the code. The Second Vatican Council, on which the revised Code of canon law is based, gives the said context. The Council used the "People of God" as its key description of the mystery of the Church present on earth.¹ The Council characterized the people as messianic and priestly; it is unique; it is gathered together from diverse peoples and is itself the Church and the Body of Christ.²

The Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, specifically distinguishes the people of God from the rest of humanity. According to *Lumen gentium*, "All men are called to belong to the new people of God. This people therefore, whilst remaining one and only one, is to be spread throughout the whole world and all ages in order that the design of God's will may be fulfilled (...)."³ *Lumen gentium* goes on to

¹ See J. PROVOST, "The People of God," in J.A. CORIDEN, T.J. GREEN, and D.E. HEINTSCHEL, eds., *The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, New York, Paulist Press, 1985, p. 117.

² *Ibid.*

³ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, 21 November 1964, no. 13, in *AAS*, 57 (1965), pp. 5-71, English translation in A. FLANNERY, gen. ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Document* (= FLANNERY I), Northport, New York, Costello Publishing

consider all those people who are in one way or another associated with the Catholic Church either by communion or belief in Jesus Christ as the people of God.⁴ Related to the people of God are those who have not yet received the gospel but believe in God and even those who through no fault of their own do not know Christ's gospel or his Church, but seek God with a sincere heart and do the will of God following the dictates of their conscience.⁵

Be that as it may, the term "People of God," in line with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, has designations such as communion, community, congregation, assembly, gathering, each with its own nuance but truly concrete and truly applicable to a plurality of human persons, and in this case, those called by God to be his own and to be Christ's.⁶ It is a theological concept rooted in the teachings of the Council emphasizing the basic unity and social nature of the Church in which there is an essential unity of all believers within the framework of a hierarchical structure.⁷ The revised Code of Canon Law has integrated the concept of the Church as the people of God in its legislation promoting the basic equality of the members of Christ's faithful (canon 208) based on their baptism, common vocation to holiness (canon 210), and call to eternal life in Christ (canon 1752). The presentation of the rights and obligations of all the members of Christ's faithful (canons 208-223) puts into practical effect the Council's teaching on unity that exists among the people of God whether they are lay, ordained, or consecrated members of religious institutes.

The people therefore are the Church.⁸ The baptized and believing people, who are in communion with Christ and with one another, constitute the Church in the world.⁹

The term "People of God" is not an invention of the Code of Canon Law. Although it was not in common usage before the Second Vatican Council, it traces its origin from the Old Testament referring to Israel, the holy people consecrated to Yahweh, put aside for him

Company, 1975, p. 364.

⁴ See *ibid.*, no. 15, in FLANNERY I, pp. 366-367.

⁵ *Ibid.*, in FLANNERY I, p. 367.

⁶ See F. MCMANUS, "Laity in Church Law: New Code, New Focus," in *The Jurist*, 47 (1987), p. 15.

⁷ J. PROVOST, "The People of God," p. 117.

⁸ See J. CORIDEN, *An Introduction to Canon Law*, New York, Paulist Press, 1991, p. 55.

⁹ *Ibid.*

(Deut 7:6; 14:2), his own possession (Ex 19:5; Jer 2:3).¹⁰

In the New Testament:

by the new covenant sealed in the blood of Jesus, God had therefore created a new people, for whom the word of scripture is fulfilled in its plenitude: "You shall be my people and I will be your God (2 Cor 6:16; cf Lev 26:12; Heb 8:10; cf Jer 31:33; Ap 21:3). This is the people for whose sins Jesus atoned (Heb 2:17), the people he sanctified by his own blood (Heb 13:12), the people of whom one becomes a member by faith (Gal 3:7; R 4:3...). Thus the titles of Israel are now transferred to this new people: the special people of God (Titus 2:14; cf Deut 7:6), chosen race, holy nation, (...).¹¹

Congar brings out well the meaning of the term "People of God" both in the Old and the New Testaments. His reflection also aptly renders the meaning of the term in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. He points out:

The category people of God as is found in scripture makes it possible to affirm both the equality of the faithful in the dignity of the Christian existence and the organic or functional inequality of the members. Israel had realized that the priestly and the kingly character of the people as such (...) Did not prevent but rather required the existence of a priesthood instituted and ordered for the service of public worship. The priestly, kingly and prophetic people, the people wholly consecrated and witnessing, was organized according to priestly and prophetic functions (*inequality*). (...). In this connection the concept of the "body" (*equality*) would serve equally well as that of "people". It is likewise a kind of type or model for Christian realities, according to which these realities are conceived. There is always a totality of members, all living and active, all sharing in the quality and dignity of the life of the body and a structure of functions with a head that gives unity and controls the conduct of all. In a people, all citizens participate in the life of the city and perform specific tasks.¹²

Book II of the 1917 Code of Canon Law following the plan of Justinian used the title *De personis*. The introductory canon stated that an individual was by baptism constituted a person in the Church, and the same canon was followed by twenty four canons corresponding to the present code's Title VI of Book I "Physical and Juridic Persons." Book II was divided

¹⁰ P. GRELOT, "People," translated by J.J. KILGALLEN, in X. LEON-DUFOUR, ed., *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, updated second edition, London, Geoffrey Chapman, 1988, p. 416.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 421

¹² Y. CONGAR, "The Church: The People of God," in *Concilium*, 1 (1965), p.12 (emphasis added).

in three parts: the clergy, religious, and laity. The 1983 Code of Canon Law begins Book II with four introductory canons, and then has three parts, namely, "Christ's Faithful," The Hierarchical Constitution of the Church," and "Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life."¹³

There is therefore a significant change in the revised Code of Canon Law. The reason for this is for the Code to correspond to the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council.¹⁴ John Paul II in the Apostolic Constitution *Sacrae disciplinae leges*, emphasizes the elements which were held by the Second Vatican Council that "express the true and authentic image of the Church."¹⁵ These are stipulated in the revised code of canon law. They are:

the teaching whereby the Church is presented as the people of God (cf. Const. *Lumen gentium*, no. 2) and its hierarchical authority of service (ibid no. 3); the further teaching which portrays the Church as a communion and then spells out the mutual relationships which must intervene between the particular and the universal Church, and between collegiality and primacy; likewise the teaching by which all the members of the people of God share, each in their own measure, in the threefold priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, with which teaching is associated also that which looks to the duties and rights of Christ's faithful and specifically the laity; and lastly the assiduity which the Church must devote to ecumenism.¹⁶

The term "People of God" is closely related to the concept of Christ's faithful. Canon 204, §1 defines Christ's faithful as:

(...) those who, since they are incorporated into Christ through baptism are constituted the people of God. For this reason they participate in their own way in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ. They are called each according to his or her particular condition to exercise the mission which God entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world.¹⁷

¹³ See W. H. WOESTMAN, "Christ's Faithful (cc. 204-329)", unpublished class notes for the private use of the students, Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1997-1998, p. 1.

¹⁴ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacrae disciplinae leges*, 25 January 1983, in AAS, 75 (1983), pp. 7-14, English translation, in *The Code of Canon Law in English Translation*, prepared by THE CANON LAW SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND in association with THE CANON LAW SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND and THE CANADIAN CANON LAW SOCIETY, New revised, London, Sydney, Dublin, Collins, 1997, p. xiv.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *The Code of Canon Law in English Translation*, prepared by THE CANON LAW SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND, in association with THE CANON LAW SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND and THE

All Christians and not only Catholics are Christ's faithful. Thus, some of the faithful are in full communion with the Catholic Church, some are not. The law of the Church (Catholic Church), is addressed to those who are in full communion with the Catholic Church (canon 11)¹⁸ and, therefore, "are joined with Christ in his visible body, through the bonds of profession of faith, the sacraments and ecclesiastical governance" (canon 205). And they are joined in the visible structure of the Church of Christ who rules through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops.

All the faithful share one salvation, one hope, and one undivided charity. Hence they have the true equality with regard to the dignity and responsibility for building up the body of Christ (apostolate - *Lumen gentium*, no. 32). There is diversity, however, in carrying out the responsibilities pertaining to the mission of the Church. Each of the faithful does so according to his or her condition of life as well as his or her specific vocation.¹⁹ In short, one becomes a faithful of Christ by baptism and is thereby incorporated into the people of God.

Although there is a close relationship between the terms, "People of God" and "Christ's Faithful," the two terms do not exactly have the same meaning. Comparatively, the former is generic and the latter is more specific. The latter is part of the former. For example, whereas the "People of God" traces its origin from the Old Testament in reference to Yahweh's chosen people of Israel and embraces the believers and followers of Christ in the New Testament, the history of "Christ's Faithful" can only be inferred from the New Testament, referring specifically to those who have been baptized in the Church of Christ. The "People of God" as already indicated above refers to baptized believers in Christ, but a relationship exists between them and members of other non-Christian religions like Jews and Moslems, and even those who through no fault of their own do not know the gospel but seek God with a sincere heart and try to do his will following the dictates of their conscience (*Lumen gentium*, no. 16). These two concepts are important in the context of this study. They

CANADIAN CANON LAW SOCIETY, New revised, London, Sydney, Dublin, Collins, 1997.

¹⁸ Within the Catholic Church there are members of the Latin rite and those of the Oriental Catholic Churches sui iuris. Members of all these Churches are in the full communion of the Catholic Church.

¹⁹ See J. HERVADA, "Christ's Faithful," in E. CAPARROS, M. THERIAULT, and J. THORN, eds., *Code of Canon Law Annotated*, Montréal, Wilson & Lafleur Limited, 1993, p. 185.

situate the identity of the laity and point to their mission in the Church, their relationship with members of non-Christian religions and non-Catholic Christians. It should be noted however, that the term “Christ’s Faithful” as used in the Code of Canon Law and in the context of this study, refers to all the baptized Catholics, that is, the laity, the clergy, and the religious.

1.1.2 —The Laity

The Second Vatican Council gave the description of the laity as follows:

The term *laity* (...) is understood to mean all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state approved by the Church. That is, the faithful who by baptism are incorporated into Christ, are placed into the people of God, and in their own way share the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, and to the best of their ability, carry on the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world.²⁰

The description defines the *laity* negatively as those who are not in Holy Orders, or who do not belong to the religious life, and positively because of their baptism and active role in the people of God.²¹

A truly positive approach to the lay identity and apostolic action begins with the baptismal status common to all the Christians, and includes the equality and dignity of all the Christian faithful as well as their common obligation for building up the Church.²² Baptism makes all Christ’s faithful fundamentally equal in the Church, whether ordained or non-ordained. They are, therefore, subject to all the obligations and rights that pertain to all the faithful of Christ as are stipulated in canons 208-223 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law. So what is said of all Christ’s faithful is also said of the laity.

The laity therefore, like all Christ’s faithful are to strive for holiness, to conquer sin (*Lumen gentium*, no. 65), and to promote God’s glory (*Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 11). They, as individuals or organizations, share in the apostolate of the whole Church.²³ Their

²⁰ *Lumen gentium*, no. 31, in FLANNERY I, pp. 388-389.

²¹ See A. PREW-WINTERS, “Who is a Lay Person?” in *The Jurist*, 47 (1987), p. 55.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ See SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, 18 November 1965, no. 23, in *AAS*, 58 (1966), pp.837-864, English translation in FLANNERY I, p. 789.

presence in these human groups should be animated with the love of God.²⁴ They labour and collaborate with others in the affairs of economic and social life.

In addition to the obligations and rights that pertain to all Christ's faithful, each category of Christ's faithful has its particular obligations to carry out and rights to exercise in the Church of Christ. Thus canons 224-231 of the 1983 code of canon law present the obligations and rights of all lay members of Christ's faithful, canons 273-289 deal with the obligations and rights of clerics, while canons 662-672 concern the obligations and rights of the religious members of Christ's faithful and their institutes.

John P. McIntyre observes that the term "Christ's faithful" (*Christifideles*) represents an abstraction. It is a legal fiction and as a legal fiction it is meant to indicate the radical equality of all the baptized anterior to any other juridic determination. He remarks that because everyone belongs either to the laity or clergy (the religious belong to either side because they include both clerics and/or non clerics), the *Christifideles* (as a separate entity) do not exist.²⁵ It is the aforesaid juridic determination that distinguishes between the clergy or religious from the lay *Christifideles*. Thus the religious are distinct from the laity by virtue of their religious vows. The clergy's distinction springs from their ordination to ministerial priesthood,²⁶ baptism brings all the three states of life together.

According to the teaching of *Lumen gentium*, no. 10, there is a real and essential difference between the ministry of the ordained and that of other Christ's faithful.²⁷ The ordained priesthood, however, is not a rival or a superior grade of the common priesthood, but simply a ministry of a different kind.²⁸ Moreover, both kinds are ordered one to another and each one of them in its own proper way shares in the one priesthood of Christ.

What specifically differentiates the laity from the rest of Christ's faithful, is what the

²⁴ See SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, *Ad gentes divinitus*, 7 December 1965, no. 12, in *AAS*, 58 (1966), pp. 947-990, English translation in FLANNERY I, p. 825.

²⁵ See J. P. MCINTYRE, *The Law of Persons: Clergy and Laity (Canons 204-297)*, unpublished class notes for the private use of students, Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1995-1996, p. 9.

²⁶ See A. PREW-WINTERS, "Who is a Lay Person?" p. 61.

²⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 62.

²⁸ See A. DULLES, "Can the Word 'Laity' be Defined?" in *Origins*, 18 (1988), p. 471.

Second Vatican Council attributed to the laity, the “secular character.”²⁹ Ordinarily then the laity will seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and in seeking to order human society according to the plan of God.³⁰ This however, does not exclude the priest and the religious from secular affairs as much as it does not exclude the laity from their active involvement in the Church.³¹ Pertinent here are the words of M. Galli expressing the attitude of the Second Vatican Council on the relationship between the laity and the Church, in the world:

Lay people are not in the Church only to be saved, they are themselves part of salvation, they are the Church—and also the world. Church and the world are the work of the divine Word, the world searching for itself, finds the Church. The Church searching for the world, finds itself.³²

We have so far attempted to identify the laity. Their role and participation in the Church’s mission and ministry will be seen later in the development of this study.

1.1.3 —Church Ministry

Ministry is not a clear-cut term with well defined meanings.³³ Sometimes it is used synonymously with mission or apostolate. Nevertheless, ministry seems to have a signification that is different from these other two terms although all do overlap in meaning.

Mission is an act of being sent to foster the emergence of God’s reign. Jesus’ mission was to bring good news to the poor (Lk 4:18-19), to make people share in the communion between him, and the Father, and their Spirit of love.³⁴ Jesus entrusted the same mission to his Church through his disciples to “...Go and make disciples of all nations...” (Mt 28:18-20). So the mission of the Church is one to work for the salvation of souls, but is carried out in a diversity of ministries.³⁵

²⁹ *Lumen gentium*, no. 31, in FLANNERY I, p.388.

³⁰ See A. DULLES, “Can the Word ‘Laity’ Be Defined?” p.472.

³¹ See *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 9, in FLANNERY I, pp. 776-777.

³² M. GALLI, *The Council and the Future*, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966, p. 198.

³³ See J. BERNADIN, “In Service of One Another,” in *Origins*, 15 (1985), p. 135.

³⁴ See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, English translation, Ottawa, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1994, no. 850.

³⁵ See *ibid.*, no. 873.

The Second Vatican Council's Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, *Ad gentes*, viewed the means of carrying out, and the aim of the Church's mission thus:

The mission of the Church is carried out by means of that activity through which, in obedience to Christ's command and moved by the grace and love of the Holy Spirit, the Church makes itself fully present to all people and nations in order to lead them to the faith, freedom and peace of Christ by the example of its life and teaching, by the sacraments and other means of grace. Its aim is to open up for all people a free and sure path to full participation in the mystery of Christ.³⁶

The mission of the Church is twofold. First, to procure the glory of God through the salvation of all people regardless of race or culture, hence the care of souls. Second, it has a social role to play.

As a representative of God the Church cannot remain indifferent to human problems but considers essential to her mission to collaborate with civic groups in laying a social foundation. So far as it concerns the attainment of this last end, the whole of man's activity, both in private and in the family, as well as in the public and social spheres, comes within the scope of the Church's mission. Since the Church's authority extends to the whole of the domain of the natural law, it is concerned with political and social questions to the degree that these are connected with man's spiritual interests. The Church supports and protects the material well-being of men, inspires and promotes true civilization by penetrating society with Christian thinking, seeks to unite all classes of men among themselves and thus helps to effect a just social order. By reason of the social order, and by the exercise of her sanctifying mission, which recalls men to their duties and molds morality in conformity with the gospel, the Church establishes the social bases of society. Finally by reason of her supernatural character, she makes a powerful contribution to peace among nations by the bonds of grace that she establishes among citizens of various nations.³⁷

These two aspects of the mission (the spiritual and the social) are well summed up in canon 275, § 2. The canon acknowledges that the lay faithful exercise a mission in the Church and in the world. Under the spiritual aspect, mission is also given connotation. For instance canon 770 talks of parish mission. A parish mission is a "systematic set of sermons, instructions and

³⁶ *Ad gentes*, no. 5, in FLANNERY I, p. 818.

³⁷ R. HOFFMAN, "Mission," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967, vol. IX, p. 904.

pious exercises designed for the spiritual renewal in a parish.”³⁸

Before the Second Vatican Council the word “ministry” was used in relation to the clergy and to the power and authority of ecclesiastical office.³⁹ The council widened the scope of the term “ministry” to include the non ordained. J. Coriden rightly notes:

(...) the most important development in the exercise of ministry since the council is the dispersion of ministerial roles. The multitude of ministerial tasks formerly performed almost exclusively by priests, are now being diversified and diffused throughout the believing community.⁴⁰

Lumen gentium 28, speaks of Church ministry:

Christ, whom the Father has hallowed and sent into the world, has through his apostles, made their successors, the bishops (...), sharers in his consecration and mission; and these, in their turn, duly entrusted in varying degrees various members of the Church with the office of their ministry. Thus the divinely instituted ecclesiastical ministry is exercised in different degrees by those who even from ancient times have been called bishops, priests and deacons.

This understanding limits ecclesiastical ministry to the ordained. This does not limit the scope of ministry though, because it is within the hierarchical context of the Church, and ministry referred to here is for the ordained. Elsewhere in the documents of the council, ministry is given a wider scope. For instance, The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, number 29 refers to servers, readers, commentators, and choir members as exercising a genuine function. “It is a real liturgical ministry to which they are called through commission and for which they do not have to be equipped merely by delegation from the priestly celebrant.”⁴¹

“Ministry” is applied to music and sacred art (*Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 112) which promote worship and glorification of God in sacred liturgy. Sacred music and art are

³⁸ F.G. MORRISSEY, “The Teaching Office of the Church,” in G. SHEEHY et al., eds., *The Canon Law Letter & Spirit: A Practical Guide to the Code of Canon Law*, Collegeville, Minnesota. The Liturgical Press, 1995, p. 426.

³⁹ See E. RINERE, “Conciliar and Canonical Applications of ‘Ministry’ to the Laity,” in *The Jurist*, 47 (1987) pp. 204, 219; cf. T.F. O’MEARA, *Theology of Ministry*, New York, Paulist, 1983, p. 138.

⁴⁰ J.A. CORIDEN, “Ministry,” in *Chicago Studies*, 15 (1976), p.305.

⁴¹ J.A. JUNGSMANN, “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy,” translated by L. ADOLPHUS, in H. VORGRIMMLER, gen. ed., *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Freiburg, Herder and Herder, 1967, vol. I, p. 22.

areas open to all members of Christ's faithful, laity, religious and clerics. So these areas "are examples of the accepted degree of interchange between the lay and clerical spheres of activity. The laity are welcomed into active participation in the internal liturgical life of the Church."⁴²

In the context of the references given above, "ministry" brings the laity into an activity which pertains to the hierarchical office, the office of sanctifying. It is in the same way that number 6 of the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, sees ministry. It states:

The Church's mission is concerned with the salvation of men; and men win salvation through the grace of Christ and faith in him. The apostolate of the Church therefore, and each of its members, aims primarily at announcing to the world by word and action the message of Christ and communicating to it the grace of Christ. The principal means of bringing this about is the ministry of the word and of the sacraments. Committed in a special way to the clergy, it leaves room however for a highly important part for the laity, the part namely of "helping on the cause of truth" (3 Jn 8). It is in this sphere most of all that the lay apostolate and pastoral ministry complete each other.

The Decree on the Church's Missionary activity, *Ad gentes*, applies ministry to lay activity, to the catechists' work (*Ad gentes*, no. 15) and to missionary activity (*Ad gentes divinitus*, no. 26) which (missionary) activity involves clerics, religious and the lay faithful.

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, goes a step further than the documents seen above on the application of ministry to the lay faithful. It presents lay ministry as an ordinary lay activity in the world, as earthly service (*Gaudium et spes*, no. 38), safeguarding human life (*ibid.*, no. 51); service of security and liberty by soldiers (*ibid.*, no. 79).

Furthermore, "ministry" saw significant development after the Second Vatican Council. In 1972 Pope Paul VI abolished tonsure and minor orders of porter, exorcist, and subdiaconate, and in place of "minor orders" the term "ministries" was to be used.⁴³ Paul VI

⁴² E. RINERE, "Conciliar and Canonical Applications," p. 207.

⁴³ PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter, *Motu proprio*, On First Tonsure, Minor Orders and the Subdiaconate, *Ministeria quaedam*, 15 August 1972, in AAS, 64 (1972), pp. 529-534, English translation in FLANNERY I, pp. 427-429.

prescribed that “ministries may be committed to lay Christians . They are thus no longer to be regarded as reserved to candidates for the sacrament of orders.”⁴⁴ Episcopal conferences could even ask for the establishment of other ministries in their area. He also allowed the introduction of extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist. He “saw these not as accidental but as part of a broader understanding of lay ministry in the Church.”⁴⁵

Much more can be said about ministry, and a lot of writing has been done on this subject but no precise definition has so far been found to dispel the ambiguity that persists concerning the exact scope of ministry. Pope John Paul II’s view of ministry in his post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Christifideles laici*, seems to put this wide subject in perspective.

Pope John Paul II, in *Christifideles laici*, treats ministries under two categories namely ministries that come from the sacrament of orders (CL, no. 22), and those ministries that have their foundation in the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, and for a good many of the lay faithful in the sacrament of matrimony, and have a specific lay character (CL, no.23).

Ministry as such, is therefore no longer limited to the ordained but is open to all members of Christ’s faithful each according to their status (lay or ordained) in the Church and participation in the service and mission thereof. Be that as it may, there are elements common to all ministries whether lay or ordained. Any of these ministries is a service in the Church performed by a lay or ordained member of Christ’s faithful. It is a gift received in faith for the promotion of God’s kingdom. All these ministries are a participation in Jesus Christ’s own ministry as the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep (Jn 10:11).⁴⁶

The Code uses the term ‘*apostolate*’ on the other hand to refer to the mission of the whole Church as carried out by all Christ’s faithful (canon 225), the laity inclusive⁴⁷ (canon

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, in FLANNERY I, p. 429.

⁴⁵ C. O’DONNELL, *Ecclesia: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Church*, Collegeville, Minnesota, The Liturgical Press, 1996, p. 302.

⁴⁶ JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles laici* (= *Christifideles laici*), 20 December 1988, no. 21, in *AAS*, 81 (1989), pp. 393-521, English translation, Sherbrooke, Les Éditions Pauline, 1989, p. 50.

⁴⁷ See *ibid.*, no. 9.

229).

The three terms: *ministry*, *mission*, and *apostolate*, all point to the underlying principles of “building up the Body of Christ” and the “salvation of souls.” Ministry does this in a very specific way supported and designated by the Church so as to disclose the presence of God in some way in our human situations and to empower the people of God to live fully the mystery of God. It is distinguished from mission in that mission belongs to the nature of the Church (*Ad gentes*, no. 2) and is primarily *ad extra* or outward, whereas ministry is *ad intra*, inward in building up the communion of the Church,⁴⁸ although the word ‘mission’ is frequently used in terms of the apostolate of the Church (e.g. canons 801; 207; § 2, 313; 659 § 1; 667, § 1; 677, § 1).

Whereas there is diversity of ministries, they all contribute to the one mission of the Church. That ministry which is reserved for the ordained ministers is called *sacred* and that which is performed by the laity is called *lay ministry*.

So far the three concepts have been discussed following the maxim, *agere sequitur esse* (action follows being). The status of the subjects (*esse*—people of God, laity) and the activity in which their role is to be exercised (*agere*—Church mission and ministry) have been identified. For, the status determines the activity.

1.2 —The Laity in the 1917 Code of Canon Law

The 1917 code of canon law did not give a definition of a lay person. In attempting to treat the identity of the laity or lay persons, we shall consider three canons of the 1917 Code, namely, 87, 107, and 948.

Canon 87 states:

By baptism a human being becomes a person in the Church of Christ, with all the rights and duties of a Christian, unless as far as rights are concerned there is some obstacle impeding the bond of communion with the Church, or a censure inflicted by the Church.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ See C. O'DONNELL, *Ecclesia*, p. 303.

⁴⁹ “Baptismate homo constituitur in Ecclesia Christi persona cum omnibus et officiis, nisi, ad iura quod attinet, obstet obex, ecclesiasticae communionis vinculum impediens, vel lata ab Ecclesia censura” (see A. PREW-WINTERS, “Who is a Lay Person?” p. 52, for the English translation).

It stated that through baptism one becomes a person in the Church; hence, a subject of rights and duties. Baptism is a juridic act by which one enters the Church publicly. Canon 87 is an ontological definition of an individual in the Church.⁵⁰ There is no particular mention in this canon of the laity or any other status in the Church. This is a canon that concerned all the members of the Church. The canon is fundamental in seeking the identity and treating the rights and duties of any physical person in the Church of Christ. The laity like any other members of the Church, have to be baptized so as to belong to the Church and enjoy the rights as well as fulfil the duties that are expected of the members of the Church. It is therefore understood that for the laity to play any role in the mission of the Church they must have membership in it through baptism and they ought also to be free of a censure inflicted by the Church.

Canon 107 takes us a step further in the understanding of a lay person in the light of the 1917 Code. It stated: "By divine institution there are in the Church clergy distinct from laity, although not all degrees of clerics are of divine institution. Both clerics and laity may be religious."⁵¹ Although this canon did not specifically treat the laity, it narrowed down the scope of canon 87 by pointing to the distinction among the members of the Church, the laity included. From the canon we can infer that the laity are the baptized members of the Church, who are neither the clergy nor the religious. They depend on the clergy for the reception of sacraments.⁵² The distinction between the clergy and the laity is of divine origin as defined by the Council of Trent.⁵³

Canon 107 is the leading canon in the 1917 Code's treatment of clerics. It is found in the second book of the Code, "On Persons" and it opens the book's legislation on the order

⁵⁰ See A. PREW-WINTERS, "Who is a Lay Person?" p. 53.

⁵¹ "Ex divina institutione sunt in Ecclesia clerici a laici distincti, licet non omnes clerici sint divinae institutionis; utrisque autem possunt esse *religiosi*" (see A. PREW-WINTERS, "Who is a Lay Person?" p. 53, for English translation).

⁵² See J.A. ABBO and J.D. HANNAN, *The Sacred Canons: A Concise Presentation of the Current Disciplinary Norms of the Church*, vol. I, rev. ed., St. Louis, MO., B. Herder Book Co., 1952, p.158.

⁵³ "If anyone says that by sacred ordination the Holy Ghost is not imparted and that therefore the bishops say in vain: *receive ye the Holy Ghost*, or that by it a character is not imparted, or that he who has once been a priest can again become a layman, let him be anathema" (COUNCIL OF TRENT, Twenty-third session, canons on the sacrament of order, canon. 4, in H.J. SCHROEDER, *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Rockford, Illinois, Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1978, p. 163).

of the hierarchy.⁵⁴ The placement of the canon in the 1917 Code indicated that the code was here concerned with clergy and the ordering of the hierarchy, not with matters of the laity. It is also clear from the context of canon 107 that the distinction between clerics and laity is a matter of the internal ordering of the Church.⁵⁵

The clergy constitute the sacred governmental authority of the Church invested with power of orders and power of jurisdiction, according to rank.⁵⁶ All clerics however do not have the same rank. There is among them the hierarchy of orders and the hierarchy of jurisdiction.⁵⁷ "The hierarchy of orders is the power which of its nature directly promotes the sanctification and the salvation of the faithful through public worship, especially through the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and the administration of the sacraments."⁵⁸ It is acquired through a sacred rite and once it is acquired it is never lost, and any exercise of it after it has been acquired is valid although sometimes it can be illicit. The hierarchy of jurisdiction is the power of governing the faithful in order that they may be brought to eternal life. It is acquired through a canonical mission and it can be revoked which makes its exercise thereafter invalid.⁵⁹

According to the 1917 Code of Canon Law, a man became a cleric at the reception of the first tonsure.⁶⁰ The following were clerics: porter, lector, exorcist, acolyte which were called minor orders, and subdiaconate, diaconate and priesthood, which were called major orders. The orders of diaconate, priesthood and episcopate were and still are held to be of divine origin and to constitute the sacrament of holy orders,⁶¹ the rest of the orders are of ecclesiastical origin.

⁵⁴ Cf. A. PREW-WINTERS, "Who is a Lay Person?" p. 53.

⁵⁵ Cf. *ibid.*

⁵⁶ See J.A. ABBO, *The Sacred Canons*, pp. 157-158.

⁵⁷ See *ibid.*, pp. 161-162.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁵⁹ See *ibid.*

⁶⁰ "First tonsure was the sacred rite, instituted by the Church, which consisted in the cutting of the hair of the head and the vesting with the surplice performed by a competent minister who, at the same time pronounces the requisite words. It (was) not an order, but rather a preparation for the reception of orders" (J.A. ABBO, *The Sacred Canons*, p. 160). Cf. C. AUGUSTINE, *A Commentary on the New Code of Canon Law*, vol. II, 6th rev. ed., St. Louis, MO., B. Herder Book Co., 1936, p. 44.

⁶¹ See *ibid.*, p. 162.

In all this, the laity are relegated to a passive position, depending on the clergy for the reception of sacraments. It is in cases of necessity that a lay person could baptize privately⁶² (canon 742). In the sacrament of matrimony, the contracting parties themselves are the ministers of the sacrament.⁶³ The laity could not share in ecclesiastical jurisdiction. "Only clerics can obtain the power of either orders or ecclesiastical jurisdiction" (canon 118).

The 1917 code of canon law devoted 34 canons in part III to the laity (canons 682-725) none of which defined nor described the laity. Canon 682 stated: "The laity have the right to receive from the clergy, according to the norms of ecclesiastical discipline, spiritual goods and helps necessary for salvation."⁶⁴ Canon 683 forbade the laity to wear clerical dress. The rest of the canons in part III concern associations of the faithful.

Canon 948 stated: "By the institution of Christ, orders distinguishes clerics from laity in the Church for governing the faithful and for the ministry of divine worship."⁶⁵ This canon too did not directly concern the laity but it mentions the effect of holy orders which distinguishes the clerics from the laity. From this canon we can understand why in the context of the 1917 code the laity were limited in their participation in those activities that were called clerical. The orders is constitutive of the clerical state. The law denotes the twofold power residing in the clergy: the power of orders meant for the ministry of divine worship and the power of jurisdiction for the governing of the faithful. The former is conferred by ordination and the latter through canonical mission.⁶⁶ The context of 1917 Code of Canon Law was an understanding of the Church as a perfect society. This ecclesiology emphasized the Church in which, as Prew-Winters notes: "the members were (...) divided into two groups - the active and the passive, the teachers and those who were taught, the pastors and the sheep. The lines of division were very neatly and completely drawn."⁶⁷

⁶² See *ibid.*, p. 158.

⁶³ See *ibid.*

⁶⁴ "Laici ius habent recipiendi a clero, ad normam ecclesiasticae disciplinae, spiritualia bona et potissimum adiumenta ad salutatem necessaria" (see A. PREW-WINTERS, "Who is a Lay Person?" p. 53, for English translation).

⁶⁵ "Ordo ex Christi institutione clericos a laicis in ecclesia distinguit ad fidelium regimen et cultus divini ministerium" (see A. PREW-WINTERS, "Who is a Lay Person?" p. 54, for English translation.).

⁶⁶ See J.A. ABBO, *The Sacred Canons*, vol. II, p. 76.

⁶⁷ A. PREW-WINTERS, "Who is a Lay Person?" p. 54.

Prew-Winters concludes that this kind of ecclesiology laid more emphasis on the juridic status (lay state or clerical state) than the baptismal status (personhood) which emphasis diminished the participation of the members of Christ's faithful in the mission of the Church accruing from their baptismal status.⁶⁸ As will be discussed later in this study, this kind of understanding of the laity and their mission became more positive and inclusive especially with the Second Vatican Council and the 1983 Code of Canon Law.

1.3 —The Place of the Laity in the Mission of the Church According to the Second Vatican Council

The Second Vatican Council has shown considerable concern for the laity. Three documents of the council, namely, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, chapters two and four, dealing with the People of God and the Laity respectively, gives theological principles; the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People (*Apostolicam actuositatem*), describes the field of the involvement of the laity in the mission of the Church, and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et spes*), envisions the relation of the Church to the world and to the people of today.

J. Blomjous aptly observes:

One of the most important contributions of Vatican II to the development of theology has certainly been the re-introduction into ecclesiology of the category "People of God." This renewed emphasis on the Church being the People of God [...], particularly by giving the fundamental answer, not only to the problem of the function of the laity in the Church, but above all to the problem of the laity's nature and position, has had as its consequence a revalorization of the theology of the laity.⁶⁹

J. Blomjous continues to observe that the Second Vatican Council through its use of the "People of God" in its definition of the nature of the Church, has balanced *ecclesiology*, *hierarchology*, and *laicology*, for ecclesiology after the Middle Ages had been identified with the hierarchy. As has already been indicated earlier in this study, the image of the Church as the "People of God" recalls most forcefully the fundamental equality of all the faithful in Christ and his Church, and also equally forcefully on the fundamental structuring of the

⁶⁸ See *ibid.*

⁶⁹ J. BLOMJOUS, "The Laity and their Activity in the Church," in *The Laity Today*, 23/24 (1977), pp. 40-41.

Christian community and on the special function and position of the apostolic ministry.⁷⁰ Speaking of the laity, clergy or religious, in light of the Second Vatican Council, one somehow finds oneself referring to the “People of God” as a basis of understanding any of these states of life in the Church and their role in the mission of the Church.

The teaching of the Second Vatican Council on the laity, is not, however, found only in *Lumen gentium*, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, or *Gaudium et spes*, but also in some other documents of the council for instance, the Decree on the Up-To-Date Renewal of Religious Life, *Perfectae caritatis*, in the Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, *Christus Dominus*, in the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, and a number of other documents. For the purposes of this study we shall only concentrate on *Lumen gentium*, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, and *Gaudium et spes*.

1.3.1 —The Laity According to *Lumen gentium*

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, gives a description of the laity and attributes to them everything it teaches concerning People of God, as it does to the religious and clergy (*Lumen gentium*, no. 30). Much of the elaboration on the teaching of *Lumen gentium* on the laity has been treated in the introductory concepts.

The constitution specifies a *secular character* as proper and special to the laity. “They carry on the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world” (*Lumen gentium*, no.31). Referring to the laity’s secular character, the constitution teaches that:

By reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God’s will. They live in the world, that is, they are engaged in each and every work and business of the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, constitute their very existence. There they are called by God that, being led by the spirit to the gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties. Thus, especially by the witness of their life, resplendent in faith, hope and charity they must manifest Christ to others. It pertains to

⁷⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 41-42

them in a special way so to illuminate and order all temporal things with which they are so closely associated that these may be affected and grow according to Christ and may be to the glory of the Creator and Redeemer.⁷¹

Four points may be singled out to identify the secular character in the teaching of *Lumen gentium*. First, the secular character is proper and peculiar to the laity. That means therefore that this characteristic element cannot and should not be attributed to the other categories of Christ's faithful, that is, the clerics and the religious. Second, the secular character determines the specific purpose of the lay apostolate, that is, of their vocational gift and of their own way of participating in the unique mission of the Church. Third, the secular character defines the existential situation, the condition of ordinary life, it specifies also the doctrinal moral and ascetic problem of living as laity in the circumstances of social and family life which constitute their very existence. Fourth, the secular character discovers the way in which, through the grace of a vocation, the search for personal sanctity and apostolate in the midst of the world are perfectly harmonized in the laity.⁷²

It is by this secular character that the laity "must diffuse in the world the spirit which animates those poor, meek and peace-makers whom the Lord (...) called blessed (Mt 5:3-9)" (*Lumen gentium*, no. 38). Thus Christians are called upon to play their role in the world as of the soul in the body.⁷³

Lumen gentium expounds the *secular character* as a theological principle on the identity and mission of the laity. No specific area is mentioned for the exercise of this mission. It is a broad mission to the world, and by the means of life witness. The specific areas of the mission and the means of carrying out the mission are laid out more concretely in the council's Decree on the Lay Apostolate. It would seem therefore that the apostolate is one of the concrete ways of carrying out the mission of the Church.

The council made a significant acknowledgment of the mission unique to the laity.

⁷¹ *Lumen gentium*, no. 31, in FLANNERY I, p. 389.

⁷² See J. HERRANZ, "The Juridic Status of the Laity: The Contribution of the Conciliar Documents and the 1983 Code of Canon Law," in *Communicationes*, 17 (1985), p. 298. See also A. PREW-WINTERS, "Who is a Lay Person?" p. 58.

⁷³ *Lumen gentium*, no. 38, in FLANNERY I, p. 396.

This is the lay apostolate which is a participation in the saving mission of the Church as *Lumen gentium* 33 teaches, as much as the hierarchical and ministerial mission is unique to the clergy. Because, if it were not, then it would mean that the laity have no specific role in the mission of the Church other than a participation in the mission of the hierarchy. The laity's apostolate derives from their baptism by which they share in the role of Christ the priest, the prophet, and the king. In their very vocation as laity, they seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. This goes further to emphasize the point already made earlier concerning the unity of mission and diversity of ministries. The laity as well as the clergy and the religious all play an active role in the mission of the Church but each category of these faithful of Christ fulfills its role according to the need and characteristics of each one's specific vocation. F. Parrella's reflection on the laity in the Church renders the point we are making more understandable. He says:

The mission to others is part of the common priesthood. At the heart of the real-spiritual sacrifice of this priesthood is the sacrifice of oneself to God, not in isolation from the world or by empty words or rituals, but by making sacred one's daily actions and serving others. This is the true mission of every Christian. One is not a priest who then serves others; service is an intrinsic part of one's priesthood. As the incarnation signifies, a sacrifice is of nothing less than the total person. We participate in the priesthood of Christ in some limited and fragmented way by doing what Christ accomplished perfectly through his cross and resurrection. This apostolate of the laity can take on many objective forms, but at the root of each form is the substance of Christianity itself: to accept the gospel message and share it with others; to live in Christ and spread his loving words and merciful deeds to all persons.⁷⁴

1.3.2 —The Laity in *Apostolicam actuositatem*

This study is not meant to give a detailed analysis of the whole Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity but to point out those areas in the decree that are pertinent to the role of the laity in the mission of the Church.

The decree, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, opens by mentioning that the lay people's

⁷⁴ F.J. PARRELLA, "The Laity in the Church," in *The Catholic Theological Society of America Proceedings*, 35 (1980), p. 280.

apostolate derives from their Christian vocation and that the Church can never be without the lay apostolate.⁷⁵ The Christian vocation is by its nature a vocation to the apostolate.⁷⁶ The decree addresses those who live in the midst of the world and of secular affairs⁷⁷—the laity. This is where the difference between the laity, the clergy and religious lies. Whereas the clergy and the religious have been called for a specific office or religious state in the Church, the laity are free from those special and lasting commitments connected with holy orders and the religious vows. This does not in any way mean that the laity are redundant in matters pertaining to the mission of the Church, but their status gives them those special opportunities and tasks which they would not have as clerics or as religious and these tasks are of the greatest importance for the Church and the world.⁷⁸ When *Apostolicam actuositatem* teaches that the laity are made to share in priestly, prophetic and kingly offices of Christ, having in the Church and in the world their own assignment in the mission of the whole People of God,⁷⁹ it emphasizes the point we are trying to make. Although each group of the People of God has its own specific position and role in the mission of the Church, they all aim at building the Body of Christ. There is therefore no danger of isolating one group from the other. Since the purpose is to build the Body of Christ, the apostolate of Christ's faithful is multifaceted. That is why we can speak of the apostolate of the laity, the apostolate of the clergy, and the apostolate of the religious. All these apostolates fulfil one mission of the Church. But when need arises one group can be involved to some extent, in the apostolate of the other. For instance, clerics and religious, although "because of their special and lasting bond with the Church, they must renounce many other tasks and opportunities,"⁸⁰ sometimes do the same work as their lay brethren; likewise lay people can be actively involved in the apostolate of the clerics especially in those regions in which there is scarcity of priests or in which priests

⁷⁵ *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 1, in FLANNERY I, p. 766.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 2, p. 768

⁷⁷ See *ibid.*

⁷⁸ F. KLOSTERMANN, "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity," translated by J.M. JAKUBIAK, in H. VORGRIMLER, gen. ed., *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. III, p. 309.

⁷⁹ *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 2, see also *Lumen gentium*, no. 33.

⁸⁰ F. KLOSTERMANN, "The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity," p. 305.

are hindered by force of circumstances in the performance of their tasks.⁸¹ In such cases, the Church is “present and active” almost exclusively through lay people (*Lumen gentium*, no.33).

The decree describes apostolate as any activity of the Mystical Body (the Church) that aims at spreading “the kingdom of Christ all over the earth for the glory of God the Father to make all people partakers in redemption and salvation, and through them to establish the right relationship of the entire world to Christ.”⁸² The Church accomplishes this apostolate through all her members, though in different ways. It is not possible therefore to try to separate the tasks of the apostolate giving to the clergy as their proper sphere of apostolic activity the Church and to the laity, the world. This would create a kind of two types of Christians, the *ecclesiastical* (the clergy and religious) and the *worldly*⁸³ (the laity). We are not, however, to overlook the danger of being forced into extreme positions which are diametrically opposed to each other, which danger confronted the Preparatory Commission for the Apostolate of the laity at the Second Vatican Council. Thus F. Klostermann tells us that the danger laid:

in the attempt to delineate the true character of the apostolate of the laity, the one (position) wished to limit it to the Christian orientation of the temporal order, and the other to the direct support of the hierarchical apostolate and, if possible, only to that apostolate under the direction and authority of the hierarchy, in their efforts to find the right relation between the apostolate of evangelization and sanctification and the apostolate of the Christian orientation of the temporal order, the one side wished to stress unity to such an extent that by the subordination of the whole of the apostolate to the leadership of the hierarchy there was danger of a new “ecclesialization” of the world, while the other side wished to have the difference between the two strongly marked that the two orders would appear to be obscured.⁸⁴

Even now, over three decades after the Council, such a danger persists. For instance, John Paul II in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World, *Christifideles laici*, warns against two temptations. He says:

(...) the Synod has pointed out that the post-conciliar path of the lay faithful has not been without its difficulties and dangers. In particular, two temptations can be

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 306.

⁸² Ibid., p. 308.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 309.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

cited which they have not always known how to avoid: the temptation of being so strongly interested in Church services and tasks that some fail to become actively engaged in their responsibilities in the professional, social, cultural and political world; and the temptation of legitimizing the unwarranted separation of faith from life, that is, a separation of the Gospel's acceptance from the actual living of the Gospel in various situations in the world.⁸⁵

The first danger concerns the hierarchy's view of the laity's role in the Church, the second danger concerns the laity's self vision in the mission of the Church. *Apostolicam actuositatem* balances the extreme positions. It preserves the concept of the universal apostolate in agreement with *Lumen gentium* nos. 31 and 33, which apostolate embraces the clergy and the laity, and the activity of both in the Church and in the world, as well as their activity as citizens of this world.⁸⁶

Klostermann substantiates this point further. He says:

Accordingly the whole life of a Christian, his worldly life included, also has part in the mission of the Church as the life of the baptized, and in that it is taken up in faith it always has at the same time an ecclesial and therefore apostolic character. The inner reason for this lies in the fact that the whole Christian vocation is already by nature "also a vocation to the apostolate."⁸⁷

The laity are called upon to specifically participate in the mission of the Church by their activity in the world, in so far as it is a penetrating and perfecting of the temporal order of things with the spirit of the gospel. This in itself is a "witness to Christ" therefore an apostolate which promotes the salvation of all.⁸⁸

If a man (...) performs a temporal task and is penetrated and filled with the spirit of the gospel, then the spirit of the gospel, the love of Christ becomes active and present in his action; then his work will be infused with the same love of Christ as well as of the men in partnership with whom the self-same work was perhaps performed, for instance, at the office or the factory.⁸⁹

The objectives for which the lay faithful are called to the apostolate are basically the evangelization and sanctification and the renewal of the temporal order. These objectives can be

⁸⁵ *Christifideles laici*, no. 2.

⁸⁶ See F. KLOSTERMANN, "The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity," p. 309.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 310.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

realized in various fields, specifically Church communities, families, the youth, and lay people amongst themselves. The council fathers through the decree call on the faithful to be involved on the national and international planes so as to be channels of Christian wisdom, to promote the common good, and influence the formation of a society based on moral principles (*Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 14).

Individual apostolate, which “flows abundantly from a truly Christian life, (...) is the starting point and condition of all types of lay apostolate. (...) Every lay person, whatever his condition, is called to it, is obliged to it, even if he has not the opportunity or possibility of collaborating in associations” (*Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 16). From this apostolate, all other types of lay apostolate flow, namely, individual apostolate in certain circumstances, group apostolate in its various types and Catholic action.

Concerning a lay person’s individual apostolate in certain circumstances, the council taught:

There is an imperative need for the individual apostolate in those areas where the Church’s freedom is seriously hampered. In such difficult circumstances the laity take over as far as possible the work of priests, jeopardizing their own freedom and sometimes their lives; they teach Christian doctrine to those around them, train them in a religious way of life and in Catholic attitudes, encourage them to receive the sacraments frequently and to cultivate piety, (...).⁹⁰

Group apostolate is very important because it is an expression “of the communion and unity of the Church in Christ, who said, ‘Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in the midst of them.’”⁹¹ By this apostolate, Christians are apostles in their families, parishes, dioceses, and the free associations that they form among themselves.⁹²

Group apostolate is also important because by concerted action, members support each other, the “organizations created for group apostolate afford support to their members, train them for the apostolate, carefully assign and direct their apostolic activities; and as a result a much richer harvest can be hoped for from them than if each one were to act on his own.”⁹³

⁹⁰ *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 17, in FLANNERY I, p. 784.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, no. 18, p. 785.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

Whether the lay apostolate is exercised by the lay faithful as individuals or as members of organized groups, the council taught that it should be incorporated into the apostolate of the whole Church. This, therefore, calls for necessary collaboration and coordination among different undertakings of the apostolate, and cooperation with the Church hierarchy.⁹⁴ Depending on the various forms and goals, the lay apostolate admits the different types of relationships with the hierarchy. For in the Church there are many apostolic enterprises owing their origin to the free choice of the laity and run at their own discretion. The mission of the Church can be effectively fulfilled in certain circumstances by such enterprises.⁹⁵ Thus, making various dispositions of the apostolate according to circumstances, the hierarchy joins some particular forms of it more closely to its own apostolic function; while preserving the specific nature and identity of each apostolate, and consequently without depriving the laity of their rightful freedom to act on their own initiative.⁹⁶

Thus three aspects of the apostolate are pointed out by the Council in *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 24, namely: 1- those enterprises owing their origin by the free choice of the laity and run at their own discretion, 2- the enterprises explicitly recognized by the hierarchy though in different ways and to different degrees, 3- certain charges that the hierarchy entrusts to the laity which are closely connected with the duty of pastors namely the teaching of Christian doctrine, certain liturgical actions, and the care of souls. In this context, Ann Prew-Winters rightly observes:

It is clear in this framework of the lay apostolate that the laity have a certain role to play in the apostolic work of the whole Church. Lines of accountability are drawn whereby the laity regulate their own activity or answer to the hierarchy. In this way, laity are empowered for participation in the Church's mission. However, we note that when it comes to the matter of teaching Christian doctrine, liturgical actions, and the care of souls, the hierarchy are clearly in control, entrusting works or functions to the laity.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 23, in FLANNERY I, p. 789.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 24, p. 790. See B. PEÑA, "Laymen in the Church: Jesus and His People," in *Philippiniana sacra*, 24 (1989), p. 223.

⁹⁶ See *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 4, in FLANNERY I, p. 790.

⁹⁷ A. PREW-WINTERS, "Who is a Lay Person?", p. 57.

1.3.3—Laity in *Gaudium et spes*

F. Parrella remarks that the Second Vatican Council renewed the Church not only *ad intra* (from within) but also in its relation to the world (*ad extra*).⁹⁸ “In the conciliar documents a new and far more positive understanding of the world was affirmed. (...) Describing its mission as ‘supremely human,’ the Church stated that ‘it will be increasingly clear that the People of God and the human race in whose midst it lives render service to each other’.”⁹⁹ The Second Vatican Council in its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, shows the Church’s concern for the whole spectrum of human life.¹⁰⁰ The mission of the Church is a mission in this world, one that relates to the condition of human society in various ways, a mission that addresses itself to personal, social, family, and international problems because these constitute the life of the People of God as well as the life of the world.¹⁰¹ A new relationship was affirmed: “At all times the Church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the gospel. (...) We must be aware of and understand the aspirations, the yearnings, and often dramatic features of the world in which we live.”¹⁰² The Church has become aware that it can reach out to the world with the gospel message in a unique and meaningful way through the laity.¹⁰³ “It is, after all, the laity who live in the world, who permeate every aspect of culture and society as husbands and wives, craftsmen, workers, members of professions—all those areas which (...) the hierarchy and clergy cannot directly touch.”¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ The council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, deals with the renewal of the Church from within (*ad intra*) whereas in its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, it deals with the Church’s relation to the world. This does not mean that the Church was renewed from without (*ad extra*). Hastings remarks that to speak of *Lumen gentium* and *Gaudium et spes* as concerning the renewal of the Church *ad intra* and *ad extra* would be misleading. “Family, social, and political problems are in no way *ad extra* to the People of God. When we turn from *Lumen gentium* to *Gaudium et spes* we do not go from *ad intra* to *ad extra*, but from one aspect of the Church to another. (...) The world is not something apart from the Church, nor the Church from the world.” See A. HASTINGS, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of the Second Vatican Council*, vol. II, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1969, pp. 24–25.

⁹⁹ F.J. PARRELLA, “The Laity in the Church,” pp. 270–271.

¹⁰⁰ A. HASTINGS, *A Concise Guide*, vol. II, p. 67

¹⁰¹ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁰² SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, 7 December 1965, in *AAS*, 58 (1966), pp. 1025–1120, no. 4, English translation in FLANNERY I, p. 905.

¹⁰³ See F.J. PARRELLA, “The Laity in the Church,” p. 271.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

The world in which the Church carries her mission and the laity are called to realize their apostolate is, in the conception of the council:

The world of men, the whole human family seen in the context of everything which envelops it: it is the world as the theatre of human history, bearing the marks of its travail, its triumphs and failures, the world, which in the Christian vision has been created and is sustained by the love of its maker, which has been freed from the slavery of sin by Christ who was crucified and rose again in order to break the stranglehold of the evil one, so that it might be fashioned anew according to God's design and brought to its fulfilment.¹⁰⁵

Concerning the laity, the Constitution teaches:

It is to the laity, though not exclusively to them, that the secular duties and activity properly belong. When therefore, as citizens of the world, they are engaged in any activity either individually or collectively, they will not be satisfied with meeting the minimum legal requirement but will strive to become truly proficient in that sphere. They will gladly cooperate with others working towards the same objectives. Let them be aware of what their faith demands of them in these matters and derive strength from it; let them not hesitate to take the initiative at the opportune moment and put their findings into effect. It is their task to cultivate a properly informed conscience and to impress the divine law on the affairs of the earthly city.¹⁰⁶

This teaching resonates the teaching of *Lumen gentium*, no. 31, concerning the secular character of the laity. The laity enjoy a special role in the mission of the Church to the world because "so many dimensions of the secular world are accessible only to them."¹⁰⁷ Those areas and issues that seem to be too secular to be in the realm of the Church's mission (for example, politics, social, economic, and cultural order) are indeed pertinent to the Church's mission because, to use the words of the Council, "the Church, at once a visible organization and a spiritual community travels the same journey as all mankind and shares the same earthly lot with the world: it is to be a leaven and, as it were, the soul of human society in its renewal by Christ and transformation

¹⁰⁵ *Gaudium et spes*, no. 2, in FLANNERY I, p. 904.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 43, in FLANNERY I, p. 944.

¹⁰⁷ F.J. PARRELLA, "The Laity in the Church," p. 280.

into the family of God.”¹⁰⁸ The (visible) Church is in the world, and cannot be elsewhere and the deepest Christian attitude to the terrestrial realities around us is one of mission.¹⁰⁹

Another area that the Council dealt with is marriage. This is an area that concerns the laity directly. The laity play an important role in the mission of the Church by living well their Christian marriage. For, through marriage “the spouses cooperate with the love of the creator and saviour, who through them will increase and enrich his family from day to day.”¹¹⁰ The role of married couples is not only to “increase and multiply” (Gen 1:28) for the world and the Church, but also to educate and bring up their offspring as faithful members of the Church (*Gaudium et spes*, no. 48). In the same vein, parents’ or guardians’ role is to provide prudent advice to their young with respect to founding a family (*Gaudium et spes*, no. 52).

Gaudium et spes, in nos. 88-90, deals with the special duty of Christians to collaborate wholeheartedly in the cause of peace and the establishment of a true international order.¹¹¹ This is an area in which the laity can also play a significant role in rendering a responsive service to the needs of the world. This service requires Christians’ attention to the balancing of the economic inequality, alleviation of hunger, disease, and every kind of misery. The call on the People of God is also a call on the laity to: do their utmost to alleviate the sufferings of the modern age, out of the substance of their goods (*Gaudium et spes*, no. 88), plunge themselves into the strengthening of international organizations and help to build up in truth a world society. It is in this way that “Christians (*especially the laity*) can be true to their vocation to be salt of the world society today, working here and now for a regime of peace and love which will provide some sort of reflection and stepping-stone for the eternal kingdom of the Prince of Peace.”¹¹²

1.3.4 —Summary

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, gives a description of the laity from the ecclesiological point of view. The laity are described as the Christian faithful, neither

¹⁰⁸ *Gaudium et spes*, in FLANNERY I, p. 940.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. A. HASTINGS, *A Concise Guide*, vol. II, p. 23. See *Lumen gentium*, nos. 8, 38, in FLANNERY I, pp. 357, 395.

¹¹⁰ *Gaudium et spes*, no. 50, in FLANNERY I, p. 953.

¹¹¹ Cf. A. HASTINGS, *A Concise Guide*, vol. II, p. 66.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p.72 (emphasis added).

ordained nor belonging to a religious state approved by the Church, called by virtue of their baptism to carry out their mission in the Church and engage in the world. They are to engage in temporal affairs and order them according to the plan of God. The Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, reiterate the secular character of the laity expounded by *Lumen gentium*. *Apostolicam actuositatem* is a call on the laity to spread the faith, to build up the Church; it is a call to an apostolate not received second hand or delegated to the lay Christian faithful by the hierarchy, but it is their own right and duty¹¹³ springing from baptism and confirmation; although sometimes they can with mandate of the Church hierarchy cooperate in the apostolate of the hierarchy. *Gaudium et spes*, concerns the relationship of the Church to the world. The duty of the Church to the world consists in converting it to the gospel. The Church acts in the world and intervenes in its life to the extent that it spiritually transforms people.¹¹⁴ Since it is to the laity that the secular duties and activity properly belong, they are in a good position to extend the mission of the Church to the world.

1.4 —1983 Code of Canon Law on the Laity in the Mission of the Church

The 1983 Code of Canon Law has widened the scope of the lay faithful's role in the mission of the Church. The basis of the lay faithful's mission is baptism and confirmation. By virtue of their baptism and confirmation the laity participate in their own way in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ. The Code has opened avenues through which the lay faithful can play a more active role in the liturgical, sacramental, and catechetical ministries as well as participate in the official ecclesiastical offices.

1.4.1 —The Lay Faithful's Basis for Apostolate

In view of what has been discussed in the preceding sections, it is worth noting the difference between the Church's mission and the hierarchy's mission. The two concepts are as

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 104

¹¹⁴ Y. CONGAR, "The Role of the Church in the Modern World," in H. VORGRIMLER, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 5, p. 204.

different as the Church is different from the hierarchy,¹¹⁵ although one does not exclude the other. The Church's mission is the responsibility of all the members of the Church whereas the mission of the hierarchy is only one aspect of the Church's mission and it is carried out only by the members of the hierarchy and any other members of the Christ's faithful who are delegated to cooperate with them as long as they are qualified.¹¹⁶ Canon 204, § 1 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law gives a basis on which the apostolate or the mission of the laity as well as the mission of every member of Christ's faithful is set. It states:

Christ's faithful are those who, since they are incorporated into Christ through baptism, are constituted the people of God. For this reason, they participate in their own way in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ. They are called, each according to his or her particular condition, to exercise the mission which God entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world.¹¹⁷

By virtue of their baptism and confirmation, the laity have a right and duty to carry out the apostolate proper to them. For this, they do not need the authorization of the hierarchy. Baptism is not simply a grace, but a divine call to share in Christ's redeeming mission. In confirmation we receive the fulness of the gift of the Holy Spirit to empower us for participation in the Church's mission. As a matter of prudence, even though ecclesiastical authorization may not be required, lay people participating in the Church's secular apostolate are to be attentive to the guidance of the Church's pastors.¹¹⁸

As a person through baptism becomes a sharer in Christ's prophetic, priestly, and kingly ministry, so also, inseparable from that dignity is a duty incumbent upon him or her to continue this ministry in the world until the kingdom of God reaches its fullness.¹¹⁹

Lumen gentium no. 36, points out the areas proper to the laity's apostolate. The laity:

¹¹⁵ See A. PORTILLO, *Faithful and Laity in the Church: The Bases of their Legal Status*, translation by L. HICKEY, Shannon, Ireland, Ecclesia Press, 1972, p. 20.

¹¹⁶ See *ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Cf. *Lumen gentium*, no. 31, in FLANNERY I, p. 388; cf. *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 3, in FLANNERY I, p. 768.

¹¹⁸ See M. PLACE, "In the Manner of a Leaven: The Lay Mission to the secular World," in *The Jurist*, 47 (1987), p. 102.

¹¹⁹ See PORTILLO, "Faithful and Laity in the Church," p. 62.

—are to recognize the inner nature, the value and the ordering of the whole of creation to the praise of God;

—are by their competence in secular disciplines and by their activity to work earnestly in order that created goods through human labour, technical skill and civic culture may benefit all people according to the creator's plan and the light of his word;

—are to work to see that created goods in their own way may lead to progress in the human and Christian liberty and to illuminate the whole of human society with Christ's saving light;

—are to remedy, by combined efforts, the institutions and conditions of the world when they are an inducement to sin, and thus imbue culture and human works with a moral value.

The role of the laity in the Church therefore, springs from their baptism and confirmation. Although they properly exercise their apostolate in a secular milieu, they can be called upon or deputed by the competent ecclesiastical authority to participate in the sacred ministry, and priestly and prophetic mission of Christ along with the Church's sacred ministers who through the sacrament of orders have special and essentially different responsibilities in these areas.¹²⁰ By the term 'deputed' is meant that for the laity to participate in the sacred apostolate, they need the appointment of the hierarchy. But still baptism and confirmation render them capable of being deputed, along with other pertinent qualifications of course.

1.4.2 —Liturgy

"The 1983 Code of Canon Law reflects an expansion of boundaries of the official ecclesiastical office, as well as of the sacramental, liturgical, and catechetical ministries to include more of the community and its members than only clerics."¹²¹

Canon 230 allows a lay man of requisite qualifications to be installed in a stable manner in the ministry of lector and acolyte. The canon mentions the possibility of laity being assigned temporarily the role of lector in liturgical actions. The laity can also exercise the roles of

¹²⁰ See M. PLACE, "In the Manner of a Leaven," p. 93.

¹²¹ J. KOURY, "The Limits of Collaboration: The New Legal Language for the Laity," in *Studia canonica*, 26 (1992), p. 436.

commentator and cantor in accordance with the law. Where there is lack of ministers and the needs of the Church require, the canon allows the laity to exercise the ministry of the word and preside over liturgical prayers. In this way, the laity participate in the sanctifying office of the Church.

The ministry of the word includes preaching and catechetical instruction. It is an exercise of the teaching office of the Church in which the laity participate in accordance with the law and at the invitation of the hierarchy.¹²² Although the law provides for the laity to lead liturgical prayers and to preach,¹²³ it restricts the giving of a homily to the ordained ministers.¹²⁴

1.4.3 — Sacraments

The 1983 Code of Canon Law makes provision for the laity to participate in the celebration of some sacraments as presiders in certain circumstances. Where this happens, lay presiders are referred to as extraordinary ministers. They are extraordinary ministers in the sense that they are fulfilling a role that does not belong to them. They are delegated by the competent ecclesiastical authority. The term 'extraordinary' however, does not only apply to the laity as delegated ministers of sacraments. It includes any person (including clerics) who is deputed to fulfill a liturgical or sacramental role that ordinarily belongs to someone else hierarchically higher. For example, "The ordinary minister of holy communion is a bishop, a priest, or a deacon. The extraordinary minister of holy communion is an acolyte, or a member of Christ's faithful [...] duly deputed (canon 910). The bishop is the ordinary minister of confirmation (canon 882). A priest with the faculty can also confer this sacrament. Canon 782, § 2 of the 1917 code of canon law referred to the priest as an extraordinary minister of confirmation.

The 1983 code provides that lay people may be ministers of baptism (canon 861 § 2). Canons 910, § 1; 911, § 2 and 943 allow the laity as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist.¹²⁵

¹²² See E. RINERE, "Conciliar and Canonical Applications," p. 217.

¹²³ See 1983 CIC, cc. 758, 766.

¹²⁴ See CIC 767, § 1; see also E. CAPARROS, et al., eds., *Code of Canon Law Annotated*. Montréal, Wilson & Lafleur Ltd., 1993, p. 1293; cf. L.G. WRENN, *Authentic Interpretations on the 1983 Code*, Washington, DC, Canon Law Society of America, 1993, pp. 41-43; cf. J. FOX, "The Homily and the Authentic Interpretation of Canon 767, § 1," in *Apollinaris*, 62 (1989), pp. 123-169.

¹²⁵ Cf. *Ministeria quaedam*, in FLANNERY I, p. 430.

They may distribute holy communion, bring viaticum to the sick, and expose and depose the blessed sacrament without the blessing.¹²⁶

The laity are the ministers of matrimony because in the exchange of their consent, the Christian couple thereby bring about marriage. The laity may be delegated by the diocesan bishop in accordance with the law to assist at marriages (canon 1112, § 1).

“The role of the laity is more evident when it comes to the preparation for the reception of the sacraments.”¹²⁷

—Canon 867: preparation for baptism begins even before the child is born.

—Canon 851: actual preparation for baptism may be carried out by qualified members of the lay faithful.¹²⁸

—Canon 890: the faithful especially the parents, are to see to the preparation for confirmation as well as for the reception of the Eucharist (canons 913, 914).¹²⁹

- Canon 1063 mentions the ways in which the Church community is to assist in preparing the young couples for marriage.¹³⁰ The law makes little reference to special preparation for the reception of penance (cf. canon 987) and anointing of the sick.¹³¹ The preparation for orders is given to those who have previously received orders (cf. canon 239).¹³²

1.4.4 —Church Administration and Decision Making

Administration and decision making in the Church belong to the ministry of governing. The 1983 Code of Canon Law admits the possibility of lay people cooperating in the exercise of ecclesiastical governance. Canon 129, § 2 states: “Lay members of Christ’s faithful can cooperate in the exercise of the power of governance in accordance with the law.” The code (canon 129 § 1) equates the power of governance with jurisdiction which (jurisdiction) in whose exercise the lay faithful can cooperate in accordance with the norms of law. Hence canon 129, § 1 states:

¹²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*

¹²⁷ F. MORRISEY, “The Laity in the New Code of Canon Law,” in *Studia canonica*, 17 (1983), p. 141.

¹²⁸ See *ibid.*

¹²⁹ See *ibid.*

¹³⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 142.

¹³¹ See *ibid.*

¹³² See *ibid.*

“Those who are in sacred orders are, in accordance with the provisions of law, capable of the power of governance, which in fact belongs to the Church by divine institution. This power is also called the power of jurisdiction.” Lay people can only cooperate in the exercise of the power of governance. The power of governance is predicated to an ecclesiastical office. Canon 145, § 1 defines an *ecclesiastical office* as “any post which by divine or ecclesiastical disposition is established in a stable manner to further a spiritual purpose.” Our concern here is to trace those areas in which the laity can assume ecclesiastical offices, how they can cooperate in the Church’s power of governance.

Canon 135, § 1 distinguishes the power of governance as *legislative, executive, and judicial*. All these three aspects of the power of governance can be exercised by the same agents, for instance the Supreme Pontiff individually or the College of Bishops with the pope for the universal Church, or the diocesan bishop within his diocese. It is important to see here how the laity are involved in ecclesiastical offices and decision making positions and processes according to the legislative, executive and judicial powers.

The legislative power of governance cannot be delegated by a legislator lower than the supreme authority unless it is specifically provided for in the law (canon 135, § 2). The diocesan bishop cannot, for instance, delegate his vicar general to make laws within the diocese or delegate the episcopal vicar(s) to do the same within their areas of jurisdiction. As J. Provost notes:

(...) legislative authority is exercised through two types of ‘votes’ - consultative and deliberative. All who are to be called to a legislative session, whether it can be an ecumenical or particular council or diocesan synod, have the right to speak there. This is consultative vote or ‘voice’. The final decision of the legislative body (the deliberative vote) is reserved by law to bishops in particular councils and synods.¹³³

Provost further states: “clearly, the lay persons called to these legislative bodies *cooperate* in the exercise of the power of governance, at least by the exercise of a consultative vote. Those with the deliberative vote remain the principal agents.”¹³⁴

¹³³J. PROVOST, “The Participation of the Laity in the Governance of the Church,” in *Studia canonica*, 17 (1983), p. 437.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

Juridically, lay people can assume any office in the Church courts apart from the offices of judicial vicar and assistant judicial vicar which are reserved to priests (canon 1420, § 4). A lay person can therefore be an advocate (canon 1483), notary (canon 1437), auditor (canon 1428), assessor (canon 1424), defender of the bond (canon 1437), promotor of justice (canon 1435), and judge (canon 1421). However, a lay person may not act as a single judge since this prerogative is reserved to clerics. A lay judge can be part of a collegiate tribunal (canon 1421, § 2).

At the executive level, those offices that require the power of orders are certainly not assumed by the laity. These offices include the offices of:

Pastor (canon 517, § 1), parochial administrator (canon 539), priests who serve as a team of pastors (*in solidum* pastors - canon 517, § 1), vicar general and episcopal vicars (canon 478, § 1).

The following offices can be assumed by lay people:

Chancellor (canon 482, § 1), notary (canon 483, § 1), and diocesan finance administrator (canon 494, § 10). Although only a priest can be appointed pastor, lay people can assist in the pastoral direction of parishes where there is shortage of priests (canon 517, § 2).

Furthermore, the laity participate in a way in the decision making processes of the Church as members on various councils, committees, commissions, and boards. These may be, for instance, diocesan synod (canon 463, § 2), diocesan pastoral council (canon 512, § 1), diocesan or parish finance committee (canons 492, § 1; 537), and parish pastoral council (canon 536, § 1), to mention but a few.

Thus, lay people who are outstanding in requisite knowledge, prudence, and integrity, are capable of being admitted as advisors, even in councils, in accordance with the law, in order to provide assistance to the pastors of the Church (canon 228, § 2).

1.5 —1987 Synod of Bishops on the Laity

In October, 1987, the seventh Ordinary Synod of Bishops was convened in Rome to deliberate on the vocation and mission of the lay faithful in the Church and in the world. This theme was not a novelty because at the Second Vatican Council matters concerning the laity were discussed at length and as a result we have the teaching of the Council on the laity in its

Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, and the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, *Apostolicam actuositatem*. The Synod was a follow-up of the teaching of the Council on the laity, twenty years after. This study is not a detailed analysis of the synodal proceedings but a basic understanding of the role of the laity in the mission of the Church on the basis of the post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Christifideles laici*.

Twenty years after the Council the world had changed considerably. The Church, which is in the world cannot but be affected by the changes, challenges, priorities, and advancements that face the world. The *Instrumentum laboris* enunciates this well:

The present evolution of the world and the pressing questions which characterize recent socio-cultural changes impel the Church once more, to take up—some 20 years after the Council—a reflection on the vocation and mission of the laity in light of the plan of salvation which God, in Jesus Christ, is accomplishing in history.

The secular feature of the laity makes them indeed leading characters in the Church's mission in the world. By their participation in the entire range of realities which make up the fabric of human existence, they realize this mission. Thus by necessity they are involved in the complex working out of contemporary history.

Therefore the reflection on the "Vocation and Mission of the Laity 20 Years After the Council" must view from the perspective of faith the human situation in which the laity live by reason of belonging to the Church. Such a perspective cannot fail to recognize that women and men are taking upon themselves a more active role through participation in contemporary society. This active participation is one of the distinctive characteristics of modern life.¹³⁵

This is a participation of which the laity partake as 'Christian citizens', that is, as members of the Church (Christians) and as people of the world (citizens - as identified by their secular character). As a Christian citizen, a lay person has a dual responsibility, a responsibility to the world and a responsibility to the Church. The laity therefore are like a bridge. Through them the Church reaches out to the world and the world meets the Church. The former is a mission and the latter is a transformation by which the world embraces the saving grace of Christ.

The *Instrumentum laboris* clarifies the distinction between vocation and mission. Thus vocation is not only infusing the reality of the world with the Christian spirit, but is also a call to

¹³⁵ GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS, "Vocation and Mission of the Laity: Working Paper for the 1987 Synod of Bishops," English translation in *Origins*, 17 (1987), pp. 3-4.

communio and to mission. Hence vocation is broader than mission. Mission on the other hand is a consequence of this call and is limited to an earthly existence.¹³⁶

The 1987 Synod on the laity was in the path of the Second Vatican Council. The Council was referred to constantly, as is evidenced in the numerous quotations from the documents of the Council,¹³⁷ in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation which “takes into account all the contributions to the work of the Synod, and seeks to be the faithful and coherent expression of the work done by everyone in the whole Synod process.”¹³⁸ It affirmed that the teachings of the Second Vatican Council are still very pertinent even after twenty years. “At times they seem prophetic. They give light and guidance to lay Christians in their response to the new problems of our time.”¹³⁹ The Synod sought to identify the ways of translating the Council’s theory on the laity into practice.¹⁴⁰ Three areas were looked at:

- the ministries or services entrusted, or to be entrusted, to the lay faithful;
- the growth and spread of new “movements” alongside other forms of associations of lay Christians;
- the place and the role of women both in the Church and in society.¹⁴¹

The call of the laity to the mission of the Church has a tone of urgency especially at the “Dramatic hour of human history: the eve of the third millennium. (...) There is a new situation both in the Church and in the social, economic, political, and cultural life. This situation calls with a particular urgency for the intervention of the Christian laity.”¹⁴² The Post-Synodal Exhortation uses the biblical image of the vineyard to identify the mission field of the laity. The Exhortation states: “It is necessary (...) to keep a watchful eye on this our world, with its problems and values, its unrest and hopes, its defeats and triumphs (...). This (...) is the vineyard; this is the field in which

¹³⁶ See *Origins*, 17 (1987), p. 7.

¹³⁷ Of the 224 major references quoted in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles laici*, 100 are from the documents of the Second Vatican Council.

¹³⁸ P. COUGHLAN, *The Hour of the Laity: Their Expanding Role: Exploring “Christifideles Laici” the Pope’s Key Document on the Laity*, Newton, E.J. Dwyer, 1989, p. 18.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, See also *Christifideles laici*, no. 2.

¹⁴¹ P. COUGHLAN, *The Hour of the Laity*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

the faithful are called to fulfill their mission."¹⁴³ They fulfill their mission in a world in which different trends emerge namely,

1- secularism in different shades of indifference to religion and atheism, along with the need for religion as is seen in "very clear signs of an openness to a spiritual search, a sense of the sacred and of prayer, and the demand to be free to call upon the name the Lord,"¹⁴⁴

2- the dignity of the human person that is both trampled upon and exalted. It is trampled upon by:

—the manipulation by the powerful forces of ideology, economic power, inhuman political systems, scientific technocracy, the prying hand of the mass media,

—violation of fundamental rights such as the right to life and integrity, the right to a house and to work, the right to a family and responsible procreation, the right to participation in political and public life, the right to freedom of conscience and to the profession of one's religious faith,

—the plight of children that are killed in their mother's womb, those that grow in oppressive environments.¹⁴⁵ Amidst all this however, the sacredness of the human person cannot be obliterated. "It has its foundation in God, the Creator and Father. (...) Throughout the world, there is growing awareness that the human person is not a 'thing' or an 'object', but is endowed with conscience and freedom, called to live responsibly in society and in history, and orientated toward spiritual and religious values."¹⁴⁶

3- Conflict and Peace.¹⁴⁷ We find ourselves in a world characterized by conflict and peace at the same time. Conflict displayed in forms of violence, terrorism and war among individuals, groups, nations, and blocks of nations.¹⁴⁸

As for peace on the other hand, "we find the longing of individuals and of nations for peace and justice."¹⁴⁹ The Post-Synodal Exhortation mentions participation in society as "the way

¹⁴³ *Christifideles laici*, no. 3.

¹⁴⁴ P. COUGHLAN, *The Hour of the Laity*, p. 19.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ See *Christifideles laici*, no. 6

¹⁴⁸ See P. COUGHLAN, *The Hour of the Laity*, p. 20.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

to make a desired peace become a reality."¹⁵⁰ This is where the laity play an important role especially through their generous commitment to the social and political field, working in a variety of institutional forms and those of a voluntary nature in service to the least.¹⁵¹

Amidst the situation of seemingly opposing forces, what strengthens the laity as well as any member of Christ's faithful is, as *Christifideles laici* puts it, "Jesus Christ the Redeemer of man and of the world. The Church knows that she is sent forth by him as sign and instrument of all the human race."¹⁵²

The centrality of Jesus Christ in the mission of the Church inspires hope, the kind of hope that is "not merely the result of an optimistic frame of mind or of "positive thinking" but one founded on the certainty of Christian faith: Christ is risen, he has vanquished sin and evil, he has conquered death.¹⁵³ Any deviation from this centrality risks making the laity's activities as part of the mission of the Church, activities just like those of philanthropists.

Christifideles laici takes us a step further towards the positive description of the laity. This is against the background of the long time description of the laity as those who were not clergy or religious. The positive description of the laity is based on their incorporation into Christ through faith and baptism, which is a source of being Christian in the mystery of the Church.¹⁵⁴ Baptism is the basis of a lay Christian's identity and it is by virtue of it that a lay member of Christ's faithful participates in the priestly, prophetic and kingly offices of Christ.¹⁵⁵

In arriving at the basic description of the lay faithful, *Christifideles laici* considers three fundamental aspects:

- 1—baptism regenerates us in the life of the Son of God;
- 2—baptism unites us to Christ and to his Body, the Church;
- 3—baptism anoints us in the Holy Spirit, making us spiritual temples.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁰ *Christifideles laici*, no. 6.

¹⁵¹ See *ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, no. 7. See *Lumen gentium*, no. 1.

¹⁵³ See P. COUGHLAN, *The Hour of the Laity*, p. 25. See also *Christifideles laici*, no. 7.

¹⁵⁴ See *Christifideles laici*, no. 9.

¹⁵⁵ See *ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ See *ibid.*, no. 10.

These aspects pertain to all the members of Christ's faithful, that is, the laity as well as the clergy and the religious. What makes a vital difference, however, is that this positive way of looking at the laity brings out the *communio* aspect of the Church as opposed to the negative description of the 1917 Code of Canon Law. This to some extent crept into the Second Vatican Council that viewed the laity from the point of view of the hierarchical aspect of the Church that saw the laity as neither the clergy nor the religious, and "to describe people as a 'not' is hardly the best way of helping people to have a strong sense of identity and healthy self-esteem."¹⁵⁷ Moreover, the weak sense of identity of laity might likely hamper them from clearly knowing their role in the mission of the Church, and the low esteem is likely to breed passivity in their involvement in the Church's mission. A positive description of the laity's identity is a light to their self-understanding which in turn clarifies their proper role in the mission of the Church lest their involvement becomes an interference in roles proper to the clergy. This positive understanding serves the *communio* aspect of the Church and from this clarity ensues a natural flow of the degree of the role that Christ's faithful play in the Church's mission, which is *participation*. Because of our baptism we all have our roles to play in the mission of the Church like labourers in the vineyard. We all participate in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ. Our participation however, hinges on our identity in the membership of the Church, as laity, clergy or religious. Hence, and this is where the lay faithful play their role in the Church owing to their identity, because of their baptismal grace and dignity, "the lay faithful participate, for their part, in the threefold mission of Christ as, Priest, Prophet and King."¹⁵⁸

Christifideles laici enumerates the ways by which the lay faithful participate in the threefold mission of Christ. They participate in the priestly mission for which Jesus offered himself on the cross and continues to be offered in the celebration of the Eucharist for the glory of God and salvation of humanity, by their acts of worship through which they consecrate the world itself to God.¹⁵⁹ In these acts of worship, especially the Eucharist, the baptized unite themselves to Christ and to his sacrifice in the offering of themselves and their daily activities. As for the lay

¹⁵⁷ P. COUGHLAN, *The Hour of the Laity*, p. 41.

¹⁵⁸ *Christifideles laici*, no. 14.

¹⁵⁹ See *ibid.* See also *Lumen gentium*, no. 34, in FLANNERY I, p. 391.

faithful specifically, *Christifideles laici* recalling the teaching of the Second Vatican Council in *Lumen gentium*, says:

(...) Their work, prayers and apostolic endeavours, their ordinary married and family life, their daily labour, their mental and physical relaxation, if carried out in the Spirit, and even the hardships of life if patiently borne - all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Pt 2:5).¹⁶⁰

The lay faithful participate in the prophetic mission of Christ by accepting the Gospel in faith and proclaiming it in word and deed, by being united to Christ the “great prophet” (Lk 7:16) and in the Spirit become witnesses of the Risen Christ, they

are made sharers in the appreciation of the Church’s supernatural faith, that “cannot err in matters of belief” and sharers as well in the grace of the word (cf. Act 2:17-18; Rev 19:10), and by allowing the newness of the power of the gospel to shine out in their family and social life and to patiently and courageously in the contradictions of the present age to express their hope of the future glory even “through the framework of their secular life.”¹⁶¹

The lay faithful participate in the kingly mission of Christ, because they belong to Christ, Lord and King of the Universe, hence they have a mission to spread the Kingdom of Christ in history. They exercise their kingship in their combating the kingdom of sin, so as to make a gift of themselves in order to serve Jesus present in all his brothers and sisters, especially in the very least (cf. Mt 25:40).¹⁶² They are called to restore creation to its original value, ordering it to the authentic well-being of humanity in an activity governed by the life of grace. In this way, “they share in the exercise of power with which the Risen Christ draws all things to himself and subjects them along with himself to the Father (...).”¹⁶³

The participation in the threefold mission of Christ is given individually to each member of the lay faithful as long as the member is in communion with the whole Church. The lay faithful’s “mission must be lived and realized in communion and for the increase of communion

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ See *Christifideles laici*, no. 14. Cf. *Lumen gentium*, no. 35, in FLANNERY I, pp. 391-392.

¹⁶² See *Christifideles laici*, no. 14.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

itself."¹⁶⁴ This participation has its source in the anointing of baptism, it is further developed through confirmation and finds its fulfilment and dynamic sustenance in the Holy Eucharist.¹⁶⁵

Christifideles laici recognizes what all the baptized have in common, and reiterates the *secular character*¹⁶⁶ of the lay faithful, which had already been emphasized by the Second Vatican Council in *Lumen gentium*, no. 31, as a distinguishing mark of the lay vocation. This can clearly be seen from the already mentioned ways of their participation enumerated by the document (cf. Section 1.2.2). They are part and parcel of the nature and life of the lay faithful. "For lay Christians, their presence and activity in the world is not something simply incidental; rather it is central to their vocation: the 'world' is the environment and the means by which a lay Christian lives out his or her vocation."¹⁶⁷ "Thus for the lay faithful, to be present and active in the world is not only an anthropological and sociological reality, but in a specific way, a theological and ecclesiological reality as well."¹⁶⁸ "The lay faithful's *position in the Church* comes to be fundamentally defined by their newness in Christian life and distinguished by their *secular character*.¹⁶⁹

Christifideles laici further highlights the call to holiness as another aspect that stresses the equality and communion among all the members of Christ's faithful as an irreplaceable condition for fruitful mission. Every Christian is called to a life of holiness in whatever situation they are living. As for the laity, no area of their life is excluded from the call to holiness. The unity of their life is of the greatest importance. They must be sanctified in everyday profession and social life. To respond to their vocation they must see their daily activities as an occasion to join themselves to Christ, to fulfil God's will, serve other people and lead them to communion with God in Christ.¹⁷⁰ Holiness is a fundamental and an irreplaceable condition for the mission because the "Church's holiness is the hidden source and the infallible measure of the works of the apostolate

¹⁶⁴ See P. COUGHLAN, *The Hour of the Laity*, p. 33.

¹⁶⁵ See *Christifideles laici*, no. 14.

¹⁶⁶ See *ibid.*, no. 15.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* Cf. P. COUGHLAN, *The Hour of the Laity*, p. 43.

¹⁶⁸ *Christifideles laici*, no. 15.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ See *ibid.*, no. 17. Cf. Proposition, no. 5, Of the 1987 Synod of Bishops, in *Origins*, 17 (1987), p.

and of the missionary effort. Only in the measure that the Church, Christ's spouse, is loved by him and she, in turn, loves him, does she become a mother fruitful in the Spirit."¹⁷¹

Chapter two of *Christifideles laici* is devoted to the reflection on the life of the Church as a communion and the lay faithful's participation therein. Communion serves as "a unifying bond between the Lord and his disciples, between Christ and the baptized: a living and life-giving communion through which Christians no longer belong to themselves but are the Lord's very own [...]"¹⁷² *Christifideles laici* likens ecclesial communion to an 'organic' communion analogous to that of a living and functioning body, characterized at one and the same time by a *diversity* and complementarity of vocations and states of life, of ministries, of charisms and responsibilities.¹⁷³ "Because of this diversity and complementarity every member of the lay faithful is seen *in relation to the whole body* and offers a totally *unique contribution* on behalf of the whole body."¹⁷⁴

The exhortation states that Church communion is a gift of the Holy Spirit which is to be gratefully accepted by the lay faithful and at the same time to be lived with a deep sense of responsibility.¹⁷⁵ "This is concretely realized through their participation in the life and mission of the Church, to whose service the lay faithful put their varied and complementary ministries and charisms."¹⁷⁶ Thus the exhortation proceeds to reflect on ministries and charisms in the Church, the ministries and roles that the lay faithful fulfil because of their baptismal state and the ones which are connected to the priests' pastoral ministry but do not require the character of orders. These are stipulated in canon 230, § 3 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law and they are entrusted to the lay faithful when necessity and expediency in the Church require it.¹⁷⁷

Christifideles laici, nos. 25-27 concentrate on the participation of the lay faithful in the life of the Church, whereas nos. 28-31 deal with their forms of participation in the life of the Church. As for the former, the exhortation, recalling the words of *Apostolicam actuositatem* of the Second Vatican Council, appeals to the lay faithful to "constantly foster a feeling for their own

¹⁷¹ *Christifideles laici*, no. 17.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, no. 18.

¹⁷³ See *ibid.*, no. 20.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ See *ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ See *ibid.*, no. 23.

diocese, of which the parish is a kind of cell, and be always ready at their bishops's invitation to participate in diocesan projects."¹⁷⁸ This cooperation could be extended as well to the interparochial, interdiocesan, national and international levels. Diocesan pastoral councils, diocesan synods and other local councils in which the lay faithful participate are good avenues of collaboration, dialogue and discernment that contribute to Church communion and the mission of the particular Church in its surroundings and in relation to other particular Churches of the same ecclesiastical province or episcopal conference.¹⁷⁹ Be that as it may, the emphasis of the participation of the laity in the mission of the Church is put on the parish which the lay faithful should find "to be 'a place' in the world for the community of believers to gather together as a 'sign' and 'instrument' of the vocation of all to communion (...) A house of welcome to all and a place of service to all."¹⁸⁰

In a parish, the ecclesial community finds its most immediate and visible expression. The parish is the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters,¹⁸¹ it is the place in which the faithful should "collaborate in every apostolic and missionary undertaking sponsored by their own ecclesial family."¹⁸² They ought to do very much to promote an authentic ecclesial communion in their parishes so as to reawaken missionary zeal towards non-believers and believers who have abandoned Christian faith or grown lax.¹⁸³

As for the forms of participation, *Christifideles laici*, no. 30, highlighted individual and group apostolate, and gave criteria of ecclesiality for lay groups.¹⁸⁴

Chapter three of the exhortation considers the coresponsibility of the lay faithful in the mission of the Church. The coresponsibility hinges on the Church's communion, the communion that generates mission. This is well expressed in the image of the vine. "He who abides in me and

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 25. See *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 10.

¹⁷⁹ See *Christifideles laici*, no. 25.

¹⁸⁰ See *ibid.*, no. 27.

¹⁸¹ See *ibid.* See also SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 4 December 1963, no. 42, in *AAS*, 56 (1964), pp. 97-138, English translation in FLANNERY I, p. 15.

¹⁸² *Christifideles laici*, no. 27. See *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 10.

¹⁸³ See *Christifideles laici*, no. 27.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. R. PAGÉ, "Note sur les critères d' ecclesialité pour les associations de laïcs," in *Studia canonica*, 24 (1990), pp. 455-463.

I in him, he it is that bears much fruit" (Jn 15:5). "Bearing fruit (*mission*) is an essential demand of life in Christ and life in the Church (*communion*)."¹⁸⁵ "Communion with Jesus, which gives rise to communion of Christians among themselves, is an indispensable condition of bearing fruit. (...) And communion with others is the most magnificent fruit that the branches can give: in fact, it is the gift of Christ and his Spirit."¹⁸⁶ *Christifideles laici* sees a profound connection between communion and mission. It states that the two:

interpenetrate and mutually imply each other, to the point that *communion presents both the source and the fruit. communion gives rise to mission and mission is accomplished in communion*. It is always the one and the same Spirit who calls together and unifies the Church and sends her to preach the gospel "to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8)."¹⁸⁷

It is incumbent upon the Church in turn to transmit the gift received from the Holy Spirit to each individual and to humanity.

The coresponsibility of the lay faithful in Church mission is the responsibility that Christ entrusts to them in communion with all the members of the People of God. They do not work in isolation, they contribute to the welfare of the whole Church. Coresponsibility exists between the lay faithful and the pastors of the Church who must be attentive to the needs of the lay flock, recognize their services and charisms, and the lay faithful who must render active participation in the liturgical life of the community, and eagerly do their share in the apostolic works that pertain to their communities. This coresponsibility in mission is yet another expression of communion. At this point we see the relationship between vocation, communion, and mission which are central in *Christifideles laici*. Vocation is composed of the call to communion and mission, communion of the Holy Spirit being a manifestation of the Father's love in Jesus Christ, is the gift towards which the economy of salvation tends, at which mission aims as also an expression of its inner dynamism.¹⁸⁸

Coresponsibility of the lay faithful is reflected in all those areas that the Church carries out her mission, as pointed out by the exhortation. It may not be the same way of involvement in each

¹⁸⁵ *Christifideles laici*, no. 32 (with emphasis added).

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ See P. COUGHLAN, *The Hour of the Laity*, p. 111.

and every aspect but their role is vital. *Christifideles laici* uses expressions such as 'participation', 'sharing', 'testimony', 'contribution', 'exercise', 'bearing witness', 'service', 'responsibility', to describe the mode of the involvement of the lay faithful in the mission of the Church. The areas in which the lay faithful are called to be coresponsible with other members of the People of God in the Church's mission are according to chapter three of *Christifideles laici*, evangelization (no.33), re-evangelization in those situations where Christian life has dwindled (no. 34), missionary activity (no. 35), and living the gospel through service to the human person and society (nos. 36-44). The latter includes promoting the dignity of the human person (no. 37), respect, defense and promotion of human rights (no, 38), promotion of freedom of conscience and religious freedom (no. 39). It includes also the family (no. 40) which is the primary place of the vocation and mission of the lay faithful,¹⁸⁹ service to society through acts of charity (no. 41), involvement in political life in pursuit of the common good and defense and promotion of justice and peace (no. 42), placing the human person at the centre of socio-economic life and work (no. 43), and evangelizing culture and the cultures of humanity. As for the latter,

the Church calls upon the lay faithful to be present, as a sign of courage and intellectual creativity, in the privileged places of culture, that is, the world of education—school and university—in places of scientific and technological research, the areas of artistic creativity and work in humanities. Such a presence is destined not only for the recognition and possible purification of the elements that critically burden existing culture, but also for the elevation of these cultures through the riches which have their source in the gospel and the Christian faith.¹⁹⁰

The said culture can be promoted through the press, cinema, radio, television and theatre (no.44).

The lay faithful are in various categories but all together are called to mission within the Church. They differ from each other in age, sex, diversity of gifts and also of vocations and conditions of life. Chapter four of *Christifideles laici* categorizes the lay faithful in four groups namely, a) young people, children and older people, b) men and women, c) the sick and the suffering. They have their distinctive roles to play in the mission of the Church. *Christifideles laici* nos. 55 and 56 reflect on the states of life and vocations. The exhortation states: "All the members of the People of God - clergy, men and women religious, the lay faithful—are labourers in the

¹⁸⁹ See P. COUGHLAN, *The Hour of the Laity*, p. 122.

¹⁹⁰ *Christifideles laici*, no. 44.

vineyard. At one and the same time they all are the goal and subjects of Church communion as well as of participation in the mission of salvation.¹⁹¹ However, the lay faithful have a state of life distinguished by its secular character, which “fulfills ecclesial service in bearing witness and, in its own way recalling for priests, women and men religious, the significance of the earthly and temporal realities in the salvific plan of God.”¹⁹² The exhortation teaches that within the lay state, there are various vocations. Thus there are different paths in the spiritual life and apostolate which are taken by individual members of the lay faithful (no. 56). Mention is made of the flourishing ‘special’ lay vocations, namely, “the spiritual experience of the flourishing of diverse forms of secular institutes that have developed recently in the Church, offering the lay faithful and even priests a possibility of professing the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience through vows or promises without losing one’s lay or clerical state.”¹⁹³ The exhortation reiterates the teaching of the Second Vatican Council that

lay spirituality should take its particular character from the circumstances of one’s state in life (married and family life, celibacy, widowhood), from one’s state of health and from one’s professional and social activity. All should not cease to develop earnestly the qualities and talents bestowed on them in accord with these conditions of life and should make use of the gifts which they have received from the Holy Spirit.¹⁹⁴

The mission of the lay faithful, like the one of any other of Christ’s faithful, is an on-going one. They have a “call to growth and continued process of maturation, of always bearing fruit.”¹⁹⁵ Life in Christ is a process of continued growth, and chapter five of *Christifideles laici* no. 58, speaks of the formation of the lay faithful, which has a lot to do with their growth in Christ. Formation facilitates the growth in Christ to take place. Its fundamental objective is to enable the lay faithful to discover their vocation and the ever-greater willingness to live it so as to fulfil their mission.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., no. 55.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ See *ibid.*, no. 56, see also canon 573.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., no. 56. See *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 4, in FLANNERY I, p. 771.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., no. 57.

The lay faithful need a total formation for living an integrated life; the formation that does not dichotomize between the 'spiritual' life and the 'secular' life but the one that includes spiritual, doctrinal, social aspects as well as the personal growth in the human values and virtues.¹⁹⁶ The exhortation expresses this well: "(...) every area of the lay faithful's lives, as different as they are, enters into the plan of God, who desires that these very areas be the 'places in time' where the love of Christ is revealed and realized for both the glory of the father and service of others."¹⁹⁷

The exhortation presents God the Father *as the first and great teacher of his People*, revealing and fulfilling his work of *forming* in Jesus Christ the Teacher, and reaching to the depth of even the individual's heart as a result of living presence of the Spirit (no. 61). Other agents that collaborate with God the Teacher in the work of formation are: the Church, the pope, bishops, the parish which has the essential task of a more personal and immediate formation of the lay faithful as it is in a position of easily reaching individual persons and groups (no. 61). Small Christian communities, within the parish help in formation especially by providing a consciousness and an experience of ecclesial communion and mission. Priests and religious play a role in the formation of the lay faithful.

Other places of formation are the Christian family, the "domestic Church" where the parents receive from the sacrament of matrimony the grace and ministry to raise and educate their children in the Christian faith, and transmit to them human and religious values. "The daily life itself of a truly Christian family makes up the first 'experience of Church', intended to find confirmation and development in an active and responsible process of the children's introduction into the wider ecclesial community and civil society."¹⁹⁸ The spouses' and parents' "domestic Church" (family) is a true participation in the life and mission of the universal Church. Schools, Catholic universities and centres of spiritual renewal, many of which are run by the lay faithful, are very instrumental in the said formation. Through them the lay faithful come to a better understanding of the intimate bond that exists between faith and science, the gospel and human culture.¹⁹⁹ Groups, associations and movements also help in the formation of the lay faithful as

¹⁹⁶ Cf. P. COUGHLAN, *The Hour of the Laity*, p. 177.

¹⁹⁷ *Christifideles laici*, no. 59. Cf. *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 4, in FLANNERY I, p. 770.

¹⁹⁸ *Christifideles laici*, no. 62.

¹⁹⁹ See *ibid.* See also Proposition, no. 45, in *Origins*, 17 (1987), p. 508.

they offer a formation through a deeply shared experience in the apostolic life, as well as making concrete and specific the formation that their members receive from other persons and communities (no. 62).

Formation is a right and duty of all Christ's faithful. A right to receive it and a duty to give and or promote it. While it relies on the intelligent resources of human science, it is rendered more effective by the action of God.

1.6 —Summary

The chapter has attempted to expound the teaching and the law of the Church on the lay members of Christ's faithful. The identity of the lay faithful has been shown, as well as their position and role in the mission of the Church. Selected Church documents and pertinent aspects of Church law have been examined as a guide in the study. It is clear therefore, that the lay members of Christ's faithful are part and parcel of the mission of the Church not only as recipients of her ministries but also as active participants in her mission. Baptism is the springboard of a positive understanding of the lay faithful and their role in the mission of the Church because it makes all the baptized equal members of the Body of Christ, and is the beginning point of the mission.

The canonical and theological principles that have been enunciated in the chapter are the basis on which the following chapters will build and put into concrete terms.

CHAPTER TWO

THE LAY FAITHFUL IN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN MBARARA ARCHDIOCESE

The lay faithful have been very instrumental in the propagation of the faith in Uganda in general and in Mbarara in particular. They have been close collaborators of the missionaries and priests in work of evangelization, and active participants in the structures of the Church in Mbarara. The history of the Church in Uganda and Mbarara testifies to the lay faithful's and especially the catechists' indispensable contribution in evangelization and the growth of the Church in these places.

2.1 —Historical Background of the Catholic Church in Uganda

Uganda received the first Christian missionaries in 1877. These were, the Reverend C.T. Wilson and Lieutenant George Shergold Smith of the Anglican Communion, sent by the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S) in England.¹

The first Catholic missionaries arrived in Uganda on 17 February 1879.² These were Father Simeon Lourdel and Brother Amans Delmas, of the missionary society of the White Fathers, now commonly known as The Missionaries of Africa. This missionary society was founded in Algiers (North Africa) by Archbishop Charles Martial Allemand Lavigerie "to promote the glory of God, first, by personal sanctification of its members, and secondly, by its apostolic labours for the establishment of the Christian religion in the continent of Africa."³

Pope Leo XIII, on 24 February 1878, signed the brief whereby he accepted the petition of Archbishop Lavigerie to send missionaries to the central Africa region and entrusted the whole of today's Uganda and North West Tanzania to the Missionary Society of the White Fathers.⁴

In 1894, the eastern part of Uganda was entrusted to the care of the Mill Hill Missionaries, and in 1895, it became the Vicariate of the Upper Nile. Northern Uganda was

¹See Y. TOURIGNY, *So Abundant a Harvest: The Catholic Church in Uganda, 1879-1979*, London, Darton Longman & Todd, 1978, p. 23.

²Ibid., p. 21.

³J. BOUNIOL, *The White Fathers and their Mission*, London, Sands & Co., 1929, p. 67.

⁴See *ibid.*, pp. 53, 172.

given to the Verona Missionaries from Verona Italy (also known as Comboni Missionaries, named after Bishop Daniel Comboni, the founder of the society), who arrived in Uganda in 1910. The White Fathers retained southern Uganda (except that part of land east of Kampala, which was under the Mill Hill Missionaries), and western Uganda. The White Fathers' territory came to be known as the North Nyanza Vicariate, and was under Bishop J.J. Hirth, as vicar apostolic, residing at Rubaga, which is now the metropolitan see of Kampala.⁵

Having been preceded by the Moslem Arabs, European explorers, colonialists, and Anglican missionaries, the French Roman Catholic missionaries were received with mixed feelings. King Mutesa of Buganda, the host, was suspicious of the motive of the missionaries, thinking of them to be political envoys of foreign powers. The Moslem Arabs and the English Anglicans each saw the arrival of the Catholic missionaries as an occasion of rivaling them for African converts. This factor, along with other reasons, of course, was later to spark off the execution of some new African Christian converts by King Mwangi of Buganda, between 1885 and 1887. Among these are the twenty-two Catholic martyrs of Uganda.

Father Lourdel and Brother Amans, along with their other confreres who joined them later, made their first contacts with, and gave instructions to, the loyal pages and members of the palace of the King of Buganda. These were very instrumental in extending the message of the gospel to their families, friends and villages. In their approaches to the local population, the White Fathers had at first to use Swahili or Arabic, because King Mutesa had forbidden his subjects to teach the missionaries Luganda (the local language in central Uganda).⁶ But later, the missionaries were able to learn Luganda and they even wrote a catechism and grammar in that language. The first baptisms were administered in March, 1880.⁷

The following information testifies to the seriousness, devotion and zeal of the missionaries in their mission. Their teaching was effective enough to commit their new

⁵ See D. BYABAZAIRE, *The Contribution of the Christian Churches to the Development of Western Uganda, 1894-1974*, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 1979, p. 46.

⁶ See Y. TOURIGNY, *So Abundant a Harvest*, p. 28.

⁷ See *Ibid.*

converts to the extent of shedding their blood for Christ.

(...) Father Livinhac imposed rather severe conditions before admitting a candidate to baptism. First, the candidates had to know the basic tenets of faith and understand them well enough to explain them. The candidates had to show good will. Nobody would be baptized unless he was prepared to live a good Christian life, and must even be ready to die rather than renounce his faith. "If we notice the least hesitation," wrote Livinhac, "we tell them that they must wait and intensify their life of prayer." Normally, children were not admitted to baptism; the average age was between 18 and 35 years. The missionaries considered whether or not the catechumen lived in surroundings where he could practice his faith without hindrance.⁸

Father Lourdel found these conditions severe and the question was referred to Archbishop Lavigerie for consideration and the latter called the attention of the missionaries to his instructions of 1879, namely, that the catechumenate should normally last four years before baptism.

On 7 November 1882, the missionaries left Buganda. This was because they had been disillusioned due to the misconduct of some neophytes and catechumens at the mission station. Since the king and his chiefs were becoming increasingly hostile to the mission, the missionaries thought that their lives were in danger when they received the rumours that the king was planning to kill them.⁹ So the missionaries voluntarily decided to leave Buganda. They went to Northern Tanzania to join their confreres at the mission station of Bukumbi.

The missionaries left behind 20 baptized Christians and 250 catechumens.¹⁰ Their departure, however, proved a blessing in disguise, because it gave an opportunity to the first Catholics in Buganda to show the depth of their faith.¹¹ The following quotation about the achievements of the newly baptized Christians points to the tremendous work the laity can do if they are given the chance and the preparation to participate in the mission of the Church.

Left to themselves in more or less hostile surroundings, deprived of the support of their priests, the first neophytes reorganized their life according to the principles instilled in them by their missionaries. Under the leadership of Joseph Mukasa Balikuddembe, Andrew Kaggwa, and Matia Mulumba, the

⁸ Ibid., p. 29.

⁹ See *ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 35.

¹¹ See *ibid.*, p. 37.

number of those who came to prayer increased daily. Joseph Mukasa looked after those who were with him in the court of the king and formed a regular praying community among them. Another strong community grew up around Matia Mulumba at Mityana (now a diocese), while Andrew Kaggwa helped those in the region around (king) Mutesa's capital.

All those who were able to do so among the catechumens and neophytes seized every opportunity of teaching the catechism to their friends. Many village chiefs who were Catholics gathered around them up to 60 and even 100 people for catechism and prayer. If a catechumen was in danger of death, he was baptized by a friend. It was thanks to these precursors of lay apostolate in Uganda that the Catholic Church survived the missionaries' absence. (...) they (the priests) found well over 500 catechumens when they returned in 1885, more than double the number they had left behind. (...) even the number of the baptized Catholics increased. It was not rare, after the missionaries' return to find at their door, a catechumen bringing with him a dozen or so catechumens who had never yet seen a priest.¹²

It is important to realize that all this work was done by people who were hardly three years old in Christianity. Now, after one hundred and twenty-one years of effective evangelization of the country, much has been achieved by the laity and much more can be accomplished with them in the mission of the Church in Uganda.

So much can be said concerning the history of the Church in Uganda, her missionary outreach to different parts of the country, her contribution to the social, economic, and political development of the nation. For the purposes of this study, it suffices to limit ourselves to the beginnings of the Church in the central region of Uganda (Buganda) and its spread from there to various corners of the country. Even here we have mentioned just a few activities and events following the immediate arrival of the first missionaries.

Just as the colonial governments and business firms could hardly have functioned without the aid of clerks, foremen, artisans, telegraphists, interpreters, printers, and many other lower or middle cadre workers during the colonial era, so also the work of the missionaries would have been¹³ very slow or ineffective without the help of lay people to

¹² Y. TOURIGNY, *So Abundant a Harvest*, pp. 37-38. Balikuddembe, Kaggwa, and Mulumba are among the 22 Catholic Martyrs of Uganda who were killed by King Mwanga between 1885-1887. They were canonized by Paul VI in 1964.

¹³ See V. NWOSU, *The Laity and the Growth of the Catholic Church in Nigeria: The Onitsha*

assist them (the missionaries). The Church was able to expand from the central region to various parts of Uganda principally due to the work of lay people especially the African catechists who were heralds, guides, and close associates of missionary priests in the evangelization of Uganda. The story of the African catechist in the history of the Church in Uganda in relation to priests is like the story of John the Baptist in relation to Jesus Christ. They have indeed been the voice of the missionary *crying in the wilderness* of the nineteenth century African jungles proclaiming the gospel of Christ. Catechists are still playing an indispensable role in the African Church.

In 1939, Uganda got the first African bishop in modern times, namely Monsignor Joseph Kiwanuka. As of now, the Catholic Church in Uganda is blessed with 19 dioceses, 17 of which are under indigenous bishops. There are four ecclesiastical provinces, namely Kampala in central Uganda, Tororo in the east, Mbarara in the west, and Gulu in the north.

Uganda covers an area of 241,040 square kilometres, with a population of 17,741,000 (1993). Religions in the percentage of the population (1991) are: Roman Catholic 44.5%, Church of Uganda (Anglican) 39.2%, Muslim 10.5%, others 5.7%.¹⁴ There are Bible translations in at least six major local languages.

2.2 —The Spread of Catholicism to Various Parts of Uganda

The people of Buganda were not passive recipients of the gospel of Christ. They propagated the gospel amongst themselves and to different corners of the kingdoms neighbouring them.¹⁵ Most of the lay evangelizers were former pages at the king of Buganda's palace where the missionaries arrived first.

As has already been indicated before, the White Fathers were the first, and for about sixteen years, the only Catholic missionaries in Uganda. The country was later shared between the Mill Hill Missionaries from Britain, who evangelized the east and the Verona Fathers who

Story 1903-1983, Ibadan, Africana - FEP Publishers, 1990, p. 26.

¹⁴ See STATISTICS DEPARTMENT, "The 1991 Population and Housing Census," Entebbe, Uganda, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, April, 1994.

¹⁵ Cf. J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African History 62-1992*, Nairobi, Paulines Publications—Africa, 1994, p. 240.

evangelized the north while the rest of the country remained under the care of the White Fathers. One gives credit to the missionaries for their tireless work in the evangelization of Uganda, but they would not have achieved such great success had it not been through the cooperation of the African converts who helped to spread the seed of the gospel as either catechists or just lay evangelizers. Although there was a supply of missionaries from Europe and North America, the African Church had to be open towards self-propagation if the faith was to take deeper roots. The first African priest during this missionary era was ordained in 1913, thirty-four years after the arrival of the missionaries. With the increasing number of Catholics and the overwhelming numbers of African catechumens, one could not say that the number of missionary priests was sufficient to cater for the needs of all these converts, plus opening up new missionary stations. The need for the laity's more active participation in the evangelizing mission of the Church was then as it is still today for Uganda, to use the words of one of the sons of Uganda at the Second Vatican Council Bishop Cyprian Kihangire, "a matter of life and death."¹⁶

The lay people kept the Church going from 1882 to 1885, the period during which the White Fathers withdrew from Buganda as has already been indicated. In 1888 Christians, both Anglican and Catholic, were driven out of Buganda by Muslims. They went to neighbouring Buddu county and Kabula (now the Diocese of Masaka), and Ankore (the present Mbarara Archdiocese). During this period lay people assumed leadership. Honorat Nyonyintono was the first leader of the Christian rebels who wanted to fight their way back, and he held them together.¹⁷ Stanislas Mugwanya was one of the prominent Catholic leaders, and even a chief justice in the kingdom of Buganda. He was the leader of lay Catholics in Uganda, 1892-1938.¹⁸

"For a number of years, Christianity in Buganda was shaped by Christian chiefs. One of them, Alexis Sebbowa, was a great benefactor of the Catholic mission. He kept a strict

¹⁶ Cf. Y. TOURIGNY, *So Abundant a Harvest*, p. 171.

¹⁷ See W.B. ANDERSON, *The Church in East Africa, 1840-174*, Nairobi, Uzima Press Limited, 1977, p. 89. See also J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa*, p. 238.

¹⁸ See J. M. WALIGGO, *A History of African Priest, Masaka, Katigondo National Major Seminary, 1988*, p. 142.

Christian discipline over his sub-chiefs and tenants.”¹⁹

2.2.1 —The Missionaries’ Methods of Evangelization²⁰

The missionaries in Uganda, especially the White Fathers, adopted three major methods of evangelization.

First, contact with the local people. The immediate problem that faced the missionaries as they arrived in Uganda was how to get in touch with the indigenous people so as to give them Christian instruction. So, having observed how the local chiefs were dealing with their subjects, the White Fathers intensified their contact with the local population. The chiefs were used to hosting many of their subjects at their homes for audiences and hospitality. Doing likewise, the missionaries thought that this would be an easy way to know and relate with the indigenous people, learn their language and eventually teach them the Catholic faith. This method seemed to yield quick and positive results. Many people came to receive instruction from the missionaries until there came a time when they realized that they needed to give time also to the needs of the new civilization that came with the missionaries, European explorers and colonialists. This reduced the numbers of the converts to Christianity considerably and so the method that had worked well was naturally being phased out by the circumstances of the time. This necessitated another method.

The second method was the movement of the missionaries from their stations to the people. The first had been the movement of the people from their homes to the missionaries at their stations. If Christianity was to spread beyond the missionary compounds and neighbourhoods, it had to be initially taken across by the missionaries. Missionaries visited villages and sought for converts whom they entrusted to some leaders chosen from among those who had already received Christian instruction and baptism. They founded outstations in the mission area where Christian candidates received instruction preceding their baptism and then would later be sent back to their villages. From there, the newly baptized would

¹⁹ W.B. ANDERSON, *The Church in East Africa*, p. 89.

²⁰ Material on the missionaries’ methods of evangelization is based on A. Goulet’s book, *Sur les rives du Victoria*, Paris, Librairie Missionnaire, 1948, pp. 136-138.

frequent the mission station for further Christian formation. Missionaries would visit villages and outstations as circumstances allowed. This method rendered good results and was adopted as the most practical and effective method. The method was tested, for example, in 1914 when many of the French White Fathers left for France to do military service during the First World War. Because the visits to villages were suspended, there was a remarkable fall of the growth of Christianity especially the enrolment for the catechumenate, so much so that one third of the White Fathers who remained were obliged to resume the village visits to the detriment of their health.

The third method of evangelization concerned the duration of the catechumenate. Cardinal Lavigerie, the founder of the Society of the White Fathers, after having observed the weaknesses in the practice of Christianity in those areas where baptisms were performed very quickly without intensive Christian instruction, imposed the catechumenate of four years, with reasonable exceptions.²¹ This practice was approved by Rome²² and was in turn proposed to other missionary societies as an excellent means of ensuring solid conversions and preventing defections from the faith as had been happening.

Catechumenates started in villages under the direction of catechists who for three and a half years initiated the candidates in some aspects of religion and evaluated the seriousness of their dispositions. After this period the candidates were sent to the mission station for the last stage of Christian instruction leading to baptism. This lasted six months. Even at the mission station it was (and still is) the catechists who were in charge of the day-to-day running of the catechumenate. In fact this role had been for a long time played by Christian chiefs, assisted by other lay volunteers. Around 1899 the Christian chiefs were running the day-to-day activities of evangelization and so the apostolic vicar put them in charge of village outstations.

The catechist had to be a model Christian, pious, intelligent and zealous, able to give substantial religious instruction. He represented the missionaries in distant village outstations sustaining the faith of the Christians and winning the confidence of the unbaptized so as to

²¹ See C. LAVIGERIE, *Instructions aux missionnaires*, Namur, Editions Grands Lacs, 1950, p. 110.

²² See *ibid.*, p. 194.

lead them to embrace Christianity. He presided at the worship services, visited the sick and called the priests to anoint them, he baptized those who in danger of death requested baptism. A. Goulet, emphasizing the importance of catechists at that time, noted: "These zealous collaborators, recruited in their own places, are so necessary that without them the mission would not have grown and taken root or even taken off."²³

Within the missionaries' methods, the role of the laity was indispensable. Although the laity came to learn from the missionaries, they had a lot to teach the missionaries about their culture and language. This factor was very crucial in expediting the spread of Christianity. Moreover, Lavigerie had instructed the first missionaries to equatorial Africa that:

the knowledge of the local language is indispensable for preaching; it is therefore necessary for the missionaries to study it as thoroughly and as quickly as possible. As soon as they are appointed to a mission, they must at once devote every moment of leisure to the study of the language spoken there. (...) In each mission where the local language has not yet been printed, I want it to be considered a duty that one of the missionaries, (...) set aside one or two hours daily for the compilation of a dictionary.²⁴

With these instructions in mind the missionaries wrote some grammar texts in local languages, and translated Sunday gospels and catechisms into local languages.

It cannot be emphasized enough that without the aid of the lay people that the missionaries had newly converted and entrusted with responsibilities as collaborators in their work of evangelization, the gospel of Christ would not have spread as quickly as it did.

Although the spread of Christianity to all the corners of Uganda was expedited by the division of the then Vicariate of Uganda into three vicariates, the foreign missionaries would not have managed to penetrate the interior villages of Uganda given still their limitation of

²³ "Ces zélés collaborateurs, recrutés sur place, sont si nécessaires que sans eux une mission ne ferait que végéter et ne pourrait ni pousser de profondes racines, ni même prendre son essor" (A. GOULET, *Sur les rives du Victoria*, p. 138).

²⁴ "La connaissance de la langue indigène est indispensable pour la prédication; il est donc nécessaire que les missionnaires s'y forment le mieux et le plus promptement possible. Dès qu'ils seront désignés pour la mission, ils devront consacrer à cette étude tous leurs moments de loisir. (...) dans chaque Mission dont la dialecte n'aura pas encore été imprimé, j'ordonne également que l'un des Missionnaires, (...) se charger de ce soin (...) pendant une ou deux heures par jours, à la composition d'un dictionnaire" (C. LAVIGERIE, 'Première instruction aux missionnaires de l'Afrique Equatoriale,' mars 1878, in *Instructions aux missionnaires*, p. 70. See Y. TOURIGNY, *So Abundant a Harvest*, p. 31).

fluency in local languages and a clear understanding of the local cultures, plus the physical impediments of lack of modern means of communication such as roads and motor vehicles. Lay people were very instrumental in this. We are not going to recount the detailed contribution of the laity in the work of evangelization in all the parts of Uganda. It is important, however, to note that the system of using catechists in the work of evangelizing Uganda, which had been introduced by the White Fathers, was continued by the Mill Hill missionaries who took over the eastern region of Uganda and the Verona Fathers who took the northern region. The success story of the Christian missionary in Uganda is also the success story of the Ugandan catechist.

Right from the onset of Christianity in Uganda, the lay Christians, especially catechists, were known to have been the ones doing the ground and reconnaissance work for the missionary priests. A good example of this is what has already been mentioned; the catechists enrolled and instructed catechumens for three and a half years out of four whereas the missionary priests had them for just six months and still with the assistance of catechists.

Among the renown catechists that served in the Mill Hill Upper Nile vicariate are "Cypriani Kyakwambala, who went to Kyaggwe in 1895; Masiali the catechist of Makerere, Yoanna Basitali, who was an early catechist at Mullajje (near Nkokonjeru)."²⁵ The Verona Fathers in northern Uganda had, in addition to the catechists they had obtained, more catechists from the White Fathers' mission of Hoima. Among them particular mention is made of "Lazaro Bagenda, who remained the chief catechist in Gulu until his death in 1932,"²⁶ "Cecilia Bonabana, a woman catechist, who did much for the spread of the Church in northern Uganda."²⁷

By 1894, there were three groups of Catholic Missionaries in Uganda, the White Fathers, the Mill Hill Fathers, and the Verona Fathers. Each of these groups has its success story. Our focus however, will be on the White Fathers, the precursors of Catholicism in Uganda and eventually in what later came to be known as Mbarara Diocese.

²⁵ Y. TOURIGNY, *So Abundant a Harvest*, p. 87.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

²⁷ D. BYABAZAIRE, *The Contribution of the Christian Churches*, p. 49.

The movement of Catholic evangelization from central Uganda (Buganda) to western Uganda was initiated by Bishop J.J. Hirth the then apostolic vicar of North Nyanza vicariate residing at Rubaga (Buganda).

In April, 1894, Fathers A. Achte and Houssin arrived in the Bugangaizi county of Bunyoro (now the Diocese of Hoima) and established a mission at Bukumi. The following year Achte moved on further south to initiate mission work in Toro, the present Diocese of Fort Portal. He arrived in Toro at a place which he called *Virika* on 18 November 1895. Achte succeeded in 1896 to win to Catholicism five chiefs led by Siras Kagoro, the provincial chief of Mwenge. The medical services provided by the missionaries helped a lot to win many converts to Catholicism. Some of those cured stayed at the mission for Christian instruction.²⁸ Meanwhile Bishop Henry Streicher had in 1897 succeeded Bishop Hirth, and so in 1900, he, with Father Achte, visited the area of Mwenge in the northeast of Toro so as to extend the mission work from *Virika*.²⁹ Catechists involved in this mission were: Placid Ssetyabi, Johana Kaparaga, Simeo Balironda and John Kitana. The catechists taught in villages and at the homes of important personalities. For example, in 1901 catechist Francis Kibira, who later became a priest, "taught at the court of provincial chief Kagoro and won the first important Catholic convert."³⁰ Most of the work was done by catechists. The priests of *Virika* mission came occasionally to supervise their work and baptize. Later in 1904 a mission station was opened in the area at Butiti by Fathers Gremeret and Dubrulle and Brother Martin.

In the meantime work had also begun in other parts of Bunyoro: at Bujuni, Hoima and Masindi. The foundation of Bujuni mission in Buyage county in 1896 was an extension of the work begun earlier at Bukumi. Bishop Streicher sent there Nicolas Masasi, a catechist, who started the catechumenate. The first resident missionaries, Fathers Vandael and Beck, arrived there in October 1899. These built up stations. The following year saw the baptisms of a group of 129 catechumens.³¹

In 1901 a mission was opened at Bujumbura by Fathers Bresson and Varangot accompanied by Baganda catechists. Among the first converts of the area was Leo Kaboha, who was at the

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

time deputy to the local senior chief Paulo Byabacwezi. Kaboha was an inspiration of the emerging Church in the area.³²

A team of catechists from Mwenge in Toro went to Hoima. They were a boost in the work of evangelization around Hoima. These were: John Kaparaga, Andrea Kabaijamu, Aleni Katorogo and Sebastian Isingoma.³³ At Masindi, northern Bunyoro, evangelization was also taking place. Father Achte appointed there catechist Placid Mutyaba as early as 1898; missionaries came to live there in 1911.

The generous African catechists did not limit their work to their local places as has been shown, nor did they even limit it to their country. Some, along with the White Fathers, initiated Christianity in Mahagi from 1901 and in Bulega from 1907.³⁴ These places are on the western shores of Lake Albert in the now Democratic Republic of Congo.

So much for the spread of Catholicism from Buganda to western Uganda. It is evident from this brief history of the growth of the Ugandan Church that the missionary priests did not carry out the work of evangelization alone. The lay faithful, mostly catechists with little training, worked along with and more often preceded the missionary priests in establishing mission areas, and enrolling and instructing new converts.

2.3 —The Historical Background of the Catholic Church in Mbarara

Mbarara saw the light of the Christian gospel for the first time around the year 1901 through the efforts of the Anglican missionaries.³⁵

The Catholic missionaries of the Society of the White Fathers arrived in Mbarara in 1902. The contribution of the laity in the evangelization of Mbarara is immense. The lay evangelizers were not working in isolation. They worked hand in hand with the missionary priests. It is not possible therefore to give an isolated account of their contribution to the work of evangelization separate from the work of the White Fathers. The two will be dealt with concurrently. The first Catholic Missionaries to arrive in Mbarara were Father Lebros

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ See *ibid.*

³⁵ See D. BYABAZAIRE, *The Contribution of the Christian Churches*, p. 42.

and Brother Hermann Kock, accompanied by catechists Jean Kamondo and Yozefu Rutebemberwa, having been sent by Bishop Streicher to survey the land and mark places for future mission stations.³⁶ Father Lebros and Brother Hermann had come to Mbarara on 26 October 1900. On this trip they selected the site of Nyamitanga Hill which is now the Diocesan headquarters of Mbarara. The missionaries were heading for Bunyaruguru but were hampered by armed resistance on the way and were forced to return to Mbarara on 19 November 1900 and travelled to Koki in the south where they had come from. They left behind two Baganda catechists, Yohaana Kamondo and Morris Kukando. The two catechists and Ruhara, the first Catholic county chief of Rwampara (in Mbarara), built the first chapel at Kamukuzi near the king's palace.³⁷ They waited for two years before the first priests, Fathers L. Gorju and A. Varangot, came to settle permanently at Nyamitanga on 14 October 1902.

The catechists were the right hand men of Bishop Streicher and his priests. They were able men who included Yohaana Kitagaana, Yozefu Rutebemberwa, and Atanaasi Nalugumbula, who recalled Bishop Streicher's instruction to him: 'Go to Mbarara and from there carry on to Kigezi. Stay with Yohaana Kitagaana who is an old man now. He is my right hand; you will be my left hand.'³⁸

Atanaasi Nalugumbula, also known as Ganaafa, worked for Mbarara Diocese from 1906 to 1966 when Kabaale Diocese was created. He made friends with king Kahaya II of Ankore, who gave him freedom of movement around Mbarara. He is known to have been a good preacher and legislator. "He made many by-laws or rules. He forbade working on Sunday, consulting diviners and wearing amulates on Church land."³⁹ He worked mainly in Bunyaruguru and Buremba, the northwestern and northern parts of Mbarara.

As for Yosefu Rutebemberwa, also known as Rwakaahwa, he was a *Mutooro* (from Toro). He worked for Mbarara Diocese since its foundation from 1900 till the time he died in 1967.⁴⁰ He was called upon by Father Lebros to guide his team to Bushagara (north of

³⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 50.

³⁷ See L. BUSHARIZI and P. KANYANDAGO, "Church Administration in Mbarara Diocese," synod position paper, no. 8, 1986, p. 11, no. 27, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11, no. 29.

³⁹ L. BUSHARIZI, "Church Administration in Mbarara Diocese," p. 12, no. 31.

⁴⁰ See *ibid.*

Mbarara) on his first journey. Father Gorju later transferred him from the outstation of Mabonwa to the mission station of Nyamitanga to teach catechumens. He worked in various other localities and on retiring he continued to give Christian instruction to small children at his home in Nyamitanga. His son Thomas Bishanga became a priest of Mbarara Diocese.

The effective start of the mission in Mbarara was with the arrival of four catechists from Buganda. "By the end of 1903, 430 people were attending catechumenate."⁴¹ Under the leadership of the two White Fathers, and with the support of the local chiefs who converted to Catholicism, the work developed faster.⁴²

The greatest response to Catholicism in Mbarara was seen among the people of Bunyaruguru in the northwestern corner of present Mbarara Archdiocese. Two Buganda catechists⁴³ were sent there by the priests in 1903. These were later joined by "catechist Yohana Kitegana who was to play a very important role in the evangelization of this area and later the area of Kigezi,"⁴⁴ which is now a separate Diocese of Kabale. After undergoing formal catechetical training at Rubaga in Buganda, Kitegana arrived in Bunyaruguru in 1903. He recruited many catechumens in this area including the local chief whose influence of life and example won other influential people in this area to the Catholic Church. In 1909, six years later, when the White Fathers settled in this area at Rugazi (which is now a parish), a Christian community was already in existence, having been prepared by these hard working catechists. In 1911, Yohana Kitegana was sent by Bishop Streicher to Kigezi to spread the gospel. There, he founded many outstations. When in the same year, Bishop Streicher, accompanied by Fathers Le Tohic and Lafleur, visited Kigezi to fix the sites for the future stations, they could build on the work of Kitegana and his group of Baganda catechist co-workers. European priests occasionally came all the long way from either Mbarara or Kitabi (now a parish in Mbarara) to baptize the already prepared catechumens. The scarcity of foreign missionaries during the First World War delayed the appointment of resident missionaries in Kigezi. Therefore, for twelve years, Kitegana and his co-workers directed the

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² See *ibid.*

⁴³ The Baganda Catechists were from Buganda in central Uganda where the first Catholic missionaries in Uganda arrived in 1879.

⁴⁴ D. BYABAZAIRE, *The Contribution of the Christian Churches*, p. 50.

work of the Church in many parts in Kigezi. By the time the Fathers settled at Kabale (the present diocesan headquarters of the region of Kigezi) in 1923, they found about 700 people already baptized. Six years later, two other mission stations were opened in other parts of the then Kigezi, namely, Nyakibale in Rujumbura and Mutolere in Bufumbira, which are now in two civil districts but within the same diocese. Kitegana's efforts and the efforts of other catechists were vital in the establishment of Christianity in these areas too.

We cannot go through the history of all lay evangelizers in Mbarara. This would be very long. However, the few examples that have been given help to point to the indispensable role and contribution of the laity in the growth of the Church in Mbarara.

Mbarara as a diocese started with the creation of Rwenzori Vicariate (in western Uganda) on the 28 March 1934, with a French Canadian White Father Francis Xavier Lacourcière as vicar apostolic. He was subsequently ordained titular bishop on the 25 July 1934.

On 25 March 1953, the Vicariate of Rwenzori became a diocese, covering the whole of the western region of Uganda, namely, Ankole, Kigezi, Toro, and Bunyoro. The seat of the bishop was at Mbarara and the new diocese was called Mbarara Diocese. On 11 December 1956, following the retirement of Bishop Lacourcière, Jean-Marie Ogez, a French White Father, was nominated and subsequently ordained bishop of Mbarara.

By 1966, three new dioceses which were part of the vast Diocese of Mbarara had been erected. These were: Fort Portal, a large part of Hoima, and Kabale. They were erected in 1961, 1965, and 1966 respectively. In 1989, a new Diocese of Kasese was erected, being cut from Fort Portal Diocese.

The Diocese of Mbarara remained only in the region of Ankole now covering three civil districts of Mbarara, Bushenyi, and Ntungamo. John Baptist Kakubi became its first Ugandan bishop in 1969, having been ordained bishop along with the bishops of Kabale, Fort Portal, and Hoima, on August 1, 1969 by Pope Paul VI on the occasion of the first papal visit to Africa/Uganda. Bishop Kakubi was succeeded in 1991 by the incumbent Archbishop Paul Bakyenga.⁴⁵ On 30 January, 1999, Mbarara was elevated to the status of an

⁴⁵ See *Uganda Catholic Directory*, 2nd ed., Kampala, Uganda Catholic Secretariat, 1994, pp. 114-120.

archdiocese, comprising Kabale, Kasese, Fort Portal, and Hoima as its suffragan dioceses. This ecclesiastical province is what was between 1934 and 1953 known as the Rwenzori Vicariate.

Mbarara Archdiocese presently borders Fort Portal and Kasese dioceses in the north, Tanzania in the south, Masaka Diocese in the east and Kabale Diocese in the west. It covers an area of 10,980 square kilometres with the population of 1,920,071 and the Catholic population of 797,480.⁴⁶ The archdiocese has 25 parishes, 104 diocesan priests (1999-2000), 12 missionary priests, 39 major seminarians, 1 minor seminary, 1 preparatory seminary, 1,590 catechists (1994), 1 catechist training centre, and 68 eucharistic centres.

2.4 —The Lay Faithful in the Structures of the Church in Mbarara Archdiocese

Mbarara, a vibrant Church built with the sweat of missionaries and gallant lay evangelizers, never cut off the cooperation of priests and the lay faithful in the mission of the Church, although instances of clericalism may have cropped up at certain moments in the development of the diocese. The lay faithful's role in the life and mission of the Church in the diocese can best be seen in its structures.

2.4.1 —Administrative Divisions

There are two major divisions in the structure of the Church in Mbarara. These are the diocesan and the parish structures. This study traces the involvement of the lay faithful in these structures.

2.4.1.1 —Diocesan Structures

The present structures of the Mbarara Archdiocese are not an instantaneous creation of the administrators or Church law. There is a history behind them. They have developed and have been shaped through the changing circumstances of needs and time, through successes and failures of the diocese since its foundation.

concerning some information on Mbarara since 1934.

⁴⁶ See *Annuario pontificio*, Città del Vaticano, 1999, p. 439.

While there were still vicariates in Uganda (up to 1953), the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, *Propaganda Fide*, issued decrees and letters for their administration.

When dioceses were established in 1953, they came under the direct authority of the local bishops. Mission stations became parishes, but the resident bishops consulted Missionary Societies' regional superiors on personnel and other (relevant) matters. The role of *Propaganda Fide* remained in specified areas such as the training of the clergy and giving financial support.⁴⁷

In 1957, when Bishop Ogez took over Mbarara Diocese, it comprised the territory of the present dioceses of Mbarara, Kasese, Fort Portal, Hoima and Kabale. The diocese was then divided in four deaneries of Ankore, Bunyoro, Kigezi and Toro in December 1957.⁴⁸ Toro and Bunyoro formed Fort Portal Diocese on 19 April 1961, and on 17 April 1966, Kabale became a diocese.⁴⁹

The diocesan administration in September 1957 consisted of: the bishop, two vicars general, secretary and chancellor, three diocesan consultors, diocesan treasurer and a diocesan administration council comprising the bishop, the treasurer and a procurator.⁵⁰ By 1961, the diocesan administration had been organized to comprise the bishop, the vicar general, secretary and chancellor, synodal examiner and three parochial consultors, director of diocesan publications, diocesan religious inspector and officials.⁵¹

In the effort to involve the laity in the running of the Church affairs two councils were defined and set up in 1961: the Catholic Council and the Parish Council. (...) The Catholic Council was intended to be a body of Catholic lay organizations for the welfare of the people in the diocese, the Parish Council was to be a body of leaders of different groups operating in the parish. (...) These councils were to help implement the bishop's call on the clergy and laity to unite in thought and action.⁵²

In 1966 seven diocesan commissions were set up. These were: pastoral council composed of seven priests, three religious members, and twenty-four lay people; vocations

⁴⁷ L. BUSHARIZI, "Church Administration in Mbarara Diocese," p. 19, no. 48.

⁴⁸ See *ibid.*

⁴⁹ See *Uganda Catholic Directory*, 1994, p. 56.

⁵⁰ See L. BUSHARIZI, "Church Administration in Mbarara Diocese," p. 20, no. 52.

⁵¹ See *ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵² *Ibid.*

commission; catechists commission; liturgy commission; refugee commission; and finance commission for parish budgets.⁵³

In 1965, the diocesan pastoral council membership was increased, bringing the total lay representation from all different sections and activities of the diocesan community to thirty-four out of fifty members.⁵⁴

During the administration of Bishop Ogez the problem of *clericalism*, which seemed to have been latent even in former administrations, was identified. It was defined by the diocesan administration as:

[...] that practice or customs by which we act in such a way that the lay [persons] in our missions are given no responsibility whatsoever or a minimum, when it suits us. It is that attitude of mind whereby the parish priest and his assistants (curates) take over and hold in their own hands all real authority and initiative, in all matters dealing even indirectly with the mission [...].⁵⁵

This is a problem that would have been addressed by the creation of commissions mentioned above. However, it is one thing to have the commissions and yet another to achieve the purpose for which the commissions were established. The establishment of the said commissions may show a positive change of attitude, which is a good step already, but if they remain inactive, then the problem of clericalism is surely not solved. In fact clericalism seemed not to have been abated because in his first pastoral letter, Bishop John Baptist Kakubi, the successor of Bishop Ogez, says: "Time is gone when you were just recipients of the services of the hierarchy, priests and religious. Indeed this should not have been so."⁵⁶ This statement is not a report of the achievements so far made in eradicating clericalism but rather an exhortation and pledge to work hard and improve the situation. Later the commissions that had been established slackened and eventually phased out or developed into other new administrative organs.⁵⁷ By 1971, for instance, the Finance Commission had been

⁵³ See *ibid.*, p. 22.

⁵⁴ See *ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23. Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Dictionary defines *clericalism* as, "An attitude that seems to imply that clergy are somehow superior to laity" (P.M.J. STRAVINSKAS, ed., *Catholic Dictionary*, Huntington, Indiana, Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1993, p. 137).

⁵⁶ L. BUSHARIZI, "Church Administration in Mbarara Diocese," p.36.

⁵⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 27.

replaced by the Finance and Planning Commission. The latter was, among other things, “to help the bishop, the treasurer and development office in coordinating efforts, study plans and projects and make financial estimates.”⁵⁸ In 1976, need was felt to set up a personnel planning committee composed of priests and religious. This committee was to handle matters pertaining to medical services, schools, seminaries, houses of religious formation and diocesan and religious offices of administration.⁵⁹ There is no indication of involving the laity in this committee that would largely deal with matters that touch areas of lay involvement such as the medical and education fields.

In 1977 the Finance and Planning Commission decided to reorganize the diocesan administration. This resulted into the Diocesan Administration Board. The Board was not to replace the role of the bishop as administrator of the diocese but, in accord with the teaching of Vatican II, to help him exercise his ministry.⁶⁰ They were organized in such a way that they were to help the bishop for the diocesan administration as well as for the pastoral activity.⁶¹ In the bishop’s letter, “Revised Reconstruction of Diocesan Administration” of 26 June 1984, it is clearly stated that the bishop is the head of the diocese and shall be immediately assisted by five commissions, namely: the Personnel Commission, the Pastoral Commission, the Social Commission, the Economic Commission, and the Education Commission.⁶²

The bishop, the vicar general, the chancellor, and the treasurer together formed the Diocesan Administration Board (DAB). Membership of the commissions was open to all Catholic lay members of Christ’s faithful in the diocese in good standing within the Church and were appointed by the bishop.

The system of commissions is a good and practical way for the bishop to exercise the principle of subsidiarity in the diocese and involving the lay faithful to collaborate in the mission of the Church at the diocesan level. Here the skills, talents and resources of the lay faithful in various areas such as management, education, economics, social work, music and

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 28.

⁵⁹ See *ibid.*

⁶⁰ See *Christus Dominus*, nos. 16, 27, in FLANNERY I, pp. 573, 579-580.

⁶¹ See *ibid.*, no. 27.

⁶² See L. BUSHARIZI, “Church Administration in Mbarara Diocese,” p. 53.

literature are tapped (canon 228, § 2). This will be shown clearly in the discussion on the participation of the lay faithful during the first diocesan synod.

In the commissions one sees the participation of the lay faithful in the teaching (Education Commission), sanctifying (Pastoral Commission), and governing (Personnel, Social, and Economic Commissions) offices of the bishop.

These commissions are still in place and they would be good channels of addressing the aforementioned problem of clericalism. But as was noted at the first diocesan synod, “these commissions have remained a one-man commission” which “has hampered and stifled the administrative and pastoral work these commissions were supposed to enhance.”⁶³ The problem of lack of personnel has been a longstanding one. There are not enough priests and trained catechists, and “the large number of the faithful (...) cannot be followed after school or catechumenate for deeper knowledge of their faith up to date.”⁶⁴ Because of this, probably much more emphasis should be put on the grassroots level of parishes and other structures below the parish. The problem at stake is that these structures are determined from above and the laity are brought in to fill up the predetermined positions. There may be also a feeling among the laity that they are rendering a service that properly belongs to the Church hierarchy whereas theirs is just to do with the realm of the world. This attitude promotes the aforementioned problem of clericalism, and whenever the laity are involved in any such mission of the Church, there is an expectation of remuneration since they are helping someone else, namely, the hierarchy, to do its job. The proper attitude would be that all together the laity and the hierarchy, as the People of God, cooperate to build up the Body of Christ each one with their designated responsibility. Remuneration would of course be expected if any of the lay Christian faithful were to be given a responsibility in the Church that would require full time engagement (canon 231 § 2). There is a difference between a job, for which remuneration should be granted, and service rendered as a fulfilment of an obligation that all the members of Christ’s faithful have to “provide for the needs of the Church.”⁶⁵

⁶³ See *ibid.*, p. 30.

⁶⁴ See *ibid.*

⁶⁵ Canon 222, § 1.

2.4.1.2 —Parish Structures

All the 25 parishes of Mbarara Diocese have basically the same structures although their involvement of the laity in these structures may somehow vary from one parish to another. In parishes the participation of the laity in the mission and ministry of the Church is needed and even seen more than at the diocesan level. This is so for the same reasons Pope John Paul II gave emphasizing the effectiveness of the parish in the formation of the lay faithful. He said:

Situating and working within the particular Church or diocese is the parish which has the essential task of a more personal and immediate formation of the lay faithful. In fact, because it is in the position to reach more easily individual persons and singular groups, the parish is called to instruct its members in hearing God's Word, in liturgical and personal dialogue with God, in the life of fraternal charity, and in allowing a more direct and concrete perception of the sense of ecclesial communion and responsibility in the Church's mission.

Internal to the parish, especially if vast and territorially extensive, small Church communities, where present, can be a notable help in the formation of Christians by providing a consciousness and an experience of ecclesial communion and mission which are more extensive and incisive.⁶⁶

Each parish in the diocese comprises a group of outstation churches called *centres*. Each *centre* church is under a *centre* catechist and his assistant. The *centres* are in turn subdivided into small village churches locally called *hiikas* (singular: *hiika*). Each *hiika* is also managed by a catechist (*hiika* catechist). In other words a group of *hiikas* make up a *centre*, and a group of *centres* make up a parish. In a parish, there is a head catechist who, keeping in mind the role of the parish priest, coordinates the pastoral activities of all the catechists in the parish, plus chairing their general meetings with the parish priest presiding. The *hiika* churches are subdivided into smaller Christian communities under the responsibility of a chairperson with a committee. This latter structure however is not administrative.

There are some big parishes that have as many as 25 *centres* and 60 *hiikas*, or more. That means that a parish like that has at least 25 *centre* catechists and 60 *hiika* catechists.

⁶⁶ *Christifideles laici*, no. 61.

These catechists are remunerated with collections from the faithful in their local communities (*centres* and *hiikas*).

At present, 18 parishes in Mbarara Archdiocese have two priests each, 1 parish has one priest and 5 parishes have at least 3 priests each. The phenomenon of priestless parishes has not been a common occurrence, but not inexistent, either.

The priests live at the central parish church, and visit the larger outstations (*centres*) on average of once every one or two months. They visit the smaller churches (*hiikas*) once every one or two years. In the meantime, the local Christian communities are led by catechists who have various responsibilities such as conducting non-Eucharistic Sunday and feast day liturgies, enrolling and instructing catechumens, visiting families, doing the preliminary phases of marriage preparation, preparing children for first Holy Communion, collecting church tithes, conducting Christian funerals, overseeing the general administration of the church (*centre* or *hiika*) property.

Right from the *hiika* level up to the parish level, there are councils that are supposed to help the catechists and the parish priest in the administration of the church. Thus, there is a *hiika* council for the *hiika*, *centre* council for the *centre*, and parish council for the parish. There are committees of these councils according to the needs of the time and place, for instance, planning, liturgical, vocations, education, finance, lay apostolate movements, building, land committees. In these councils and committees, members are elected according to their experiences and readiness to serve. In some cases expertise in particular fields or professions is required. Although these councils and committees make important "decisions" concerning their local churches, the final decision is made by the parish priest.

Realistically, in Mbarara Archdiocese, it is at the *hiika* and *centre* levels that the faithful feel themselves as a family/community. This is because parishes are territorially extensive whereas *hiikas* comprise groups of Christian families living close to each other. At the *hiika* and *centre* levels for instance the faithful cooperate with one another to build up and sustain their Church. This includes cleaning the *hiika* premises, putting up vegetable gardens and such other projects as sources of income for the Church. Furthermore, the *hiika* or *centre* committee members arrange to do pre-sacramental preparations. These involve pre-

sacramental interviews and paperwork especially for baptism and marriage. Whenever conflicts arise amongst the faithful the Church committee members intervene to resolve them. So at the *hiika and centre* levels, the principle of communion is lived well.

Just one example of the parish of Rubindi can shed some light on how an average parish stands in Mbarara Archdiocese. As per 1991 parish census, Rubindi Parish had a Catholic population of about 32,000, 6,000 Catholic families, 25 centres, 60 *hiikas*, about 70 catechists, 2 priests appointed to the parish, 80 residential catechumens,⁶⁷ and four religious sisters to train catechumens and organize lay apostolate movements. The furthest outstation is about 40 kilometres from the parish church. Four of the 25 *centres* are Eucharistic. This is a parish that cannot be run effectively by just priests without the cooperation of zealous lay faithful.

2.4.2 —Eucharistic Centres

Eucharistic *centres* are the outstation churches of a parish, with the blessed sacrament reserved in them. These started as a result of the need to give Christians the opportunity of having a real presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist in their midst.⁶⁸

Eucharistic centres, however, are an alternative pastoral provision to make up for the lack of sufficient priests to celebrate the sacrifice of Mass in as many places in the diocese as possible. If there were enough priests, there would certainly have been no need to establish them. In this context, the then bishop of the diocese said:

I should give the full sacrifice of Christ, the Mass, to the Christian communities as is demanded by the teaching of the council Fathers (Vatican II); I cannot do this, due to shortage of ordained ministers; priests. (...) Out of 52 priests, only 30 are working in the 16 parishes with 25,000 Catholics. These priests (...) try to go around parishes offering the Mass. But with such

⁶⁷ Catechumens are enrolled by their respective catechists and are given non-residential Christian instruction for two years at their home churches (outstations). After that, they come to the parish for residential Christian instruction for one year. Those who were not baptized in infancy are baptized on Easter Vigil, and are usually confirmed on Pentecost Sunday. Confirmation marks the end of the instruction programme.

⁶⁸ See J.B.KAKUBI, "Christian Communities in Mbarara Diocese," in *African Ecclesiastical Review*, 21 (1979), p. 301.

numbers for 150 centres, it would mean that each priest, on average, will have five centres to care for. If he says one Mass in each centre, that is, once a month when the Christian community of those centres can nourish their spiritual life with the life-giving Body and Blood of Christ. For the rest of month they starve!

Faced with these circumstances and having in mind the biblical and the teachings of the Church on the Eucharist we feel that we must find ways and means of maintaining a regular supply of the spiritual food for our Christians. My desire would be to have the complete sacrifice of the Mass as often as each time Christian community comes together for worshipping God.

It is due to the shortage of ordained ministers of the Eucharist that the universal Church has allowed some non-ordained ministers to distribute holy communion. In the same way, I am obliged to spread this distribution not only to those around the parishes but also to other good Christians in the centres by establishing Eucharistic communities.⁶⁹

The project of the Eucharistic centres was initially conceived early in 1972 by two missionary priests of the society of the White Fathers, Michel Lejeune and Richard Bouchard.⁷⁰ They arranged that some of the larger and more progressive outstations be given permission to keep the reserved sacrament in their village churches. This was in view of strengthening sacramental life and self-reliance in parish outstations. The situation in the parish of Mushanga at that time was typical of most parishes in the diocese and is even still common in a big number of the parishes today.

To talk about sacraments: baptism, for instance, was administered at the parish once a week as a policy in the parish of Mushanga whereas in some other parishes it was once a month. In the outstations it was administered during the priests' visits which were—and still are—not regular. Such a practice imposed on the parishioners a burden of making a long journey to come to the parish for baptisms. As a consequence people came in very small numbers to attend a particular baptism and so not much could be done to make baptism the family and community festive celebration that it should be.⁷¹ The Eucharist was celebrated at

⁶⁹ J.B. KAKUBI, "Considerations with Regard to the Establishment of Eucharistic Community Centres," talk given at the diocesan pastoral meeting 1973, p. 2, in Mbarara Archdiocese Archives.

⁷⁰ Bouchard and Lejeune later published a booklet, *Eucharist and Community*, demonstrating how the experiment of Eucharistic centres has progressed in Mushanga, a parish of Mbarara Archdiocese where this endeavour begun.

⁷¹ See M. LEJEUNE and R. BOUCHARD, *Eucharist and Community*, Kampala, Gaba Publications, 1973, p. 7.

the local centres on the occasion of the priest's visit. It was also celebrated at the village (*hiika*) level on the occasion of the pastoral visitation (house to house) once a year or every two years. Whenever a priest was visiting, people were given the opportunity to receive the sacrament of penance.⁷² Marriage was celebrated exclusively at the parish church, usually with a minimum attendance as it entailed very long distances to travel and sometimes on foot or bicycles.

With the establishment of Eucharistic centres, the situation improved because the services that had been restricted to the parish were transferred to the Eucharistic centres. Two problems however still persist despite the pastoral provision of Eucharistic centres. One is that not all the outstations in any given parish are Eucharistic centres. Some are limited in resources to qualify for the reservation of the Eucharist in their Churches. The second one is that the Eucharistic centres do not have a priest frequently to celebrate Mass, baptize, bless marriages, and hear confessions. This may be at an interval of one or two months.

The above has been a short review of the birth of Eucharistic centres in Mushanga Parish. The initiative of Bouchard and Lejeune was embraced by the Diocese of Mbarara. The diocese had planned to hold a pastoral conference in 1973 and then decided to take Eucharistic centres as one of its main topics.⁷³ This topic was discussed and recommended to be effected in the diocese at the said conference. As of now, there are 68 of these centres in the Archdiocese of Mbarara. One or two Christians in each of these centres are designated as extraordinary ministers by the diocesan bishop to distribute Holy Communion to the faithful at Sunday liturgies and on feast days in the absence of a priest. They are recommended by their parish priest after consulting the Christian communities concerned. These also take Holy Communion to the sick in their homes.

Certain conditions are exacted before an outstation is elevated to a Eucharistic centre. The community has to have a strong and secure Church building, with a strong tabernacle. There has to be a good, reliable and devoted catechist in charge, with a dedicated council.

⁷² See *ibid.*

⁷³ L.J. GOODWIN, *Ecclesiological Dimensions of the Eucharistic Centres in the Diocese of Mbarara, Uganda: an Inquiry into Christian Community Structure and Ministry*, Ann Arbor, Mich., University Microfilms International, 1984, p. 82.

The Christians in the area should show signs of being a worshipping community, desirous of strengthening their Christian virtues through the frequent reception of the Eucharist. They should have two or three Christians of good repute who could be chosen as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist and as custodians of the blessed sacrament in their Church.⁷⁴

This initiative has proved to be very beneficial for both the diocese and the faithful. Since the parishes are so extensive in Mbarara Archdiocese it is difficult for many people to receive Holy Communion often. So Eucharistic centres avail frequent Eucharist to the people. But more than this is the diocese's plan to convey to the people the centrality of the Eucharist in the Christian's individual and community life. The faithful are to be imbued with a sense of relating all aspects of their lives to the faith values they celebrate in the Eucharist.

Moreover, it was observed at the 1977 diocesan conference, while evaluating the effectiveness of the Eucharistic centres that these communities have developed better and faster⁷⁵ both in spiritual and temporal aspects. Hence:

More marriages were either solemnized or celebrated initially in the Church since most of the Eucharistic centres were also centres for the celebration of the sacrament of marriage, and Christians no longer had the excuse of long distances to prevent them from going to Church for the marriage ceremony. The faithful pay regular visits to the blessed sacrament, both individually and in groups.⁷⁶

The Eucharistic centres involve more the lay members of Christ's faithful in the mission of the Church. They run these centres as their own rather than looking at them as the property of the priests or the parish. Moreover, most of the new parishes in the diocese have begun as Eucharistic centres. So, this helps the faithful to undergo a kind of preparation towards the responsibility of supporting a parish. Establishing Eucharistic centres puts in concrete practice the norms of canons 910, § 2 and 230, § 3 of 1983 Code of Canon Law about lay extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

⁷⁴ See J. B. KAKUBI, "Christian Communities in Mbarara," p. 301.

⁷⁵ See *ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

When the reserved sacrament is finished, a priest goes to the centre, celebrates Mass for the community and leaves enough consecrated hosts in the tabernacle to last for a month or two.

Despite all the positive aspects of the Eucharistic centres, one should not lose sight of the fact that this is just a pastoral provision in special circumstances of lack of ordained ministers, other than a norm.

2.4.3 —Canonical Observations on Eucharistic Centres

There is no explicit provision for the institution of Eucharistic centres in canon law. Eucharistic centres, as has been indicated above are a creation of Mbarara Archdiocese to fulfil a spiritual need in the diocese. This practice may have spread to other dioceses in Uganda, although not necessarily coming from Mbarara, evoked by similar needs and circumstances in those other particular Churches.

Eucharistic centres can be related canonically to that part of canon 918 that provides for reception of holy communion outside Mass. The canon however, “highly recommends that the faithful receive communion during the Eucharistic celebration.”⁷⁷ An exception to this requires a good reason (a just cause). The canon reads: “It is most strongly recommended that the faithful receive holy communion in the course of a Eucharistic celebration. If, however, for good reason they ask for it apart from the Mass, it is to be administered to them, observing the liturgical rites.” The American commentary on the Code of Canon Law, gives some examples of these reasons as illness or old age of the recipient of the communion, or absence of a priest to preside at the Eucharist.⁷⁸

The 1967 instruction on the worship of the Eucharistic mystery from the Congregation of Rites greatly recommended that the faithful receive Communion during Mass and stated also that there must be a good reason for the distribution of communion outside Mass.⁷⁹ In

⁷⁷ J. M. HUELS, “The Most Holy Eucharist,” in *The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, p. 654.

⁷⁸ See *ibid.* Cf. L. NAUGHTON, “Weekday Communion Services by Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist,” in P. J. COGAN, ed., *CLSA Advisory Opinions 1984-1993*, Washington, DC, Canon Law Society of America, 1995, pp. 285-288.

⁷⁹ See SACRED CONGREGATION OF RITES, *Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery*,

the case of Mbarara, as has been pointed out, the absence of priests to celebrate the Eucharist constitutes a good reason for the establishment of Eucharistic centres whereby the Eucharist is received outside Mass (but in a liturgical service).

The same lack of enough priests has necessitated the Archdiocese of Mbarara to offer opportunity to the lay faithful to have Sunday celebrations in the absence of priests. These take place in all outstation churches in parishes. The 1988 *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* gives three conditions/circumstances in which the participation of the faithful in the Eucharistic celebration is not possible. These are:

1— Those regions which after their first evangelization, the bishops have put catechists in charge of gathering the faithful together on Sunday and, in the form of a devotional exercise, of leading them in prayer. In such cases the number of Christians grew, and they are scattered in so many and such widely separated places that a priest cannot reach them every Sunday.⁸⁰

2— The places where the faithful are completely blocked from gathering on Sunday, either because of the persecution of Christians or because of other severe restrictions of religious freedom.⁸¹

3— “Other grounds today, namely the scarcity of priests in many places not every parish can have its own Eucharistic celebration each Sunday. Further, for various social and economic reasons some parishes have many fewer members. As a consequence, many priests are assigned to celebrate Mass several times on Sunday in many widely scattered churches.”⁸²

The situation in Mbarara is a combination of the first and the third conditions. But the bottom line is the scarcity of priests to celebrate the Eucharist. The scarcity has been there right from the inception of Christianity in the region. So the missionaries put catechists in charge of Christian communities to teach them Christian doctrine and lead them at worship. What the Archdiocese of Mbarara has done to cope with this kind of situation is to establish

Eucharisticum mysterium, nos. 31, 33a, in *AAS*. 59 (1967), pp. 537-573. English translation in FLANNERY I, pp. 120-121.

⁸⁰ See CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, “Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest,” no. 3, in *Origins*, 18 (1988), p. 303.

⁸¹ See *ibid.*, no. 4.

⁸² *Ibid.*, no. 5.

Eucharistic centres for distribution of holy communion to the faithful during Sunday and feast day celebrations, and permitting catechists to lead Sunday celebrations in the absence of priests in these centres and all the other outstation Churches in the archdiocese. A ritual/booklet has been prepared by the diocesan pastoral centre to be used by catechists during these celebrations. This initiative is in line with what the *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* says:

In some local Churches, then, because of the conditions indicated, the bishops have judged it necessary to arrange for other Sunday Celebrations in the absence of a priest so that in the best way possible the weekly gatherings of the faithful can be continued and the Christian traditions regarding Sunday preserved.

It is by no means unusual, particularly in mission territories, for the faithful themselves, aware of the importance of the Lord's Day and with the help of catechists and religious, together to listen to the word of God, to pray and in some cases even receive communion.⁸³

In doing this, some points of caution have to be put into consideration as the *Directory* points out. Some of these are:

1— The faithful are to be taught to see the substitutional character of the Sunday celebration in the absence of a priest, that they are not regarded as the optimal solution to new difficulties nor as a surrender to a mere convenience.⁸⁴

2— There is not to be any confusion between these celebrations and the Eucharistic celebration.⁸⁵ Often one hears some of the faithful in outstation churches referring to Sunday celebrations led by a catechist, especially where there is reception of Holy Communion, as Mass. "Assemblies of this kind should not take away, but rather increase the desire of the faithful to take part in the celebration of the Eucharist and should make them eager to be present at the celebration of the Eucharist."⁸⁶

3— "The faithful are to understand that the Eucharistic sacrifice cannot take place without a priest and that the Eucharistic Communion which they receive in this kind of

⁸³ Ibid., no. 6.

⁸⁴ See *ibid.*, no. 21, p. 305.

⁸⁵ See *ibid.*, no. 22.

⁸⁶ See *ibid.*

assembly is closely connected with the sacrifice of the Mass.”⁸⁷ “Great care must be taken to ensure that no misunderstanding arises about the nature of the Eucharist and its essential link with the ordained priesthood.”⁸⁸

The concept ‘Eucharistic centre’ is not to be equated with ‘Eucharistic community’. A Eucharistic community would consist of those members of Christ’s faithful who gather to celebrate and partake of the Eucharist. Canonically, a parish, as the basic unit of the organisation of the Church is an example of a Eucharistic community. The Eucharist is a central element of a parish community.⁸⁹ Broadly speaking the seminaries, houses of formation for the religious, and religious communities also constitute Eucharistic communities since the celebration of the Eucharist is also an integral part of these communities.

The Eucharistic centre, on the other hand, is just a place, an outstation of a parish where the Eucharist is reserved for the benefit of the Christian community that does not have a priest to celebrate the Eucharist often for them. So the Eucharistic community refers to a community (*communitas*) of persons whereas the Eucharistic centre refers to a place (*locus*). It does not mean, however, that a community of Christ’s faithful which lives without a priest among them and gathers to celebrate Sunday at a Eucharistic centre or any other outstation without a priest is not a Eucharistic community. A Christian community in a Eucharistic or non-Eucharistic centre is a Eucharistic community by the very fact of their belonging to a given parish no matter how far the parish church may be from them and/or how often the Eucharist is celebrated there.

They can be moved by a deep desire for the sacrament and be united in prayer with the whole Church. They can call upon the Lord and raise their minds and hearts to him, with the Church, his living body (...) and therefore they receive the fruits of the Eucharist.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, no 23.

⁸⁸ JOHN PAUL II, Address to Bishops of Canada—Atlantic Region on Visit *Ad Limina Apostolorum*, in *Osservatore romano*, English ed., 17 November, 1993, p. 3.

⁸⁹ Cf. G. READ, “Particular Churches and their Groupings,” in *Letter & Spirit*, p. 285.

⁹⁰ CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, “Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest,” no. 34, p. 306.

Moreover, even when the faithful receive communion outside Mass, they are united to the Eucharistic sacrifice.⁹¹

It is important to note the peculiar nature of the Church in Uganda that distinguishes it a little bit structurally from the established Churches in Europe and North America. While reading the *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*, one gets the impression that although the *Directory* addresses itself to the universal Church, it seems to lean more towards the already established Churches in the West while special circumstances in the young Churches seem to be given little attention. The *Directory* seems to be addressing the situation of those Churches that were originally with enough priests to cater for all the pastoral needs in those Churches. With the decrease of priests and priestly vocations some Churches have had to do without priests and so provision like Sunday celebrations in the absence of priests have been instituted, and rightly so. So, when the *Directory* talks of Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest, it is in the context of those parishes that had a priest before, and the Eucharist reserved in their churches.

On the other hand, interpreting the norms of the *Directory* in the young Churches in Uganda for instance, one finds oneself in the context of the Churches that never had priests to cater for their Christian communities, save the large mission stations (at the beginning of evangelization or large parishes now), and even at present priests are not enough to take on the would-be parishes some of which have been instituted as Eucharistic centres. So the Eucharist is reserved or is to be reserved in those Churches that never had priests before and still do not have them; and may not have them in the near future. They are cared for by lay people. The *Directory* states for instance:

It is the duty of the parish priest to inform the bishop about the opportuneness of such celebrations in his territory, to prepare the faithful for them, to visit them during the week at a convenient time to celebrate the sacraments for them, particularly the sacrament of penance. In this way the communities involved will come to realize that their assembly on Sunday is not an assembly “without a priest,” but an assembly “in the absence of a priest” or, better still, an assembly “in expectation of a priest.”⁹²

⁹¹ See *ibid.*, no. 46, p. 307.

⁹² *Ibid.*, no. 27, p. 303.

Given the situation in Mbarara Archdiocese, it would be very difficult if not impossible to fulfil the above directive. This is because of the same reason for which the Eucharistic centres were established and Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest were instituted: lack of enough priests. For that matter, many communities' assemblies are instead assemblies "without a priest" other than "in the absence of a priest" because they never had one before and it is rare for them to have one even once a month.

The situation described above is of a provisional nature, and the offices entrusted to lay people in Eucharistic centres and other outstations are suppletory.⁹³ This situation points to another way of being a Christian community in the African Church. Granted that hopefully in future there will be a sufficient number of priests in the archdiocese, the role the laity have assumed has nevertheless a long future and is to be encouraged. This resonates with what A. Avognon, herself an African lay woman, once said:

African Christians—particularly those who are called to occupy posts of responsibility, and decision-makers—would be failing in their mission unless they participate in working out the African Church's own thinking. It is urgent for us to think out our own way of seeing ourselves as the Church in Africa, and find our own way of exercising it. (...) It is for us, Christian lay people, to re-appropriate the gospel, to tell it in our own fashion, to reflect it in our own individual lives. Unless we do, the image that people have in Africa of committed Christians, as people "doing the priests' job," will perpetuate the idea that the Church is foreign, and only has an "appendix" in Africa—despite the real effort that is being made to raise up responsible Christian communities in the towns and villages.⁹⁴

2.5 —Catechists and their Role

The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* defines "catechist" as "one who teaches doctrine;" in the Christian context, one who proclaims the mystery of Christ to those who are catechumens and deepens the commitment to Christ after the initiation of baptism."⁹⁵ This is

⁹³ See *ibid.*, no. 31, p. 306: "Since they exercise it 'where the need of the Church suggests in the absence of ministers,'" cf. canon 230 § 3.

⁹⁴ A. AVOGNON, "Looking to the Future as African Christians," in *The Laity Today*, 28 (1981), pp. 133-134.

⁹⁵ See C. CLARKSON, "Catechist," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York, McGraw—Hill Book Co., 1967, vol. III, p. 234.

a general definition. It may include any agent of Christian instruction.⁹⁶ In this context, then, the Pope is a catechist as well as the bishops whom *Catechesi tradendae* refers to as catechists par excellence (CT, no. 63), the priests (CT, no. 64) and religious men and women (CT, no 65).

But as John Paul II further points out, “the term ‘catechists’ belongs above all to the catechists in mission lands” (CT, no.66). To them fits the definition “a lay person commissioned by the Church, according to the local needs, to make Christ known, loved and followed by those who do not as yet know him and by the faithful.”⁹⁷ They are the ones whose duty also is to “help in the building up of the Christian community by manifesting the presence of Christ.”⁹⁸ Three roles are highlighted here: first, a catechist is an evangelizer—he/she makes Christ known to those who do not know him yet; second, he/she makes Christ loved and followed by the faithful; and third, he/she is a Christian community animator.

Catechists in the 1983 Code of Canon Law are treated in Book III, “The Teaching Office of the Church”, title II “The Missionary Activity of the Church.” Their services are therefore placed in the ministry of word, and in missionary work. Canon 785, § 1 states:

Catechists are to be given a role in missionary work. These are lay members of Christ’s faithful who have received proper formation and are outstanding in their living of the Christian life. Under the direction of missionaries they are to present the gospel teaching and engage in liturgical worship and in various works of charity.

⁹⁶ S.J. EMMANUEL, *The Lay Catechist: Ecclesiological Considerations Towards Identifying Him in the Ministerial Structure of the Mission Churches*, Rome, Pontifical Urban University, 1978, p. 1. Cf. J.H. KROEGER, “*Redemptoris missio: The Catechist as Evangelizer*,” in *The Living Light*, 34 (1998), p. 20.

⁹⁷ Report on the Plenary Assembly of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, 14 - 16 April, 1970, in *Omnis terra*, 33 (1970), p. 352. A number of other definitions have been offered by bishops in whose dioceses catechists actually work. Although some of these definitions are vague and inadequate, they point to the image and role of the catechist in the African Churches. “There is, first of all, a frequent stress that the catechist is truly a layman (or lay woman); secondly, upon his being a teacher of religion; thirdly, upon his receiving some special type of hierarchical mandate to do what he does; fourthly, upon his having a very close relationship with the priest (A. HASTINGS, “The Ministry of the Catechist Considered Theologically,” in A. SHORTER and E. KATAZA, eds., *Missionaries to Yourself: African Catechists Today*, London, Geoffrey Chapman, 1972, p. 105).

⁹⁸ Report on the Plenary Assembly, p. 352.

Although catechists play an important role in missionary work, they are not themselves considered missionaries by the code of canon law. They carry out their activities under the direction of a missionary. They are assistants of missionaries.⁹⁹ Although canon law does not regard them as missionaries,¹⁰⁰ considering the activities they have done and still do in mission countries, one would be justified to call them missionaries. Moreover, they have all the requirements expected of missionaries as stipulated in canon 784:

Missionaries, that is, those who have been sent by the competent ecclesiastical authority to engage in missionary activity, may be chosen from the indigenous population or from others, be they secular clergy, or members of institutes of consecrated life or of a society of apostolic life, or other lay members of Christ's faithful.

Furthermore, as per the meanings of 'missionary' and 'missionary activity', one may say that the African or at least the Ugandan catechists were missionaries because they were sent by the Church hierarchy especially from Buganda to various parts of the country to implant the gospel.

Missionary activity properly so called, through which the Church is implanted among peoples or groups where it has not yet taken root, is carried out by the Church especially by sending out heralds of the gospel, until the new Churches are fully constituted, that is, are equipped with their own resources and sufficient means so that they themselves can carry on the work of evangelization.¹⁰¹

The above canon gives "a criterion by which the Church is judged to be no longer a mission"¹⁰²—the planting of the Church where it has not yet been rooted. The situation in Mbarara and most of the dioceses in Uganda indicates that the Church has taken root there with their own indigenous hierarchy and clergy, a great number of the Catholic population, a greatly reduced number of adult baptisms, and some material resources.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ See J.A. CORIDEN, "The Teaching Office of the Church," p. 782.

¹⁰⁰ See canon 785, § 1—Catechists are to be given a role in missionary work; but under the direction of missionaries they are to present the gospel teaching and engage in liturgical worship and works of charity.

¹⁰¹ Canon 786.

¹⁰² J.A. CORIDEN, "The Teaching Office of the Church," p. 562.

¹⁰³ In the early days of Christianity in Mbarara there used to be multitudes of adults flocking to catechumenates for Christian instruction and baptism. These were people born and raised in their African traditional beliefs. Now days the numbers have reduced considerably because most adults are Christians. What one sees are instead many children that are brought by their Christian parents for baptism. Those whom the

The 1997 *General Directory for Catechesis* gives various types of catechists that are particularly necessary today, namely, the catechists in missionary countries, those who have the specific responsibility for catechesis and those who collaborate in various forms of the apostolate such as the youth, children and adolescents, pre-sacramental encounter, the elderly, the handicapped, and migrants and the marginalized.¹⁰⁴ The catechists in Mbarara Archdiocese fall under the first category of missionary catechists. However, since the catechists in Mbarara and a number of other dioceses in Uganda have undergone a certain kind of evolution, it may probably be proper now to refer to them as lay catechists rather than missionary catechists. At the beginnings of Christianity in Uganda catechists were assistants to missionaries and some of them were sent to far off areas to spread the gospel and now that the gospel has spread to all corners of the country, they are leaders of Christian communities in their villages. They are now neither missionaries to the unbaptized nor assistants of missionaries to non-Christians. They are lay Christian community leaders.

It is important to note that the kind of role the lay catechist plays in the mission of the Church is quite different from the role that *Lumen gentium* accords the lay members of Christ's faithful. *Lumen gentium*, as was seen in chapter one, places the mission of the laity

missionaries used to call pagans are almost nonexistent in the archdiocese now. In 1998 the Missionaries of Africa (The White Fathers), who founded the Diocese of Mbarara and have been serving it up to this time, decided to pull out of the pastoral ministry of the archdiocese. One of the reasons for this among others, is that they saw that the diocese is self-propagating and self-ministering. The missionary era has ended in the diocese but the mission of the Church continues. It may not be fair to judge the Church as having taken root by the material resources, however an important component it may be (cf. canon 1254), because that has to be considered within the whole economic matrix of the nation. One would not certainly argue that since Uganda is not economically self-reliant it is not independent which it is. Likewise the diocese like Mbarara that has generations of Christian culture and is growing nurtured by its own personnel should not be counted among the mission Churches but rather among young Churches considering the years since the inception of Christianity in the diocese. It is within this context that Pope Paul VI during his visit to Uganda addressed the African hierarchy: "We are filled with admiration and devotion for your Martyrs, whom we have come here to honour and invoke. We have no other desire than to foster what you already are: Christians and Africans. Hence we wish our presence among you to have the significance of a recognition of your maturity, and of a desire to show you how that communion which unites us does not suffocate, but rather nourishes the originality of your personal, ecclesial and even civil personality. (...) By now, you Africans are missionaries to yourselves. The Church of Christ is well and truly planted in this blessed soil. (...) 'Missionaries to yourselves': in other words, you Africans must continue upon this continent, the building up of the Church" (AAS, 61 (1969), pp. 574-575).

¹⁰⁴ CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *General Directory for Catechesis*, English edition, Ottawa, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1997, pp. 237-239.

in the secular world where they are to imbue the spirit of the gospel in their daily activities (*Lumen gentium*, no. 31). The catechists on the other hand although lay, play a role in the religious/pastoral sphere of the Church and they do this by virtue of their baptism and confirmation and of course with the mandate to serve in the name of the Church. Theirs is a ministry, that of other lay members of Christ's faithful referred to by *Lumen gentium* is an apostolate.

Furthermore, there is also a difference between the catechist in the African context and any other catechist essentially seen in the context of teaching. A. Hastings notes this difference clearly. He says:

The catechist is mostly easily defined in terms of his teaching, but what in fact distinguishes his ministry in Africa most clearly from that of teachers of religion in other countries, where there are no 'catechists,' are rather his liturgical and church leadership functions.

There have, of course, been other personnel in the Church with a liturgical ministry below the presbyteral ministry, but they have generally been envisaged as functioning in the presence of a presbyter. A catechist almost never functions liturgically in the presence of a presbyter, though he may teach in such a situation, but he exercises liturgical functions precisely in the absence of a presbyter. All over Africa there are Christian communities in which Mass is not celebrated even once a month. They are priestless communities whose normal Sunday service is led by a catechist.¹⁰⁵

Within the area of the liturgical ministry, the catechist in Mbarara has added to his responsibilities a Eucharistic aspect. This has come about as a result of the creation of Eucharistic centres in the diocese. The Eucharistic centres have been discussed in the preceding section. Some catechists in charge of Eucharistic centres are at the same time extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Thus, their usual Sunday services have to be given the necessary readjustments to bring the people to a more constant awareness of the presence of Christ among them in their lives.¹⁰⁶

The role of the lay catechists in the Church of Mbarara is very important. It has become so central in the structure of the archdiocese that it can no longer be seen to be

¹⁰⁵ A. HASTINGS, in *Missionaries to Yourself*, p. 115.

¹⁰⁶ See, M. LEJEUNE and R. BOUCHARD, *Eucharist and Community*, Kampala, Gaba Publications, 1973, p. 22.

provisional as it seemed to have begun. We use the word provisional because in the beginning they seemed to have been used to do the work that the missionaries could not accomplish because of their lack of personnel and facilities to carry out the work of evangelization in all the areas of their mission territory. Now, although they still fill the personnel vacuum in the archdiocese, there is an aspect of the mission they contribute in the Church that the clergy even the indigenous ones, may not be able to accomplish. Their particular character as lay people, bridges the gap between the clergy on the one hand and the other lay members of Christ's faithful on the other. What Suso Brechter said of the missionary catechist thirty years ago is still pertinent of the lay catechist in Mbarara Archdiocese today.

Usually the catechists are the first to make contact with the missionary, and this is particularly important, especially for foreign priests. They live among the people, speak their language, and know their manners and customs, share their troubles and sufferings, and consequently find it easier than priests to approach them. They are often better teachers, especially if they have suitable training, for they strike the right popular note and can draw apt illustrations from daily life. They gather people in Church for divine worship, admonish the lukewarm and indifferent, settle disputes, keep the missionary (priest) informed about important events and difficulties in the parish, work as itinerant preachers or take charge of outpost stations, hold services of the Word in the absence of the priest, baptize in case of necessity, visit the sick, bury the dead and keep the parish registers. Catechists have become indispensable for missionary work, and it would be catastrophic to underestimate their importance. With the great shortage of missionary priests, only a relatively small circle of people could be reached if it were not for their constant collaboration.¹⁰⁷

With the above background of catechists in the Church, we can now turn to the role played by catechists in Mbarara.

As has been implied in the preceding sections:

The nineteenth-century missionaries arrived in eastern Africa without any clear idea of how they would set about evangelizing its inhabitants. For the most part they were young men with little or no pastoral experience elsewhere. Their knowledge of the local languages, customs, and religious beliefs was virtually non-existent. They were necessarily ill-prepared for the health hazards and political problems they were to encounter. [...] It is

¹⁰⁷ S. BRECHTER, "Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity," in H. VORGRIMLER, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. IV, p. 139.

obvious that active cooperation of the first converts was essential if large numbers of people were to be influenced by the new teaching.¹⁰⁸

Most of the converts cooperators were African catechists such as the aforementioned Yohana Kitegana.

What A. Shorter and E. Kataza remarked in 1972 is still true today at least in Mbarara Archdiocese, namely, "All over Africa there are Christian communities in which the Eucharist is not celebrated even once a month. There are priestless communities, and the normal Sunday service is conducted by a layman: the catechist."¹⁰⁹ The catechist today occupies a crucial position in the structure and policies of the contemporary Church¹¹⁰ in Africa.

The Church in Mbarara could not have grown to the level it is now and could have hardly survived without the catechists. Although the majority of these catechists have not received adequate formation, they constitute the real local ministry without whom the priests would not have been able to achieve much. In fact, the catechists, especially those in charge of *centre* churches, have taken on a position analogous to that of the priest as liturgical and pastoral leaders of their communities. Most of the Christian instruction in the catechumenates at all levels, from enrolment to confirmation, is done by catechists.

The Archdiocese of Mbarara along with the neighbouring Diocese of Kabale run a catechists training centre. There, selected catechists go and learn the basics of theology for one year for those with the primary school level of education, and two years for those above it. At the end of the course, the graduates are given certificates to qualify them as trained catechists. It is the diocesan bishop who appoints the catechists in their home parishes following their applications and recommendations from their parish priests. That gives them a mandate to minister in the name of the Church/diocese.

¹⁰⁸ F. NOLAN, "History of the Catechist in Eastern Africa," in A. SHORTER and E. KATAZA, eds., *Missionaries to Yourselves: African Catechists Today*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ A. SHORTER, *Missionaries to Yourselves*, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ See *ibid.*, p. ix.

2.6 —Laity Council

There is established in Mbarara Archdiocese a fully-fledged laity council. The creation of this structure is in itself an acknowledgement of the need to involve more actively the lay faithful in the mission of the Church in the archdiocese. The archbishop has appointed an episcopal vicar who while working hand in hand with the laity council liaises the activities of the lay faithful in the mission of the Church.

Through the office of the episcopal vicar for the laity annual retreats and refresher courses are arranged on the deanery level. This way the laity are made to realise their civil and ecclesial rights and responsibilities of building the Body of Christ in the archdiocese and promoting the common good in light of their faith.

Other courses and seminars have been organized to educate the lay faithful about their role in the mission of the Church. One such seminar was held from 7 to 9 September 1995 aiming at re-activating the lay apostolate. The seminar was attended by 182 people from various walks of life. Of these, 135 were lay faithful. The course emphasized the mission of the lay faithful, leadership strategies, women in apostolate, and youth apostolate.¹¹¹

2.7 —Lay Apostolate Movements

The lay apostolate is an aspect of Christ's faithful's baptismal commitment. It is therefore a right the laity can exercise without any concession on the part of the hierarchy although it is exercised under the jurisdiction of the competent ecclesiastical authority.¹¹² There is a good number of lay apostolate movements in Mbarara Archdiocese. This kind of organized lay apostolate is a concrete form for the members to live their Christian calling. They help their members to live a life of witness to Christ by means of faith, hope, and charity, as lay members of Christ's faithful.

There is a variety in these movements and associations as was recommended by Vatican II. Thus,

¹¹¹ See MBARARA DIOCESAN PASTORAL CENTRE, *Re-activating Lay Apostolate: Report of Mbarara Seminar, 7 to 9 September 1995*, Mbarara, 1995, pp. 1-64.

¹¹² A. PORTILLO, *Faithful and Laity in the Church*, p. 63.

some look to the general apostolic end of the Church; others aim specifically at evangelization and sanctification; others work for the permeation of the temporal order by the Christian spirit; and others engage in works of mercy and charity as their special way of bearing witness to Christ.¹¹³

Under the category of the apostolate movements in Mbarara Archdiocese are included devotions and those movements and associations whose membership is open to all the members of Christ's faithful, namely, the lay, the religious, and the ordained faithful. Whatever the category may be, these movements, associations, and devotions equip the lay faithful to play their role better in the mission of the Church. They foster the lay faithful's spiritual nourishment, as well as their formation in the area of leadership, and a sense of responsibility in family, social, economic, and political aspects of their lives. Parishes with active lay apostolate movements and associations have as a consequence active lay faithful involved in their pastoral life.

Two positive observations can be made about the movements under consideration. First, there are those movements that bring the lay faithful into close collaboration with the Church's hierarchy in the mission of the Church. Here are lay Christians who in fulfillment of their movements' statutes, among other activities, visit the sick and prepare some of them for anointing and/or viaticum, prepare children for first Holy Communion, teach catechism, help lapsed Catholics to recommit themselves to Christ and the reception of the sacraments. Second, there are those movements that specifically deal with the affairs of the lay faithful such as the permeation of the temporal order by the Christian spirit (*Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 19). These bring the hierarchy as chaplains and spiritual advisors closer to the lay faithful. The two aspects then help to bring up the lay members of Christ's faithful as citizens of the Church as well as the citizens of the world.

Mbarara Archdiocese established an office for lay apostolate and youth with a chaplain. The same structure exists in all the parishes of the diocese although the degree of laity and clergy's active involvement in these movements varies from parish to parish.

¹¹³ *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 19, in FLANNERY I, p. 786.

The following are the movements, associations and devotions of organized apostolate in Mbarara Archdiocese:

Youth and Children	Adults
Xaverians	Legion of Mary
Eucharistic Crusaders	Devotion to St. Jude
Catholic Charismatic Renewal	Catholic Charismatic Renewal
Young Christian Workers	Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus
Young Christian Students	Those who pray for Souls in Purgatory
Pioneer Total Abstinence Association	Pioneer Total Abstinence Association
	Christian Family Movement
	Catholic Women's League
	Catholic Professionals of Uganda

2.8 —Conclusion: The Necessity of the Laity's Role in the Active Pastoral Life of the Church in Mbarara

From what has been discussed so far, it is clear that baptism and confirmation are the basis of the laity's apostolate or any delegated ministry in the Church. Moreover,

The pastors, [...] know well how much the laity contribute to the welfare of the whole Church. For they know that they themselves were not established by Christ to undertake alone the whole salvific mission of the Church to the world, but that it is their exalted office so to be shepherds of the faithful and also recognize the latter's contribution and charisms that everyone in his own way, will, with one mind, cooperate in the common task.¹¹⁴

Lay people are not in the Church just to be saved as passive recipients of the ministries of the hierarchy, they are themselves part of the sign of salvation; they are the Church¹¹⁵ and they need to be involved in the affairs that concern them in the ministry of the Church.

¹¹⁴ *Lumen gentium*, no. 30, in FLANNERY I, p. 388.

¹¹⁵ M. GALLI, *The Council*, p. 198.

Furthermore, the number of Catholics is increasing, outnumbering the proportion of priests by far. At the present moment, the ratio of priests to Catholics in Mbarara Archdiocese is about 1:6,874. Although the archdiocese expects to have at least 15 priests ordained in the next five years, the number of priests is still small. Even if the rate of priestly ordinations were to stay like this, it is very unlikely that there will be priests enough to fulfil the ministerial needs in the diocese. Moreover, there are many outstations that would be created parishes, if there were enough priests. At one time, some parishes in the diocese did not have priests to minister to them. Such a phenomenon is very likely to happen again in the future. So the shortage of priests and the great amount of work in the parishes necessitate the laity to take a more active part in the Church ministry. Moreover, as has been indicated in the history of the Church in Uganda and Mbarara, the laity have played an important role in the implanting and spread of Christianity in the country even to the extent of (some of them) shedding their blood for it.

The laity today have the education and the motivation to perform (...) ministries without detriment to their lay status. Their committed service is seen as a sign that they are not content to be passive recipients of the Church's ministrations, but feel corresponsable for the health and vigour of the Church.¹¹⁶

Much of the work done in the outstations of the parishes in the diocese is achieved mainly by the 1,590 catechists together with their committee and council members who are all exclusively lay persons. Otherwise, it is impossible to think of an active church as is seen in outstations which see a priest and assist at Mass once or twice a year.

Is there a need for improvement so that the laity can be more involved? Yes. Most of the principles given in the 1983 Code of Canon Law need to be put into actual practice. Although the laity are involved in decision making processes and structures in the diocese, like the diocesan synod, councils and committees, there is still a need to shift from making them spectators to making them active participants in these processes. For instance, it is not enough for a parish priest to have a parish finance committee just for approving the parish budget he has made himself. The committee members need to be involved in the actual making of the budget. Let the laity be properly formed to take offices in the diocese that do

¹¹⁶ A. DULLES, "Can the Word 'Laity' be Defined?" p. 474.

not require full care of souls (canon 150), such as education, social services and development, offices of chancellor and notary, and so on. Even in those cases whereby some parishes might become priestless, the laity could be given chance to share in the exercise of the pastoral care of those parishes (canon 517, § 2). It is true the laity may not be ready yet for this venture, but as the need presses and the laity are duly formed, it is possible.

Sacramentally, the laity could be delegated in accordance with the norms of law, as ministers of baptism and official church witnesses at marriages, as has been done for the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion in Eucharistic centres. This is not to be a general delegation, but selected zones (groups of *centres*) and carefully selected lay people can be appointed to do that ministry. This would save people from walking long distances, at times taking two days on the way, to the parish headquarters for marriages and baptisms or waiting for several months until a priest visits their outstation. Prudence and discretion have to be employed in this case.

This study has shown that the role of the lay catechist in the mission and ministry of the Church in Mbarara and Uganda at large. These catechists are not just limited to the ministry of the word but also participate actively in the sanctifying office of the Church as leaders at worship services in outstation churches. Because of their relationship to the ministry of the word and worship¹¹⁷ catechists in Mbarara should officially be installed into the ministries of lector and acolyte, which they are *de facto* exercising in their churches.

Last, but not least, the laity need to participate in the pastoral life of the Church not only due to the dearth of priests in the archdiocese, but also because of the enrichment they bring to the ministry. It should be kept in mind however, that "... the authority to teach, govern, and perform major liturgical actions in the Church remains in the hands of the ecclesiastical hierarchy."¹¹⁸ The laity can cooperate in these functions with the authorization

¹¹⁷ "Among the special offices which are to be retained and adapted to the present-day needs there are some which are especially connected with the ministries of the word and of the altar. (...) They are the office of lector (and) the office of acolyte. (...) Ministeries may be committed to lay Christians" (*Ministeria quaedam*, in FLANNERY I, pp. 428, 429).

¹¹⁸ A. DULLES, "Can the Word 'Laity' be Defined?", p. 475.

of the hierarchy which they (the hierarchy) should gladly and readily concede for the good of the Church and the salvation of souls.

The chapter has discussed the role of the lay faithful in various aspects of the mission of the Church in Mbarara Archdiocese. Now we move to the next chapter which will discuss their role in one aspect of the mission of the Church—the diocesan synod and the related pastoral conferences that preceded it.

CHAPTER THREE

THE LAY CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL AND THE FIRST SYNOD OF MBARARA

The first synod of Mbarara was a big landmark in the life of the Church in Mbarara. It was an event by which this particular Church went through a self-examination—looking back at the journey thus made and planning for what lies ahead in its mission. This exercise was done through the efforts of all the faithful in the Archdiocese, mostly through their representatives to the synod preparation and celebration sessions. This chapter focuses on the contribution of the lay Christian faithful to this synod. It examines the meaning of a synod, its importance in the life of a diocese, and the pastoral provisions by which the Archdiocese of Mbarara carried out its mission before the synod.

3.1 —The Meaning of Synod

The word *synod* is derived from the Greek word *synodos* (σύνοδος) (meeting, assembly) which in turn is derived from two Greek words, *sun* (σύν) (with) and *hodos* (ὁδός) (way, journey).¹ It therefore “involves a group traveling upon the same road. Because of shared common interests and a similar vision of a future destination, members of a local Church join together to plan for a faith journey.”²

The word synod has been used in the past interchangeably with the word council (*concilium*) to refer to any of the various church assemblies.³

When the bishops of the whole world are congregated under the presidency of the pope, the synod is denominated ecumenical or general (...). If the bishops of an ecclesiastical province meet under the leadership of the metropolitan, the council is termed provincial. When the hierarchs of all the provinces of a nation assemble, the synod is called national, or under certain circumstances plenary.⁴

¹ See L. BROWN, ed., *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary On Historical Principles*, vol. 2, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993, p. 3190.

² D.M. ROSS, “The Diocesan Synod: A Comparative Analysis of the 1917 and 1983 Codes of Canon Law,” in *Monitor ecclesiasticus*, 114 (1989), p. 561.

³ W.H.W FANNING, “Synod,” in C.G. HERBERMANN et al., eds., *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church* (= *The Catholic Encyclopedia*), New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1912, vol. XIV, p. 388. Cf. BENEDICT XIV, *De synodo dioeclesana*, English edition, *The Diocesan Synod: Being Some Chapters from the Treatise “De synodo dioeclesana”* (= *De synodo dioeclesana*) selected and done into English by W.R.V. BRADE, London, The Faith Press, Ltd., 1926, p. 1.

⁴ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. XIV, p. 388. Cf. *De synodo dioeclesana*, p. 3.

By the 17th century, “the word synod was used to designate the diocesan synod alone and Bellarmine insisted that the name council could not be properly given to the diocesan synod.”⁵ The diocesan synod, however, is different from all these councils. Other councils were assemblies of bishops who had a definitive (deliberative) vote in the matters under consideration, but in a diocesan synod there was, as is still the case, only one person with a deliberative vote, and only one lawgiver, the diocesan bishop.⁶ The rest of the synod members have a consultative vote. Synod or council was not a place or any kind of gathering of persons, but an assembly in which bishops were present and where ecclesiastical business especially was transacted.⁷

The structure and procedure of the diocesan synod have during the history of the Church changed according to circumstances of different times. However, three elements of the synod have endured. These are:

1 —the synod as an assembly. The synod has always been an assembly of some Church members. Before the promulgation of the 1983 code, membership was limited to the bishop and the clerics, but now it is open to the members of Christ’s faithful of a particular Church ordained, religious and lay.

2 —the bishop. The presence of a bishop is a constitutive element of a synod. There is no synod without a bishop presiding over it. All other participants at the synods are there to help the bishop in his ministry of shepherding the flock in the diocese.

3 —the agenda. The agenda of the synod, whatever it is, deals with matters concerning the well-being of the Church, (e.g., discipline of clergy, morals, doctrine, legislation etc.).

These points can be substantiated by the different conceptions of the synod at different historical epochs of the Church. Pope Benedict XIV, quoting Bottus and Antony Paulutius, defines the diocesan synod as “a lawful gathering, summoned by the bishop, of the priests and

⁵F.B. DONNELLY, *The Diocesan Synod: An Historical Conspectus and Commentary*, Canon Law Studies no. 74, Washington, DC, Catholic University of America, 1932, pp. 1-2.

⁶ See *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, p. 388.

⁷ Cf. *ibid.*

clergy of his diocese and of others who are bound to attend thereat, wherein such matters as appertain to the pastoral office are to be transacted and discussed.”⁸ This definition was retained until the promulgation of the 1983 Code of Canon Law. The 1983 Code then defined a diocesan synod as “ (...) an assembly of selected priests and other members of Christ’s faithful of a particular Church which, for the good of the whole diocesan community, assists the diocesan bishop (...).”⁹

Whereas the diocesan synod the 1917 Code was restrictive in terms of membership, the 1983 Code has widened its membership and scope. In the former case the diocesan synod was limited to clerical participation. For instance, canon 385, § 1 of the 1917 Code stipulated that the membership of the diocesan synod comprise:

1 —those who must be invited namely:

—the vicar general, the canons of the cathedral chapter or the diocesan consultors, the rector of the diocesan seminary, at least the major seminary; vicars forane; a delegate from each collegiate Church, the pastors of the city where the synod is held; at least one pastor from each vicariate forane; and governing abbots and one superior from every clerical religious institute in the diocese.¹⁰

2 —those who may be invited namely, “other or even all canons (of the collegiate churches), other or all pastors and religious superiors, and every secular priest of the diocese, except those necessary for the care of souls in the parishes.”¹¹

By comparison the canon 463, §1 of the 1983 Code stipulates thus:

The following are to be summoned to the diocesan synod as members and they are obliged to participate in it:

1° the coadjutor bishop and the auxiliary bishops;

2° the vicars general and episcopal vicars, and the judicial vicar

⁸ *De synodo dioeclesana*, p.7.

⁹ Canon 460.

¹⁰ See T.L. BOUSCAREN and A.C. ELLIS, *Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, 3rd ed., Milwaukee, The Bruce Publishing Company, 1957, p. 177.

¹¹ J.A. ABBO and J.D. HANNAN, *The Sacred Canons: A Concise Presentation of the Current Disciplinary Norms of the Church*, St. Louis, MO., B. Herder Book Co., 1952, vol.1, p. 380. See CIC 17 canon 358, § 2.

- 3° the canons of the cathedral church;
- 4° the members of the council of priests;
- 5° lay members of Christ's faithful, not excluding members of institutes of consecrated life, to be elected by the pastoral council in the manner and the number to be determined by the diocesan bishop or, where this council does not exist, on a basis determined by the diocesan bishop;
- 6° the rector of the major seminary of the diocese;
- 7° the vicars forane;
- 8° at least one priest from each vicariate forane to be elected by all those who have the care of souls there; another priest is also to be elected, to take the place of the first if he is prevented from attending;
- 9° some superiors of religious institutes and of societies of apostolic life which have a house in the diocese: these are to be elected in the number and the manner determined by the diocesan bishop.

The canon further widens the scope of the synod participants. Hence the second and third paragraphs state:

§2 The diocesan bishop may also invite others to be members of the diocesan synod, whether clerics or members of institutes of consecrated life or lay members of the faithful.

§3 If the diocesan bishop considers it opportune, he may invite to the diocesan Synod as observers some ministers or members of Churches or ecclesial communities which are not in full communion with the Catholic Church.

This canon shows a radical departure from the practice of the 1917 Code. It "reflects the renewed understanding of the Church, the dignity of all the faithful and the obligation of ensuring the laity can visibly and tangibly share in the *tria munera* of Christ."¹² Moreover, the provision for the bishop to invite other Christians who are not in full communion with the

¹² A. MENDONÇA, *Diocesan Curia*, Class Notes for the Private Use of the Students, Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1995-1996, p. 22.

Catholic Church shows a spirit and atmosphere of ecumenism, thus increasing knowledge of one another, reciprocal charity, and fraternal cooperation if possible.¹³

The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) prescribed that diocesan synods be celebrated every year “as instruments of implementing the disciplinary dispositions given by the provincial councils, which too were annual events.”¹⁴ This ruling resulted in many celebrations of diocesan synods so much so that later many other synods were celebrated without enthusiasm, lacking due preparation and seriousness, but just to fulfil an obligation.¹⁵

In 1374, Pope Gregory XI moved synods from being merely legislative to being pastoral. He prescribed that instead of limiting itself to promulgate and execute the decisions of a provincial council the diocesan synod should truly deliberate on the problems and controversies existing in the context of the particular Churches and thus avoid just repeating the resolutions and decisions of other synods and councils. They were instead to be instruments for studying and solving specific problems of each particular Church.¹⁶

Despite Gregory XI’s prescriptions, the synodal system suffered neglect and was slowly heading for *desuetude*. Moreover, the fifteenth century spirit of anticonciliarism and conciliar assemblies contributed to the decadence of diocesan synods.¹⁷

The Council of Trent (1545-1563), in its efforts to bring about reform in the Church, revived the synodal system and demanded that diocesan synods be celebrated every year. The diocesan synod, like provincial councils, were to be renewed for the purpose of “regulation of morals, the correction of abuses, the settlement of controversies (...).”¹⁸ All clergy were to attend except those who were subject to general chapters and without a parish ministry. Penalties were to be imposed on those who would not attend. The Council also approved the

¹³ See THE CONGREGATION FOR BISHOPS AND THE CONGREGATION FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF PEOPLES, Instruction on Diocesan Synods. In *constitutione apostolica*, 19 March 1997, in *AAS*, 89 (1997), pp. 706-727, English translation in *The Pope Speaks*, 43 (1998), p. 5. See also J. KOONAMPARAMPIL, “Diocesan Synods,” in *Indian Theological Studies*, 32 (1994), p. 91.

¹⁴ J. KOONAMPARAMPIL, “Diocesan Synods,” p. 87.

¹⁵ See *ibid.*

¹⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 88, foot note 8.

¹⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 88.

¹⁸ COUNCIL OF TRENT, *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent (= Canons and Decrees of Trent)*, Twenty-Fourth Session, Decree Concerning Reform, chapter II, translated by H.J. SCHROEDER, Rockford, Illinois, Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1978, p. 192.

matters to be discussed, for example, mass stipends,¹⁹ and the appointment of synodal judges and examiners in the concursus for vacant parishes. The latter were to be appointed by a decisive vote of those present.²⁰

Furthermore, the First Vatican Council (1869-1870) tackled in draft form the Tridentine prescription of the annual celebration of the diocesan synod. Unfortunately the Council did not conclude duly due to the occupation of Rome by the Italian army. "The drafts were speaking of the celebration of the diocesan synods once in three years or even less frequently according to some bishops, and they also proposed that it was not necessary to convoke the whole clergy but only a representative part of it."²¹ The same drafts stated that the bishop was the sole legislator in a diocesan synod. This prescription was later codified in the 1917 Code of Canon Law (canon 362) and 1983 code (canon 466).²² The 1917 code prescribed that diocesan synods be celebrated at least once every ten years (canon 356, § 1), whereas the 1983 Code has not prescribed any specific time lapse between the celebration of diocesan synods. It instead recommends the synods to be held in "each particular Church when the diocesan bishop, after consulting the council of priests, judges that the circumstances suggest it" (canon 461, § 1). This is yet another instance whereby the principle of subsidiarity is provided for in the Code. In this instance, then, "the diocesan synod is no longer celebrated as a juridical obligation, but rather as a result of the positive decision of the diocesan bishop. Therefore, it offers better chances for a very fruitful and meaningful celebration, making it a real ecclesial event expressing the vitality of the particular Church."²³ The particular Churches then are no longer merely agencies of adaptation and implementation of the norms given by the supreme legislative authority.²⁴

Although the Second Vatican Council did not specifically study nor mention the diocesan synod, its spirit has greatly influenced the institution of the diocesan synod as it is now in the 1983 Code. This, of course, goes without saying that the 1983 Code is the

¹⁹ See *ibid.*, Twenty-Fifth Session, chapter IV, p. 236.

²⁰ See *ibid.*, chapter X, p. 244. See also A. MENDONÇA, *Diocesan Curia*, p. 9.

²¹ J. KOONAMPARAMPIL, "Diocesan Synods," p. 89.

²² See *ibid.*, p. 89.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

²⁴ See *ibid.*

codification of the Second Vatican Council. The influence of the Second Vatican Council on the diocesan synod will be dealt with in the section on the significance of the synod in the life of a diocese.

As has been shown above, the institution of the diocesan synod as it is today did not emerge instantaneously from one particular era of the history of the Church. It is a legacy of many eras combined. Thus, from the Fourth Lateran Council we have the synod used as a tool of imposing discipline in particular Churches following the provisions of provincial councils. Pope Gregory XI made the diocesan synod more of a pastoral means than a legislative one to deal with real problems and issues affecting individual dioceses. The synods would then help in trying to find solutions for problems affecting them.²⁵ The Council of Trent saw the diocesan synod as a tool to bring about reform in particular Churches. The 1917 Code structured the diocesan synod based on the preceding eras and helped to preserve this institution (the synod) until the 1983 Code in which the current law concerning diocesan synods is stipulated.

The present structure of the synod enhances the values that the synod aimed at promoting at different periods in the history of the Church. This can be evidenced by a closer look at the definition of a diocesan synod in the 1983 Code of Canon Law. Canon 460 of the 1983 Code defines what a diocesan synod is. The canon can be divided into three parts. The diocesan synod is:

- 1) an assembly of selected priests and other members of Christ's faithful of a particular Church;
- 2) an assembly for the good of the whole diocesan community; and
- 3) an assembly that assists the diocesan bishop.

In this definition there is the goal, the agent who acts so that the goal can be reached, and the means (used by the agent) to reach the goal. The goal is the good of the whole diocese (or the diocesan community), the means is the deliberations of the synodal assembly and the synodal decrees and acts, and the agent of course being the diocesan bishop, assisted by the

²⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 88.

synod members. The good of the whole diocese though, is not achieved by the same means.

This is related to the notion of a diocese. Canon 369 defines a diocese thus:

A diocese is a portion of the people of God, which is entrusted to a bishop to be nurtured by him, with the cooperation of the presbyterium, in such a way that, remaining close to its pastor and gathered by him through the gospel and the Eucharist in the Holy Spirit, it constitutes a particular Church. In this Church, the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church of Christ truly exists and functions.

So the assembly of the selected people of God in the synod helps the bishop by its deliberations to enact laws and give direction that may bring about or promote discipline in the diocese if it is lacking or weak, reform some structures and practices of the diocese that need it, and make provisions that will enhance communion, that “the sacred services of preaching, sanctification and governing may be properly supplied to the faithful, and missionary action may be directed even to those who do not yet believe in Christ, or who no longer follow his faith and law.”²⁶ *The Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops* sums up this well. The diocesan synod helps the bishop to fulfil his role of shepherding the flock

by adapting the laws and norms of the universal Church to the local conditions, by pointing out the policy and programme of apostolic work in the diocese, by resolving problems encountered in the apostolate and administration, by giving impetus to projects and undertakings, and by correcting errors in doctrine and morals if any have crept in.²⁷

In this way then the synod helps the bishop to achieve the good of the whole diocesan community which is ultimately the salvation of souls. This carries us therefore to the significance of the synod in the life of a diocese.

3.2 — The Significance of the Synod in the Life of a Diocese

As has already been indicated in its definition, the diocesan synod promotes the good of the diocesan community. Vatican Council II’s Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in

²⁶ SACRED CONGREGATION FOR BISHOPS, *Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops, Ecclesiae imago*, 22 February 1973, no. 171, English translation by the BENEDICTINE MONKS of the Seminary of Christ the King, Mission, BC, Ottawa, Publication Services of the Canadian Catholic Conference, 1974, p. 88.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 163, p. 83.

the Church, *Christus Dominus*, saw synods, councils, and episcopal conferences as institutions that promote the teaching of the truths of the faith and for regulating ecclesiastical discipline. The council therefore encouraged their flourishing “with renewed vigour so that the growth of religion and the maintenance of discipline in the various Churches may increasingly be more effectively provided for in accordance with the needs of the times.”²⁸ Although the council Fathers did not expressly refer to the diocesan synod as such here or anywhere else in the council, this may by analogy allude to it.²⁹ Moreover, the diocesan synod as we have it now stands as a concrete expression of the ecclesiological or theological foundations of the Second Vatican Council. These principles are coherently elaborated on by J. Coriden. They are communion, equality, mission, renewal, kerygma, and priesthood.³⁰

The diocesan synod flows from the nature of the Church. “The self-understanding of the Church influences the very nature of the diocesan synod.”³¹ Before the council, the Church saw itself primarily as a perfect society, and it therefore reflected and presented fully the hierarchical authority of the Church.³² The council’s ecclesiology of *communio* affirms that all the baptized faithful are a “people” constituted by the Spirit of God in relationship to each other in the Lord.³³ It therefore engenders a sharing and contributing, a fellowship and solidarity among all the members of the diocese which is expressed through the assembly of their selected representatives, when they meet in a synod to discuss matters that are focused on the building up of the Body of Christ.³⁴ In relation to communion is the fundamental equality of all Christians (c. 208). Thus,

[...] those who have been called by the Father, baptized in Christ, strengthened in the Spirit and united in the Eucharist—indicates the propriety of each one sharing in the deliberation and policy-making of the local community of

²⁸ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops in the Church, *Christus Dominus*, 28 October 1965, no. 36, in *AAS*, 58 (1966), pp. 673-701, English translation in FLANNERY I, p. 586.

²⁹ See A. MENDONÇA, *Diocesan Curia*, p. 11.

³⁰ See J.A. CORIDEN, “The Diocesan Synod An Instrument of Renewal for the Local Church,” in *The Jurist*, 34 (1974), pp. 84-87.

³¹ A. MENDONÇA, *Diocesan Curia*, p. 11.

³² See *ibid.*, p. 10.

³³ See *ibid.*

³⁴ See J.A. CORIDEN, “The Diocesan Synod An Instrument of Renewal for the Local Church,” p. 84.

Christians (*Lumen gentium*, nos. 11 and 32). Synods and similar assemblies have been and continue to be apt instruments for such participation based on the fundamental equality and common dignity of all members of God's people.³⁵

Furthermore, in the synod the members exercise the mission of the Church which is the responsibility of all the baptized. The proclamation of the gospel, the witness of the community, and the service in the world are the concern of the entire Church.³⁶ In the synod this task is explained and directed, this burden is shouldered, and this privilege is shared. In it each can share the individual gifts and charisms which the Spirit has provided for the building up of the Body of Christ.³⁷

Coriden further explains that a diocesan synod is a fitting occasion on which to achieve reform and renew the covenant between the community and the Lord. For the obligation of continual reformation must always be the concern of the people of God. "Like the people of Israel at the time of Joshua and Josiah (Joshua 24; 2 Kings 22; 23), the local Church must recall its covenant pledge and its commitment to the demands of the covenant."³⁸

The celebration of a diocesan synod also serves a unique *kerygmatic* function. Coriden sees in the large gathering of the synod members with its elaborate preparation and attendant fanfare an opportunity for the Christian community to attract the attention of the larger human community, and to hold up the banner of Christ for all to see (*Lumen gentium*, nos. 1 and 12; *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 9; *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 6). "The event," he says, "can be a signal proclamation of the good news."³⁹

Finally, Coriden views a diocesan synod, the assembly of the clergy and the lay Christian faithful, as an illustration of the appropriate function of priesthood of all the baptized alongside the ordained ministry (*Lumen gentium*, nos. 10, 30-38). "Thus enriched,

³⁵ Ibid., p. 85.

³⁶ See *ibid.*

³⁷ See *ibid.*

³⁸ Ibid. Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*, 21 November 1964, no. 6, in *AAS*, 57 (1965), pp. 90-112, English translation in FLANNERY I, p. 458.

³⁹ J.A. CORIDEN, "The Diocesan Synod an Instrument of Renewal," p. 86. Cf. *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 3, FLANNERY I, p. 769.

the synod gives a fuller and more faithful picture of the whole Christian priesthood in action."⁴⁰

The above conciliar principles in one way or another have been reiterated in the revised Code of Canon Law. For example, in his apostolic constitution, *Sacrae disciplinae leges*, by which he promulgated the revised Code, John Paul II said:

(...) the Code (...) fully accords with the nature of the Church, particularly as presented in the authentic teaching of the Second Vatican Council as seen as a whole, and especially in its eschatological doctrine. In fact, in a certain sense, this new Code can be viewed as a great effort to translate the conciliar ecclesiological teaching into canonical terms. (...) From this it follows that the fundamental basis of the 'newness' which, while never straying from the Church's legislative tradition, is found in the second Vatican Council and especially in its ecclesiological teaching, generates also the mark of 'newness' in the code.⁴¹

One should note that the principles enunciated by Coriden offer a very good way of understanding the synod as a self-expression of the particular Church in a given context. That context is the Second Vatican Council. But these principles must be qualified with the longstanding canonical tradition that the diocesan synod, being an event of communion, is also an action of episcopal governance, thus expressing that nature of hierarchical communion which belongs to the nature of the Church.⁴² Thus the principles of communion, equality, mission, kerygma, and priesthood should be understood in the context that is given by the *Instruction on Diocesan Synods*, given by the Congregations for Bishops and Evangelization of Peoples. The *Instruction* states:

The people of God is thus not an amorphous aggregate of the disciples of Christ, but rather a priestly community, organically structured from its inception according to the will of its Founder (*Lumen gentium*, no. 11), whose head, in every diocese is the bishop, the visible source and foundation of unity and its sole representative (*Lumen gentium*, no. 23). Those who participate in the synod "assist the diocesan bishop (c. 460) by formulating their opinion or "votum" with regard to the questions which have been sponsored by him. (...). In virtue of their experience and their counsel, those who participate in the

⁴⁰ J.A. CORIDEN, "The Diocesan Synod an Instrument of Renewal," p. 86.

⁴¹ *Sacrae disciplinae leges*, in *The Code of Canon Law*, 1997, pp. xiv-xv.

⁴² See *Instruction on Diocesan Synods*, p. 2.

synod also collaborate actively in drawing up those declarations and decrees which are properly called "synodal" (cf. cc. 466-467) by which the episcopal government of the diocese is inspired for the future.⁴³

Could not the diocesan bishop himself put in place provisions and legislation that would sustain the running of the diocese without convoking a synod? What then would a diocese gain by holding a synod? The diocese as a portion of the people of God constitutes a particular Church (c. 369). John Paul II points out that the particular Church does not come about as a result of the fragmentation of the universal Church, nor does the universal Church come about as a simple amalgamation of particular Churches. The universal Church exists and is manifested in particular Churches (*Christifideles laici*, no. 25). We are not going to give a theological elaboration of this statement, but one important point can be made here. This is, the *particularity* of the diocese. While the diocese is part of the universal Church, it has its unique character that identifies it from other dioceses and the universal Church. Like other dioceses it gathers the people of God through the gospel and the Eucharist in the Holy Spirit. Its *particularity* consists among other things in the presence of a bishop;⁴⁴ the diocesan synod is also one of those tools that promote this particularity. Although the structures of the Church might in some cases be similar in some dioceses, life might be different in those dioceses depending on the actual situation and circumstances there. The synod in this context can be a good tool of adaptation and inculturation of the teaching of the Church in the dioceses concerned. Here we can speak of incarnating the Christian message into the particular Church whereby Christian life and Church structures would be adapted to the mentality, traditions, and character of the people in the diocese.⁴⁵ In this vein, Coriden sees the diocesan synod, especially after the Second Vatican Council, as a way to implement the

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁴ Cf. H. DE LUBAC, *Les églises particulières dans l'Église universelle*, Paris, Aubier, Montaigne, 1971, p. 45. Cf. R.J. LICARI, *The Diocese as a Particular Church According to the 1983 Code of Canon Law*, Ottawa, Saint Paul University, 1989, p. 113.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Ad gentes*, no. 22, in FLANNERY I, p. 840.

documents of the Council, to translate them into reality locally.⁴⁶ Coriden further gives the goals that a diocesan synod aims at achieving.⁴⁷ These are:

- to promote communications and foster the exchange of views and needs between leaders and members of the community and among all members;
- to advance religious education and formation in faith and assist the maturing of consciences;
- to heighten consciousness of being Church locally, strengthen the sense of diocesan unity around bishop and clergy, increase awareness of belonging and sharing;
- to stimulate research and planning, study real needs, set goals, reach consensus on policies, make rules and guidelines accordingly;
- to reorganize and coordinate diocesan structures and agencies, place the offices of service in the best relationship to the community;
- to correct abuses, stimulate laggards, restrain zealots, settle disputes.

One can observe from the verbs used to describe the aims of the diocesan synod (promote, advance, heighten, stimulate, reorganize, coordinate, correct) that the underlying values are to invigorate the faith of the community, deepening the commitment to Christian witness and manifesting more vividly the love which is to characterize the followers of Christ.⁴⁸

In our reflection on the first synod of Mbarara Archdiocese, we shall see that the aforementioned aims are the same that the synod was trying to achieve. For instance, in his opening speech at the synod, John Baptist Kakubi, the then bishop of Mbarara, said that the purpose of the synod was to study ways and means of deepening the Christian life of all the members of the diocese so as to bring the Christian community to a new birth.⁴⁹ The synod was to seek to update the diocesan strategy and methods of its apostolate so as to:

- proclaim better the good news to the contemporary world;

⁴⁶ See J.A. CORIDEN, "The Diocesan Synod an Instrument of Renewal," p. 87.

⁴⁷ See *ibid.*

⁴⁸ See *ibid.*

⁴⁹ See J.B. KAKUBI, *Opening Speech at the First Diocesan Synod*, 26 August 1986 at Kitabi Seminary," p. 1. in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

- witness prophetically to the good news proclaimed;
- better administer the material goods entrusted to the Church and promote the social, economic and political welfare of all the people of God in the diocese.⁵⁰

3.3 —Diocesan Pastoral Provisions Before the Synod

In his letter to all the Christian faithful of Mbarara Diocese announcing the preparation for a diocesan synod, Bishop Kakubi, alluded to pastoral conferences that had been taking place in the diocese. These dealt with the pastoral situations arising in the diocese. He called them 'quasi-synods'.⁵¹

Such conferences are also an expression of ecclesial communion. They, like the diocesan synod, are consultative in relation to the bishop as the head of and legislator in the diocese. They are also good ways of involving the laity in the mission of the Church since they are comprised of participants from the clergy, religious, and the lay Christian faithful in the diocese. Unlike the diocesan synod, pastoral conferences are not covered in the law of the Church. They are a creation of a particular Church, in this case Mbarara Diocese, to address various needs as they arise in the mission of the Church therein. Their organization therefore depends on the diocesan bishop. They are less demanding in terms of financial, personnel and time considerations since they are small in scope as compared to the diocesan synod.

The conference proceedings are not promulgated by the bishop. But they help him to put in place diocesan policies and guidelines by which the pastoral ministry in the diocese is to be done. They are good avenues of introducing pastoral practices in the diocese. These practices are somehow analogous to customs for through the conferences the people of God, both the laity and the hierarchy, participate each according to their charism to create norms of actions that uphold the values which they commonly judge necessary or useful for the life, prosperity, and mission of the Church in the diocese.⁵² They are helpful in letting the diocese

⁵⁰ See *ibid.* p. 2.

⁵¹ Cf. J.B. KAKUBI, letter, *The Proposed Diocesan Synod*, 1 August 1983, p. 1, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

⁵² See L. ÖRSY, "Foreword," in J.P. MCINTYRE, *Customary Law in Corpus Iuris Canonici*, San Francisco, Mellen Research University Press, 1991, p. viii.

develop its “personality” as a particular Church while maintaining unity with the universal Church, but cultivating their own distinct cultural tradition.⁵³

The pastoral conferences in Mbarara Diocese were normally held biannually unless other impeding circumstances intervened. The first of these took place in 1968 and others took place in 1971, 1973, 1977,⁵⁴ and 1982 respectively. At these conferences all categories of the Catholic population in the diocese were represented, ranging from smaller Christian communities in the diocese to the representatives from the clergy, the religious, and diocesan structures.

3.3.1 —1968 Pastoral Conference⁵⁵

The 1968 pastoral conference took place from 10 to 12 January. The theme was evangelization. Different commissions were set up to study specific aspects of evangelization. These were: evangelization —first contacts, and move towards conversion, catechumenate, mystagogy, and catechesis of the lapsed.⁵⁶

There is no indication in the conference proceedings of the active participation of the lay Christian faithful thereat. The conference seems to have been overwhelmingly clerical in attendance. The topics for discussion however, to a large extent, concerned directly the laity as is evidenced by the topics and the proceedings:

⁵³ See *ibid.*, p. x.

⁵⁴ Cf. J.B. KAKUBI, “Opening Talk,” in *Mbarara Diocese Pastoral Conference, 1977*, p. 3, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives. After the 1973 pastoral conference the next one was supposed to be held in 1975 but due to the Holy Year and the 75th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the diocese it could not be duly prepared in time. It was held in 1977.

⁵⁵ There is documentation in the diocesan archives referring to the 1968 conference as a diocesan synod. However, there are reasons to prove that this was not strictly speaking a diocesan synod. For instance in his opening speeches at the 1973 and 1977 pastoral conferences John Baptist Kakubi, the bishop of the diocese, referred to this assembly as the first pastoral conference of Mbarara diocese. Kakubi himself (he was not yet a bishop) as a priest of Mbarara diocese chaired the discussion on catechists at the 1968 pastoral conference. He later in 1983 in his letter to the faithful of Mbarara diocese proposed the convocation of the first canonical diocesan synod and talks of assemblies that had been taking place since 1968 as pastoral conferences which he also referred to as kind of mini-synods. So we treat the 1968 assembly as a pastoral conference.

⁵⁶ The term *lapsed Catholics* is used for lack of a better one to refer to those Catholics who for one reason or another have stopped receiving sacraments. Many of these are still active in all other aspects of their Christian practice. Some of the reasons barring them from receiving sacraments revolve around marriage. Some may for instance be involved in polygamous marriages or in unions without a Church wedding.

- areas of evangelization, as is indicated by the commissions;
- methods of evangelization;
- agents of evangelization;
- lay apostolate.

As for the methods of evangelization, it was observed at the conference that in most cases the first contact of the converts was by the catechists, only in few cases would priests meet them in outstations.⁵⁷ It was felt therefore that it was the duty of every Christian, and not only the Church officials, to make the first approaches. Hence Christians were to be made aware of their apostolic duties towards their neighbours. This brings to mind the teaching of *Lumen gentium* (no. 31) that calls on the lay people to imbue the world with a Christian spirit. It calls also for the strengthening of family apostolate and building of the basic Christian communities, because the gospel of Christ can thrive on the strength of the witness of the Christians as individuals, in their families and communities. They are to be known by “their fruits”(Mt 7:20). So they have to be strengthened in their Christian commitment so as to give of what they live and have.

The consequent step to witnessing to the faith of the Christians is the coming forth of the candidates to enroll for the catechumenate. They are attracted by the exemplary life of the Christians. The latter were to start in Christian families being taught Christian prayers. In the meantime, they would be brought to personally realize that a true conversion is needed. So they would make a positive choice and personal commitment to go ahead and get in contact with the Church officially by enrolling for Christian instruction. This is pertinent to what Avery Dulles says:

For the successful transmission of Christian faith, it is highly important for the neophyte to find a welcoming community with responsible leaders who are mature disciples, formed in the ways of the Lord. This follows from the very nature of faith, which consists most fundamentally in trust in the living Lord, who makes himself present in and through the community and its ministries. Faith includes, to be sure, a dimension of intellectual assent, but this element follows from a more general commitment to the community and its corporate

⁵⁷ See *Mbarara Diocese Pastoral Conference*, 1968, session of 10 January 1968, p. 1, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

vision. For this reason, faith cannot be adequately transmitted in the cold atmosphere of the classroom or lecture hall. It is most successfully passed on by trusted masters in a network of interpersonal relations resembling the community life of Jesus with the Twelve. Response to the Lord himself in prayer and worship is essential to any living faith. The individual is formed in the attitudes of faith through affiliation with a praying, worshipping community.⁵⁸

At the level of instruction, the conference foresaw the method of selecting some families in different villages, which families would after due training invite Christian candidates to their homes for discussions about Christian truths, life and spirit. After this the candidates would ask to be accepted into the catechumenate for intensive instruction. This method, however good it seemed, never took off. It stopped at the point where it was disputed (in the conference) whether or not the mentioned families could be found to do the Christian instruction. It would have been a good way of involving the lay faithful in the teaching mission of the Church.

The systematic Christian instruction of the baptism candidates in Mbarara Archdiocese is the catechumenate, the equivalent of the *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults* (RCIA) programme. The catechumenate was divided into two sections, the adult and the school catechumenates. The orientation of the catechumenate, according to the conference, was to give Christian instruction that does not stop merely at imparting theoretical knowledge but prepares the candidates to lead a life according to the teaching of Christ, and have a personal relationship with God.⁵⁹ This was foreseen to be realized, among other things, through the instrumentality of catechists, baptismal sponsors, members of the lay apostolate movements such as the Legion of Mary and other lay Christians who led exemplary lives. These were among the agents of evangelization that the conference focused on.

It is interesting to note that during the conference, despite the seemingly passive participation of the laity thereat, their role in the field of evangelization was emphasized. The positive side of this is that it was emphasized by the Church hierarchy who would in turn

⁵⁸ A. DULLES, *Models of the Church*, expanded edition, New York, Doubleday, 1987, p. 218.

⁵⁹ See 1968 Conference proceedings, session of 10 January, 1968, p. 5.

involve and encourage the laity in this mission. The two talks⁶⁰ given at the conference, for instance, were focused on this—the Christians themselves bring the catechumens for Christian instruction, and later give them support as a community, as they mature in the faith. The Christian community structured into outstations was seen as an effective way to help the priests to understand the community, and therefore use their leaders as their (priests) pastoral agents to execute part of their work such as conducting meetings and conducting sacramental preparations.⁶¹

Other agents of evangelization include the sponsors of the baptismal candidates. These are known in the local language in Mbarara as *abazaire ba batismu* (baptismal parents). They nurture the faith of their 'baptismal' children by way of example, advice and Christian instruction at times. Catholic teachers in schools too were targeted as agents of evangelization by imparting Christian education to school children following the syllabus arranged by the diocese.

Catechists were given a particular attention as indispensable agents of evangelization. The context of catechists was seen by the conference on the premises that:

—the Church must teach the good tidings and feed the faith by the sacraments. But first comes faith and conversion, the sacraments can only feed those who have faith and are converted towards Christ;

—the priority is to preach the faith and help the people to dispose themselves to the sacraments by faith;

—the preaching of the faith in the context of Uganda and Mbarara in particular could not be done sufficiently by priests. There was therefore the need for other people; the catechists.

It is significant, however, to note the reasons given for the necessity and relevance of catechists in the work of evangelization. Catechists were seen to be very close to the people both in locality and life situations as compared to priests who were distant from their flocks.

⁶⁰ Two talks on catechumenate and the role of the community in the conversion of the pagan respectively, were given by Vermersch, a White Father Missionary, with practical experience in Rwanda (*Pastoral Conference, 1968, session of 11 January 1968, pp. 1-4*).

⁶¹ See *ibid.*, p. 3.

The conference saw the catechists as the ones who can bring living faith. This is what was said of catechists:

1 —“Faith must be living faith, that is faith which enlightens and strengthens the daily life. How far do we priests know the daily life (of the people)? Catechists could know it better.”⁶²

2—“Preaching faith is to give answer to the particular circumstances in which the Catholics live and the questions which arise from it. General preaching and general principles are difficult to be applied by the individual. Can we priests be present when the questions arise? Catechists are nearer.”⁶³

3 —“In many cases the Christians do not even see where they must apply the light of the gospel to their life. They must be helped more or less individually to see the Christian way of life. Do we (priests) live the same life? A catechist has his own experience and his connections with people.”⁶⁴

4 —“The reception of sacraments is not an act of one moment, but it is a life function, a growing process that needs a longer preparation and follow up after the sacraments have been received.” “Who can do it better than a catechist, who, for example, could take the whole lenten period to prepare them, and the whole Easter period to explain the new life in Christ?”⁶⁵

These observations have their strength and weakness. Their strength is in the clergy’s recognition of the very important role the catechists can play in the mission of the Church. The weakness is in the defeatist pastoral attitude the priests seemed to have had of their pastoral ministry. It borders on rendering their role irrelevant in face of the catechists’ ministry. But to deny the reality of the situation the priests referred to would be a disservice to the mission of the Church in the diocese. The aforementioned gap between the clergy and their flock is a challenge to the ministry of the priests who act in the name of Christ who came

⁶² See L. WITBROEK, Paper on “The Tasks of Trained Catechist,” p. 1, in *Pastoral Conference*, 1968, session of 11 January 1968.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ See *ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

to live among those he served.⁶⁶ The priests too ought be close to the people. This situation calls for a better understanding of each one's role, both priests and the catechists in the mission of the Church. Whereas they are partners in the same mission of the Church, each of them has their specific role to play. So when catechists are carrying out their ministry, they are not usurping the role particular to clerics but doing a ministry that is very much complimentary to the one of clerics.

The conference discussed at length the ministry of catechists. There had been in the diocese four types of catechists, namely, lay volunteers, sister catechists (religious women), trained catechists, and non-trained catechists. The conference wanted to reduce the categories to just lay volunteers and fully trained catechists. This idea did not work out due to the insufficient number of trained catechists. Catechists trained for the maximum of two years at the interdiocesan catechists training centre of *St. Kalemba* located at Ibanda in the Archdiocese of Mbarara. The conference preferred that the two years' training be interrupted by a year of pastoral practice of the catechists in their home parishes.

Furthermore, questions arose at the conference whether

1 —permission should be sought for catechists to give Holy Communion and to administer the sacrament of the sick in cases of emergency, baptize, and assist liturgically at burials;

2 —the ministry of catechist should be turned towards the formation of deacons.

No concrete answers were given at the conference to the questions raised. However, these pastoral concerns were addressed later at different times in the development of the Church in Mbarara, in particular, and East Africa in general. For example, the establishment of Eucharistic centres in Mbarara in 1973 opened the possibility for selected catechists and lay

⁶⁶ P. Kanyandago acknowledges the presence of the gap between the ordained ministers and the people. He attributes it to the type of formation the priests received in the seminary which, according to him, lacks the capacity to equip candidates to the priesthood with the knowledge of the people they are going to serve and of the situation in which they will work. He suggests the revision of the seminary curriculum to include more practical subjects and topics concerning life situations of the students (see P. KANYANDAGO, "Ordained and Non-ordained Ministry in the Local Church of Eastern Africa," in A. RADOLI, ed., *How Local is the Local Church?: Small Christian Communities and Church in Eastern Africa*, Eldoret, Kenya, AMECEA Gaba Publications, 1993, Spearhead nos. 126-128, pp. 139-162).

faithful to distribute Holy Communion in those centres where the Eucharist is reserved. Funeral liturgical services in Mbarara are almost always conducted by catechists. This is because funerals and burials are done in the families of the bereaved and so the presence of a catechist amidst the bereaved family members, relatives and friends brings the consolation of Christ closer to the suffering (Jn 11:17-37).

Surprisingly, the conference that discussed so much about the involvement of the lay faithful in the mission and ministry of the Church could not then or even later make use of the provision from the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith that catechists in a mission territory could be authorized by the local ordinary to baptize infants without awaiting the arrival of the missionaries,⁶⁷ or even now that the 1983 Code explicitly allows a catechist or some other person deputed to this office by the local ordinary “to lawfully baptize if the ordinary minister (bishop, priest, or deacon) is absent or impeded” (canon 861, § 2). The long absence of the priests in most of the outstations in Mbarara Archdiocese would be a reasonable factor to make use of this provision. Moreover, catechists are the ones that instruct adult catechumens and prepare the families of infants who are to be baptized.⁶⁸

On the ordination of catechists to the diaconate, the *AMECEA*⁶⁹ bishops in July 1970 at Lusaka

did not advise the introduction of the permanent diaconate in these countries. By narrow majority the view was taken that it was better to have ‘functional deacons’ that is, to upgrade the catechist and give him through the necessary indults as great a share as possible in the priestly and diaconal ministry without giving him ordination.⁷⁰

This has, up to now, not come to pass.

⁶⁷ See J.A. ABBO and J.D. HANNAN, *The Sacred Canons*, pp. 749-750.

⁶⁸ Cf. D. KELLY, “The Sanctifying Office of the Church,” in *Letter and Spirit*, p. 474.

⁶⁹ Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa, which includes Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

⁷⁰ M. ROOKACKERS, “Catechists and the Future of the Christian Ministry,” in A. SHORTER and E. KATAZA, eds., *Missionaries to Yourselves: African Catechists Today*, p. 140. Cf. CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION and CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, “Joint Declaration and Introduction,” no. 3, in *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons and Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons*, Vatican City, Libreria editrice Vaticana, 1998, p. 17.

After dealing with evangelization, its means and agents, the conference looked at the area of those already evangelized, namely the area of lay apostolate. Four aspects of lay apostolate were examined. First was the role of priests in the apostolate of the laity. The priest was seen as an animator to help the lay faithful get involved in the work of Christian education and infuse a Christian spirit in the mentality and customs of the community and to renew the temporal order.⁷¹ The second aspect was the teachers' guild. As a form of association the teachers' guild was seen as a good means to help the Catholic teachers both at the diocesan and parish levels to exercise their role in the teaching mission of the Church. The third aspect was the individual apostolate. Concern was expressed about many people's misunderstanding of the apostolate as a special domain of the members of catholic action. It was proposed that the individuals be trained to express the meaning of their Christian life to candidates for baptism during the step of evangelization. The apostolate is every Christian's responsibility. The fourth aspect was the lay movements for adults. Here was discussed the point of motivating lay people to take a keen interest in joining the Church movements. There was need to give the apostolate movements a clear sense of direction, defining their identity and objectives. There seemed to have been a tendency of putting in the same category movements and associations with the Church administration. For instance, under lay adult movements was discussed parents association and parish committees. Although both the Church movements/associations and committees ultimately come under the mission of the Church, the associations comprise the voluntary membership of the faithful and is not so crucial for the existence of the Church community whereas the Church committees are part and parcel of the life of the Christian community without which the mission of the Church would be impaired. Through these committees the lay faithful come to participate with the clergy in the mission and ministry of the Church. The two are not to be mixed up. The movements and associations, however, can be incorporated within the structures of the parish by having membership positions in Church committees to fortify the mission of the Church.

⁷¹ See *Pastoral Conference*, 1968, session on 12 January 1968, p. 2.

3.3.1.1 —Observations

The 1968 pastoral conference was held at the time during which the diocese of Mbarara was at the crossroads of a missionary Church and an indigenous Church. Fourteen parishes had been established. Of the 58 priests working in the diocese, 14 were diocesan, the rest being missionaries. There were 231,135 Catholics out of the population of 823,129.⁷² In 1968, the last missionary bishop of the diocese, Jean Marie Ogez, resigned and a year later the diocese got its first indigenous bishop. The conference attendance was mostly of the missionary clergy and so the language at the conference had more of a missionary accent of conversion and evangelization than that of adaptation and inculturation of Christianity that was later to characterize most of the later conferences.

3.3.2 —1970 Pastoral Conference

The 1970 conference took place in August and concentrated on the theme: evangelization and development. It was observed that the diocese had been insisting very much on sacramental life. Very often parish work had been organized to satisfy the necessities arising from the administration of sacraments, without taking into account what the social environment brings, favourable or not, to Christian life. This approach of evangelization stressed the number over the quality of converts. It was noted that whereas the number of baptized Catholics was increasing, religious practice in parishes was diminishing every year. So the conference stressed the point that evangelization and development go hand in hand, they cannot be separated. The Church is a sacrament, a sign of the presence of Christ in the world and, as such, it has to change this world through charity.

Through evangelization, the parish communities have to be revived through a solid formation of small communities, taking into account the geographical and the social problems of these communities. The village committees were seen to be the backbone of a parish community. This approach promotes the spirit of active participation of the community in evangelization and development. Hence the members of these communities become

⁷² See *Annuario pontificio, 1969*, Città del Vaticano, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1969, p. 290.

missionaries to themselves. This approach, however, can work out best in an ecclesiology that corresponds to its end. As Avery Dulles notes in his book, *Models of the Church*, each model of the Church “entails a particular vision of the ministry”⁷³ and that the Church in every age has adjusted its structures and offices so as to operate more effectively in the social environment in which it finds itself. So the kind of approach the conference suggested needed some adjustment in the structures of the Church so as to fit the participatory role of the community members in the work of evangelization and development. The structures in place then (as they are still now), were hierarchically set up and this arrangement favours more the involvement of the clergy in evangelization than involving the communities as the conference discussed. This is similar to what Dulles says in his discussion of the model of the Church as the community of believers. He says:

Evangelization takes on special qualities in the discipleship model of ecclesiology. In recent centuries, when the Church has been highly institutional, the task of evangelization has been considered the responsibility of priests and religious, assisted by a few co-opted lay volunteers. Moving away from this model Vatican II several times asserts that “every disciple of Christ has the obligation to take part in the spreading of the faith” (*Lumen gentium*, no. 23). In a Church that has been renewed as a community of disciples, the generality of the members will feel involved in the kind of communal and missionary existence exemplified by the disciples of Jesus.⁷⁴

To pursue the theme of evangelization and development, the conference used the Vatican II principles. This was just three years after the close of the Council and so it was a good occasion for the young Church to interpret and apply the teaching of the Council in her own context. In light of the Council, therefore, the conference reflected on evangelization and the human condition. In this context evangelization was:

—seen as a promotion of human dignity (*Gaudium et spes*, no. 78). There are two agents at play in the promotion of human dignity—the political community and the Church. Both of these agents are at the service of one and the same person, although each is autonomous and independent of the other in its own field. The Church and the political

⁷³ A. DULLES, *Models of the Church*, p. 162.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

community need to cooperate in as far as the promotion of the human dignity is concerned. The conference however, did not mention the specific areas in which the two bodies needed to cooperate. Usually some members of the political community are also members in the Church community. They work for the promotion of the human dignity according to the teaching of the Church while at the same time imbuing the spirit of the gospel in their political arena;

—seen as an aspect of missionary activity (*Ad gentes*, no. 8). Missionary activity, since the latter is intimately bound up with human nature and its aspirations. And “even in the secular history of mankind the gospel has acted as a leaven in the interests of liberty and progress, and it always offers itself as a leaven with regard to brotherhood, unity and peace” (*Gaudium et spes*, no. 8);

—seen as promoting freedom and human activity (*Gaudium et spes*, nos. 38, 43). Human activity is achieved in the Paschal Mystery. Christ entered the world’s history as a perfect human being, and he revealed that God is love and taught that the new commandment of love was the basic law of human perfection and the world’s transformation. While Christ called some to devote themselves to the work that pertains to mankind’s yearning for its heavenly kingdom (spiritual aspect), others he calls to earthly service (temporal aspect) and this way to prepare for the kingdom of heaven.

Evangelization and development are not to be dichotomized. The two go hand in hand; which is why the conference discussed at length their relationship. It discussed development in light of Pope Paul VI’s encyclical letter, *Populorum progressio*, as dealing with the development of the whole person and all people.⁷⁵ This was seen as a working out of the gospel commandment to love one another as Christ loved us. In this perspective work undertaken toward integral development is a genuine way of evangelization,⁷⁶ for its thrust goes beyond the temporal. This work, taken seriously, is a task which involves the whole person, a task which demands a radical option for the spiritual.

⁷⁵ See PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter on the Development of Peoples, *Populorum progressio*, 26 March 1967, no. 14, in *AAS*, 59 (1967), pp. 257-299, English translation by the Daughters of St. Paul, Boston, Mass., 1967, p. 11.

⁷⁶ See *Mbarara Diocese Pastoral Conference*, 1970, p. 3, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

To the extent that this task involves a human person, development becomes a reality which is not merely an object lesson: it is a living and eloquent witness of the lordship of Christ over the world. This witnessing should be acknowledged as work of evangelization in its strict sense, as an act which is explicitly religious. This witness, which is one of the ways by which evangelization is carried out, requires in turn the proclamation of the genuine word of salvation, thus revealing to the people the mystery of our divine calling and the contemporary problems.⁷⁷

The conference emphasized that there is a bond between the two ways of evangelization, namely witness, and the ministry of the word and sacraments. The ministry of word and sacraments reveals to people the deepest, the ultimate meaning of development and gives to it a dynamism which is no longer a merely human thing. Christian witness reveals the concrete way of living the ideals of Christ's teaching in this world as one involves oneself in development. The conference at the same time acknowledged the relationship and distinction between the Church and the state. The Church is to establish the kingdom of God inside the human community which is organized by the state. They are distinct in as far as the Church's preoccupation is essentially in the spiritual realm whereas that of the state is in the temporal realm. The Church ought to observe the signs of the times and interpret them in light of the gospel, "sharing the noblest aspirations of the people and suffering when she sees them not satisfied, she wishes to help them to attain their full flowering (...)." ⁷⁸

It was the earnest wish of the conference to help the faithful of the Diocese of Mbarara to "live according to more human conditions; which is what authentic development is all about—a development that is for each and all, the transition from less human conditions such as lack of material necessities for those who are without the minimum essentials for life and the moral deficiencies of those who are domineered by selfishness."⁷⁹

The conference recommended that the attitude of the Church/diocese towards development be characterized by a touch of expertise and methodology in handling issues/projects of development. The Church has been involved in education by setting up and running schools, in health care by establishing health centres and providing medical services,

⁷⁷ *Pastoral Conference*, 1970, p. 3.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁷⁹ See *ibid.*

and agricultural projects to mention but a few. She has not dichotomized between the physical well-being of the people and their spiritual well-being. Her mission aims at making the person have life in its abundance (Jn 10:10). In order to render better services in those areas of temporal and social development, the Church needs to employ the pertinent managerial/scientific skills and methods in these areas. "The Church can no longer work by way of trial and error (...), she has to work methodically, to plan, (...), good will and generosity alone can no longer suffice for Church activity,"⁸⁰ the conference remarked. Here is a provision of involving the lay members of Christ's faithful in those areas of the mission of the Church that require their particular expertise. It is more among the lay faithful than the clergy that we find people competently qualified in various fields of development such as finance, agriculture, education, to mention but a few. The clergy are more involved in the spiritual aspect of the mission of the Church. Therefore, to ensure integral evangelization, the aspect of temporal development is not to be overlooked nor is the spiritual aspect to be overlooked in striving to bring about integral development. The clergy and the lay faithful ought to work together in this area as Vatican II has emphasized:

—By reason of the knowledge, competence or pre-eminence which they have the laity are empowered—indeed sometimes obliged—to manifest their opinion on those things which pertain to the good of the Church (*Lumen gentium*, no.37);

—In dioceses, as far as possible, councils should be set up to assist the Church's apostolic work, whether in the field of evangelization and sanctification or in the fields of charity, social relations and the rest; the clergy and religious working with the laity in whatever way proves satisfactory (*Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 26);

—Priests are to manage ecclesiastical property, according to the nature of the case and the norm of ecclesiastical laws and with the help, as far as possible, of skilled lay men (*Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 17).

In its deliberations, the conference noted that development is wider than mere economic growth or socio-economic development. It embraces social, economic, political,

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 4.

structural, ideological, and religious aspects. "It is a cultural fact," the conference remarked.⁸¹ There are economic and non-economic facets of development and the latter are perhaps those on which the Church has the best chance of acting.⁸² The conference warned against two dangers, namely the *horizontalist* and the *evangelization* mentalities. The former emphasizes development at the exclusion of everything else, the latter is the mentality that the most important thing in the Church is evangelization, that is, "the proclamation of the word of God: liturgy, sacraments and catechesis. Human promotion does not matter."⁸³ The Church ought to balance the two extremes and orient development in the right direction.

On Church establishments, the conference had six areas to consider:

1—Institutions affecting the economic area. Here the conference recommended that the Church/diocese should not control big business organizations but only small enterprises;

2 —Works in the social field. Before the Church starts her own projects for social services, she should first make use of the existing ones (such as those run by the state) so as to avoid the duplication of the same services;

3 —Education. The Church and state are partners in the field of education. The focus of the Church in education should be on character training, forming consciences and teaching people to think for themselves;

4 —Small enterprises geared directly to the needs of the local Church, such as garages, carpentry workshops, printing press, and brick factories. The idea behind this is not business but to enable the Church to fulfil her apostolate;

5 —Only projects that are progressive are to be kept running so as to avoid the wastage of resources;

6 —The conference observed that sometimes too many social activities/projects in parishes depend on one individual and when the individual can no longer look after them, they collapse. It recommended that means be put in place to ensure the continuity of viable projects started in parishes. Furthermore, the Church is not opposed to the state as long as

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 5.

⁸² See *ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

it fights for justice and equality. She permeates the spirit of the gospel in the government structures through the lay Christian faithful who work and are involved in those structures. Their Christian commitment and responsibility will build a world of charity and brotherhood.⁸⁴

It was the view of the conference that if the Church has to give a good example of Christian witness, she has to guard against putting up structures (such as expensive churches, presbyteries, convents and seminaries) that depict power and wealth. Let the Church work within the economic capacity of the diocese. This would also lessen the Church's dependence on financial help from abroad.⁸⁵

In her catechesis, the Church should emphasize professional conscience, the true meaning of work, service to the nation, and a sense of responsibility. Since development is for the person, the person cannot just stand in isolation from others. One has relationships and one's relationships go beyond family and faith community to embrace people of other faith communities. Hence the issue of interreligious and ecumenical relationships comes in if the Church deals with development. The lay faithful who both act as agents and beneficiaries of the Church's role in development and evangelization are in this case living practically ecumenism and interreligious dialogue.

3.3.2.1 —Conclusion

The 1970 Pastoral Conference aimed at fostering the integral development of the human person which can be well attained through Christ, the fullness of time, the perfection of humanity. It was an attempt to adapt the teaching of Christ to the social situation of the diocese and vice versa, and thus prepare a Church for Africa and Africa for the Church. The Church's emphasis on development in her evangelizing mission helps to build a nation with the leaven which is Christ himself and not a state within a state. The lay faithful who are both members of the Church and the state at the same time, ease the tension that might crop up between the Church and the state in addition to being the bridge between the two bodies.

⁸⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 6.

⁸⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 7.

3.3.3 —1973 Pastoral Conference

The next conference took place in August 1973. It lasted five days. Its theme was: Investigating the role and responsibility of the local community and the mission of the Church.⁸⁶ Five topics were discussed at the conference and these resulted in five categories of guidelines given by the bishop of the diocese. These were: pastoral development of centres and liturgical, socio-economic, social communication, and ecumenical guidelines.

Of all the pastoral conferences so far held in the diocese of Mbarara, the 1973 conference is perhaps the one that has had the greatest impact on the pastoral life of the diocese. It is known to have given birth to the establishment of Eucharistic centres in the diocese.⁸⁷ These centres not only contained a strong spiritual element, but also pioneered a way for priests to have a closer contact with specific groups of Christian leaders as well as opening new avenues for the development of lay ministries. The idea caught the imagination of the lay people who saw it as a way in which to benefit more deeply from the sacramental life of the Church and animate their communities at the same time.⁸⁸

Lay ministry was of course a pastoral concern in the diocese before the conference. What the conference fixed was a definite plan which linked lay ministry directly to the Eucharistic centres by concentrating apostolic efforts to the outstation representatives.⁸⁹ The role of the lay Christian faithful was emphasized in the pastoral guidelines. The guidelines concerning pastoral development of centres clarified the role and position of the catechist. He should be a person of strong faith, excellent qualities of leadership and influence over the community. He should be a trained catechist with a possibility of ongoing formation so as to be well equipped as a community spiritual and moral leader. "The catechist's role vis à vis the

⁸⁶ See *Mbarara Diocese Pastoral Conference Guidelines (= Guidelines)*, 1973 approved by Bishop Kakubi, p. 4, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

⁸⁷ Eucharistic centres have already been discussed in chapter two.

⁸⁸ See L.J. GOODWIN, *Ecclesiological Dimensions of Eucharistic Centres in the Diocese of Mbarara, Uganda: An Inquiry into Christian Community Structure and Ministry*, Ann Arbor, Mich., University Microfilms International, 1984, p. 82

⁸⁹ See *ibid.*, p. 83.

village councillors is that of representative of the Church to the local community. No decisions regarding the Christian life of the community may be taken without his approval."⁹⁰

The *guidelines* further stipulated that before a Eucharistic centre is established, there should be leaders chosen to promote development in the centre. They should be people of exemplary character and practice of the faith. On ministries, the *guidelines* encouraged that the Church councillors at the centre and lower levels should receive responsibility/ministries determined according to the situation of the place and that appropriate training be provided for the effective carrying out of those responsibilities. The village councillors in addition to their specific responsibilities have the duty of dealing with cases of public scandal, Christian instruction to the pre catechumenate candidates, the filling of necessary church forms, and overseeing the finances of the centre/*hiika*.

Certain members of the Eucharistic community who were chosen by the people and were leading examples of the faith to the community, were allowed to distribute Holy Communion or take Communion to the sick.⁹¹

The *guidelines* set conditions that have to be fulfilled by the communities before they are raised to the status of Eucharistic centre. Hence the Christian communities concerned have to be self-supporting in terms of the building and the upkeep of their churches, liturgical requirements and paying the salaries of their catechists. Furthermore, the communities have to be duly prepared before they have the Eucharist reserved in their churches. The preparation ought to guarantee that the community reserving the Eucharist is a true worshipping community with adequate Christian leadership and must feel the need for the divine Eucharistic presence in their midst. "No spirit of competition or false idea of prestige should enter into the community's desire to establish a Eucharistic centre."⁹²

The 1973 conference also discussed parish administration and church councils at different levels in the structures of the diocese. It was recommended that full details of the church's financial situation should be given to the faithful, as well as matters arising from

⁹⁰ *Guidelines*, p. 4.

⁹¹ See *ibid.*, p.5.

⁹² *Ibid.*

meetings of councils at different levels. This was in order to make the people aware that the Church is theirs, it is their family. Guidelines were given concerning church councils right from the basic structure of pastoral activity, the *hiika*, to the diocesan level. The councils are: the *hiika* council, the centre council, parish council, deanery meetings, diocesan pastoral council, and pastoral conferences. One common factor in these councils is that each of them is a channel through which the lay members of Christ's faithful build their Church and participate with the clergy in the mission of the Church.

We are not going to give a detailed analysis of the rest of the guidelines but just point out those points that highlight the role of the lay faithful in the mission of the Church in the areas discussed at the conference.

Liturgical guidelines: The forms for adult baptism should be filled and verified before the candidate begins the catechumenate. The centre council members have the responsibility of filling these forms. The priests of the parish should ensure that the village councillors are properly instructed on how to fill these forms.

Socio-economic guidelines: It was strongly recommended in the pastoral conference that there be a ministry within the councils to deal with socio-economic questions. In developing the Eucharistic centres there should be the concern to develop the whole person in the context of the community. The council members should be encouraged to cooperate with local government agencies in any development scheme they undertake. They should have the right to determine how much land is to be used in any development scheme.

Social communication guidelines: Each parish in conjunction with the centres should develop a system to ensure proper distribution and payment for *Ageeteeraine*⁹³ and other Christian publications destined for the benefit of the Christian community. One (lay) council member at the centre and another at the *hiika* should be in charge of *Ageeteeraine* and other publications. If possible a press committee could be set up at the centre to propagate *Ageeteeraine* and gather the news for this publication. Teachers should be encouraged to spread Christian literature in their schools.

⁹³ *Ageeteeraine* was a diocesan news paper. It is no longer published.

Ecumenical guidelines: Catholics should be made aware of the bond that exists between Christians of all denominations. A spirit of tolerance and helpfulness towards other Christian groups should be reflected by the Eucharistic communities.

3.3.3.1 —Conclusion and Reflections

The 1973 pastoral conference was held to imbue the faithful of the diocese with a real awareness of the presence of Christ among them. The plan of gathering the people around the Eucharist always present in their midst, was one way to hold out many positive hopes of achieving this aim.⁹⁴

The conference tried to balance the spiritual and temporal aspects of the Christian communities. The remarkable outcome of the conference—the establishment of Eucharistic centres—enhanced the ministry of the lay faithful who are in charge of these centres. The ultimate goal that had been foreseen in the establishment of Eucharistic centres was to gather and celebrate the Eucharistic sacrifice very often other than just having the reservation of the Eucharist and Communion services in the centres. This goal has not been achieved now almost three decades since the establishment of Eucharistic centres, due to the dearth of priests. But twenty years before their establishment, who knew that such a phenomenon could be initiated in the diocese. So with more serious study, reflection, and necessary adaptations creation of new forms and deep understanding of the Eucharistic ministry may be possible. The creation of Eucharistic centres became a very practical way of implementing the norm of *Ministeria quaedam*⁹⁵ that instituted that laity can be extraordinary ministers of holy communion. The structures set up as a result of the conference were not only for the sake of pastoral convenience but to help the faithful have a closer relationship with God. The proceeding conference emphasized the aspect of prayer.

⁹⁴ See *Guidelines*, p. 7.

⁹⁵ Cf. *Ministeria quaedam*, no. 6, in FLANNERY I, p. 430. Cf. canons 230; 910, § 2.

3.3.4 —1977 Pastoral Conference

The 1977 pastoral conference deliberated for five days on the theme: Christian living in basic Christian communities as expressed through prayer. This was a follow-up of the 1973 pastoral conference which dealt with the role and responsibility of the local community in the mission of the Church.

The theme was chosen after a study by the clergy and their communities in parishes and after the bishop's pastoral visit to the parishes in the diocese. Since the 1970 pastoral conference, the diocese had been encouraging the development of Christian communities leading them eventually to Eucharistic centres. It was found out, however, that over the past six years this aim had been impeded in many places by other material aims.⁹⁶

The diocese had aimed at making the Eucharistic centres attain maturity and this entailed self-reliance in all spheres, both spiritual and material. Unfortunately development was one-sided by leaning on the material side. The stress was on having sufficient money and a beautiful church building at the expense of making each Christian conscious of their charitable obligations towards their neighbour, thus fostering a real spirit of community and service to each member of the community (Acts 4:32-35).⁹⁷ There was a need to stress community Christian life in all centres, and prayer was seen as the foremost tool in this endeavour. "Prayer must be the basis of our families, our communities, and indeed of all our life,"⁹⁸ the bishop emphasized.

During the five day conference, four areas of prayer were studied:

- 1 —how to use the bible for personal and communal prayer;
- 2 —how to have and maintain real family prayer, and the fruits of family prayer;
- 3 —how to make communities at the grassroots real worshipping communities; and
- 4 —how to participate in the sacramental life of the Church, especially the integration of prayer life in the Eucharist (Acts 2:42-47).⁹⁹

⁹⁶ See J.B. KAKUBL, "Opening Talk," in *Mbarara Diocese Pastoral Conference, 1977*, p. 4, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

⁹⁷ See *ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹⁹ See *ibid.*

The conference did not solely consist of talks and discussions but had also a practical orientation. The participants prayed together as a community and thus put in practice what they were learning and what they would later on go to propagate in their communities.

The participation of the lay faithful was not only by attendance but also by their positive contribution in discussion groups. Some were group leaders and secretaries and so they helped to coordinate and put together the ideas from group members. Even at one of the conference general assemblies a lay person gave a talk on prayer in the family. So what resulted from the conference was not a product of the efforts of the Church's hierarchy alone but of all the members of Christ's faithful who attended it. Furthermore, the presence of the laity was of great significance for apart from being the majority of the attendants, they were the ones who would reach much more easily the different corners of the Christian communities in the diocese where the priests and religious would not be able to reach. Moreover, when one talks of Christian communities one in most cases is referring to lay communities and so the success of the project of the 1977 pastoral conference and, in fact, most of the other conferences before and after that, depended mostly on the cooperation of the lay faithful. They play a double role in this area; the role of effecting the resolutions of the conferences as leaders of Christian or Eucharistic communities, and the role of living/practicing the teachings of the conferences as the flock for which the diocese convened the conferences.

The conference recommended some practical ways of praying in Christian communities. Christians were called upon to gather in their small Christian communities/village communities to pray together especially in the months of the holy rosary (May and October). This practice was already being done in some parishes. The conference commended it and advised that it be started in those parishes where it was nonexistent.¹⁰⁰ Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the Way of the Cross, and Holy Hours were recommended to be held in parish churches or Eucharistic centres once every month. Ecumenical prayer gatherings were encouraged. They were to be held based on what the

¹⁰⁰ See *Pastoral Conference, 1977*, p. 25.

Christian denominations have in common, such as the Sacred Scriptures and prayers like the Our Father. But most importantly these were to build on the social/cordial relationships Christians would have built among themselves. Venues of ecumenical prayers could among others be social centres in towns, and small Christian communities in rural areas. Occasions of such prayers could be funerals and community celebrations of various kinds.¹⁰¹ Frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament in the *Eucharistic* centres were recommended. Lay apostolate movements in the *centres* concerned were required to alternate in making sure that the visitations were done. Bible services if possible on the first Thursday of the month, novenas, shared prayer, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in *Eucharistic centres* were encouraged as the spiritual exercises that could be carried out in Christian communities.

The following suggestions were made at the conference in order to regulate community prayer in parishes and Eucharistic communities:

—in order to improve liturgical celebrations in parishes and Eucharistic centres, liturgical committees were commended to be set up;

—masses could be celebrated at funerals (in families), in schools, and in other places where there is need;

—hymns sung at liturgical services should be those that have been approved by the ecclesiastical authorities;

—care should be taken that liturgical dances are in tune with the sacred nature of the celebration other than distracting the people from prayer.¹⁰²

—steps should be taken to inculturate some aspects of the liturgy (with the assistance of liturgical experts) especially the use of mass vessels.¹⁰³

All in all, these provisions were meant to help the lay Christian faithful to grow in their faith/spirituality and thus be well equipped to carry out the mission of the Church in their communities.

¹⁰¹ See *ibid.*

¹⁰² See *ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁰³ See *ibid.*, p. 36.

3.3.5 —1982 Pastoral Conference

The conference was held from 2 to 4 August 1982. The theme was: Building small Christian communities. This was not the first time that small Christian communities were discussed in Mbarara Diocese. The idea had been discussed before and implemented in some parishes. It was the first time, however, that the topic was discussed on the diocesan level.¹⁰⁴

The participants included:

- the clergy working in Mbarara diocese;
- two representatives from each religious congregation in the diocese;
- each parish pastoral council chairperson;
- one representative catechist from each parish;
- a few other invited catechists.¹⁰⁵

In all there were 102 participants comprising 47 priests, 46 laymen, 3 laywomen, 4 religious women, and 2 religious brothers.¹⁰⁶

The conference was a kind of workshop on what small Christian communities are, their importance in the mission of the Church, and how they could be established. Two priests working in the diocese were the main facilitators/speakers at the conference and the participation of the rest of the participants was exercised more in discussion groups.

On 4 October, 1982, J.B. Kakubi, the bishop of Mbarara, issued directives establishing small Christian communities, based on the proceedings of the pastoral conference.

Small Christian communities were described in the directives as:

the way in which the Universal Church is brought down from a relatively empty, abstract organization to the daily life concerns, joys and sorrows of people where they actively live, are born, fall in love, make friends, work, sleep, rejoice, lament, and die. These communities are a means by which people are enabled to recognize the mystery of Christ present among them, appearing to them in the face of a neighbour. They are the communities in which the people support one another in their common search for God, in

¹⁰⁴ See L. BUSHARIZI and P. KANYANDAGO, "Church Administration in Mbarara Diocese," Synod Position Paper, p.31, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives. Cf. L.J. GOODWIN, *Ecclesiological Dimensions of Eucharistic Centres*, pp. 76-78.

¹⁰⁵ See P.R. BETUNGA, *Pastoral Conference of Mbarara Diocese*, letter to all priests, and superiors of religious congregations in Mbarara diocese, 15 June 1982, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

¹⁰⁶ See *Mbarara Diocese Pastoral Conference*, 1982, pp. 1-2, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

their often painful efforts to follow the way of Christ, and in which forgiveness, love and trust are communicated at the very heart of daily life. They make the Church *really present* in a given place, and make people feel they belong to, and are responsible for the Church.¹⁰⁷

Because of the importance of small Christian communities, the bishop directed¹⁰⁸ that:

1—parish priests and all priests charged with the care of souls do their utmost to incorporate small Christian communities in their apostolate while not abandoning the structures then operating in the diocese. The criterion of demarcating these communities is whether the numbers in a given Christian community live and share the everyday social life together. This however, does not mean that these communities isolate Christians from the non-Christians in their villages. The small Christian communities leave Christians in their milieu but while they live with non-Christians in their midst, they are called upon to establish a closer relationship with their Christian (Catholic) brothers and sisters in those communities on the basis of their Christian fellowship.¹⁰⁹

The system of small Christian communities ideally has two advantages. First, it enables the Christian community to witness to their non-catholic village neighbours and imbue the spirit of the gospel in their day-to-day activities and dealings with them. Secondly, the Christians themselves as individuals witness to one another and are encouraged to live their Christian life and fulfil better their responsibilities in the mission of the Church.

2—the members of a small Christian community choose their leader who is to be approved by the parish priest. His/her responsibilities are to facilitate the activities of the community meetings as well as coordinate its activities and liaise the community with other small Christian communities. The bishop stressed that “each member of a small Christian

¹⁰⁷ L.J. GOODWIN, *Ecclesiological Dimensions of Eucharistic Centres*, p. 199.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. J.B. KAKUBI, “Directives Establishing Small Christian Communities in Mbarara Diocese.” in L.J. GOODWIN, *Ecclesiological Dimensions of Eucharistic Centres*, pp. 199-203.

¹⁰⁹ At the beginning of Christianity in some parts of Africa (especially Gabon, and East Africa, except Uganda), missionaries set up Christian villages to protect neophytes from a hostile environment and to train them to a more convinced Christian life. *Small Christian communities* are different from Christian villages. In small Christian communities, Christians live in a heterogeneous environment, along with their Christian and non-Christian neighbours (See J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christians in Africa*, pp. 230-232).

community is equal to the others as a Christian when they come together for religious purposes. Each (member) should be given a share of responsibilities in the community.”¹¹⁰

3 —the main activities in small Christian communities include: common prayer on any day of the week except Sunday, shared reflection on the bible, frequent reception of sacraments of reconciliation and Eucharist, and social and economic awareness based on the Christian law of love. In short, the spiritual and the temporal aspects of the community life were/are to be attended to. On the frequent reception of sacraments, the bishop advised the priests charged with the care of souls in the diocese to replace the traditional house-to-house visitations¹¹¹ with visitations to the small Christian communities so as to avail the sacraments to as many people as possible.

4 —priests train thoroughly the Christian leaders in the Christian way of life and leadership. The training is to be conducted thus: three days every month for catechists, two days every month for the members of church committees including parish pastoral councillors, and two days a month for the coordinators of the small Christian communities. The bishop stressed the importance of the ongoing training of the lay leaders “because they are the ones primarily involved in furthering the aims and objectives of small Christian communities (...) priests can only make occasional appearances in their communities.”¹¹²

5 —the small Christian communities are not small churches in or beside the bigger universal Church, but are in the same universal Church of Christ in communion with the bishop of the diocese and the supreme pontiff. The link between the small Christian communities and the other structures of the Church must be maintained, with the small Christian communities forming the nuclei of the whole ecclesial community of Mbarara Archdiocese.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ L.J. GOODWIN, *Ecclesiological Dimensions*, p. 200.

¹¹¹ These were visitations by priests to individual families so as to get to know the people more and animate their faith.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p.202.

¹¹³ See *ibid.*

3.3.5.1 —Concluding Remarks

The system of small Christian communities is a very good pastoral tool to effect the localization of the Church. These communities' importance was emphasized by the bishops of the *AMECEA* countries, to which Mbarara belongs, and what they said in relation to Eastern Africa in general can also apply specifically to Mbarara Archdiocese. The bishops said:

We are convinced that in these countries of Eastern Africa it is time for the Church to become really *local*, that is: self-ministering, self-propagating, and self-supporting. Our plan is aimed at building Church life on basic (small) Christian communities (...). Church life must be based on communities in which everyday life and work take place: those basic and manageable social groupings whose members can experience real interpersonal relationship and feel a sense of communal belonging both in living and working. We believe that Christian communities at this level will be best suited to develop really intense vitality and become effective witnesses in their natural environment.¹¹⁴

However important the small Christian communities are, they have not been successfully established in Mbarara Archdiocese. The structures are nominally there but they fulfil a purpose foreign to that for which they were started. They are used in some parishes as structures for easy collection of the church funds. In some parishes they have died completely. Reasons for the "ill health" and eventual demise of the small Christian communities vary from parish to parish, and the venture to gather them may require field and statistical research. Suffice it to mention that small Christian communities have been started in a hierarchical structure of the Church and so they have been seen as the beginning of the Church's hierarchy of command from the grassroots to the diocesan level. Their survival, therefore, is sure as long as the Church's hierarchy keeps on directly animating them. It should be noted that their future survival is not only due to the content of their teaching but also due to the methodology of their introduction and propagation. Patrick Kalilombe, who has written and lectured extensively on building Christian communities, makes a pertinent point with regard to small Christian communities. He holds the view that small Christian

¹¹⁴ AMECEA PLENARY CONFERENCE, "Planning for the Church in Eastern Africa in the 1980's"; Record of the AMECEA Study Conference Held at St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary, Nairobi, 14-21 December 1973, in *African Ecclesiastical Review* (=AFER), 16 (1974), pp. 9-10.

communities are important tools in the building of a local Church. They initiate changes that are “a result and proof of the local people’s own understanding of their real feelings, needs and desires as they see them in the actual situation.”¹¹⁵ This is the content of the small Christian communities. Methodologically, “if the changes are just imposed from above or are the wishes of a handful of specialists thinking and feeling for the majority, then these changes have very little value as signs or factors of localization.”¹¹⁶

From the study of the 1982 pastoral conference proceedings, one gets the impression that the participants were just lectured on small Christian communities, discussed the content of the lectures, and on leaving the conference not much was done as to the serious sensitization of the people in parishes. Even in the bishop’s *Directives Establishing Small Christian Communities in Mbarara*, which were a result of the conference proceedings, no mention was made of the role of those, especially the lay Christian leaders, who attended the conference. So one gets the impression that lay faithful in parishes have perceived the small Christian communities as an idea imposed from above, and the wishes of specialists, which then must be perpetually enkindled by these leaders for it to survive. This shows the importance of the lay Christian faithful in the pastoral ministry of the Church. As Kalilombe further remarks, “[...] The progress and growth of the Church will depend finally on the local people themselves. This is possible only if it is the majority of the local faithful that determines the life of the Church. And the majority in any local Church are the laity. In other words localization is measured by the extent of the laity’s active and conscious involvement in the Church.”¹¹⁷ It is not only in localization that the Church must succeed in involving the laity but also in many other areas of its mission that do not require sacred power.

¹¹⁵ P.A. KALILOMBE, “An Overall View on Building Christian Communities,” in *AFER*, 18 (1976), p. 263.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

3.3.6 —Concluding Remarks on Pastoral Conferences

Pastoral conferences are assemblies convoked by the diocesan bishop in view of determining major policies in the diocese and include a wide representation of pastoral workers at all levels of the diocese. The conferences that have been held by the diocese of Mbarara have gone a long way to bring the diocese to a remarkable maturity. The diocese has progressed from a small mission Church to a local Church. It would not be unrealistic to say that each conference brought progress that marked a transition of the diocese from one stage to another. It would be worthwhile therefore for the diocese to continue the system of pastoral conferences in order to forge ahead in its mission, in tune with the changing circumstances of place and time. The conferences prepared the faithful in the diocese so that the dawn of the synod was not unfamiliar. And may be a number of pastoral conferences could be held at specified time intervals in future before diocesan synods are celebrated

Probably another conference was due in the diocese especially before or after the special assembly for Africa of the synod of bishops. This would have been a good venue for the faithful of Mbarara Archdiocese, especially the laity, to contribute ideas to the special assembly or reflect on the Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*, and apply it to their circumstances.

3.4 —The Lay Christian Faithful and the First Diocesan Synod of Mbarara

In his concluding speech of the 1982 pastoral conference, Kakubi, the then bishop of Mbarara, expressed his intention of convoking a diocesan synod in the near future.¹¹⁸ This was followed by his letter of 1 August 1983 to all the faithful of Mbarara diocese to alert them to the “Forthcoming diocesan synod.”¹¹⁹ The synod was eventually convoked on 17 February 1986, to take place from Tuesday, 26 August to Saturday, 6 September 1986.

The bishop explained further in his letter of 1 August, that:

a diocesan synod (is one) to which some priests, religious and laity are invited is a formal meeting, or conference, presided over by a diocesan bishop,

¹¹⁸ See *Pastoral Conference, 1982, Third Day*, 4 August 1982, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

¹¹⁹ J.B. KAKUBI, *The Proposed Diocesan Synod*, p. 3.

assisted by experts in dogmatic, biblical and pastoral theology, and canon law, in order to study and plan for the deepening of Christian life in a diocese; and to formulate norms for fostering the growth of the community.¹²⁰

The lay members of Christ's faithful were involved in all the activities of the synodal process, that is, during the preparation, celebration and the implementation phases. Although the subject of the synod was not specifically on the lay faithful, their role and place in the mission of the Church in the diocese were discussed.

3.4.1 —Preparatory Phase of the Synod

A synod includes not just the actual celebration of the event but also the preparatory phase and the implementation of the resolutions after the celebration. The preparation for the synod involved all the faithful in the diocese, which was among other things, a time of prayer and renewal. In this context the bishop said:

The first and foremost stage is prayerful preparation, and change of heart, leading to genuine conversion.(...) A concerted effort should be made by all individuals and Christian communities to renew and strengthen prayer life. We must pray as the apostles did before the first inpouring of the Holy Spirit, in order for us to be ready for the same Spirit to imbue each and everyone of us, enable us (...) to hold a fruitful synod.¹²¹

A special prayer for the successful preparation and celebration of the synod was composed and was said by the faithful during the liturgical celebrations, the communal and private prayers.

The second stage of the preparatory phase was the study of various aspects of the religious life of the Christian community in Mbarara diocese. These were studied and presented by various commissions and committees coordinated by the diocesan synod organizing secretary. The commissions included priests, religious and lay people. For example, the synod working committee was chaired by a lay person and had 5 other lay people, 3 religious sisters, and 7 priests. This committee was divided into subcommittees, namely: spiritual subcommittee in charge of all the spiritual preparations, finance

¹²⁰ Ibid. P. 1.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 2. Cf. *In constitutione apostolica*, in *The Pope Speaks*, 43 (1998), pp. 7-8.

subcommittee in charge of financial arrangements, and publicity subcommittee for synod publicity. The synod working committee met 26 times for the synodal preparations during which there was the formulation of a questionnaire that helped in the composition of position papers, the formation of parish synod working committees and the formation of 9 synod commissions.¹²²

The questionnaire mentioned above was circulated to all the parishes of Mbarara to be answered by the faithful from all corners of the diocese. It was

intended to identify the areas of pastoral concern, to find out the existing needs, aspirations and expectations so that they could be studied and deliberated upon in the synod in order to find some ways of rejuvenating the faith and to put forward views and options which would encourage its growth in the diocese.¹²³

The parish synod working committees were formed to liaise synodal processes at the parish level with the ones at the diocesan level. Also formed on the diocesan level were 9 synod commissions. These were the commissions on: the teaching mission of the Church, the socio-cultural development, the economic development and Church finance, the sanctifying role of the Church, Church administration, ecumenism, the religious vocations, the lay apostolate, and the catechists.¹²⁴ These did research and interviews relevant to their topics out of which they compiled position papers which were sent to parishes for amendments after which they were presented at the synod general assemblies during the celebration phase.

So far one can see that the laity performed an indispensable role all through the preparation of the synod. Everybody in the diocese was involved either materially by the financial, time, and personnel contributions, or spiritually by praying for the successful progress of this important event in the life and mission of the Church in Mbarara.

¹²² See P.R. BETUNGA, *Synod Organizing Secretary's Opening Speech at the First Diocesan Synod*, August 26, 1986, p. 2, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 3.

3.4.2 —Celebration Phase of the Synod

The content of celebration of the synod will be discussed in chapter four. But we should indicate in this section the magnitude of the presence and participation of the lay members of Christ's faithful at the synod. The synod was attended by 150 participants excluding the observers. These were categorized as follows: priests 34, religious women 11, one religious brother, catechists 25, "laity"¹²⁵ 72, seminarians 2, and youth 5. These members consisted of 104 lay people, 12 religious and 33 priests. So the synod was ostensibly a lay people's synod from the point of view of attendance.

As for participation, certainly a large number of the laity's attendance must have had a remarkable contribution to the synod deliberations and recommendations. Perusing the list of the lay synod participants, one sees people with a wealth of experience and expertise to contribute to the synod. So the problem of clericalism that was mentioned in chapter two was certainly at its minimum at the synod. Among the lay participants were school teachers and administrators, health workers, social workers, businessmen, agricultural and veterinary workers, Church musicians, lawyers, politicians, students, and of course catechists. There was, therefore, a good mix of people representing the secular and spiritual spheres of society in Mbarara Archdiocese. This fact was recognized by the bishop in his opening speech at the synod. He said:

A diocesan synod is an important event in every diocese, it brings Christians from all parts of the diocese and is the main source matter for legislation. This matter that has been prepared is known to many of you, who have been involved at parish level and/or at commission level. It is contained in various position papers (...). Guided by this preparatory work, this synod is going to examine our communal obligations in view of updating our strategy and methods of apostolate.¹²⁶

This shows that although the bishop is the sole legislator in his diocese (canon 466), the lay people and indeed all the members of Christ's faithful assembled at the synod, by their

¹²⁵ "Laity" here refers to those who were no longer the youth and did not hold any official ministry in the Church.

¹²⁶ J.B. KAKUBL, *Opening Speech at the First Diocesan Synod*, p. 2.

contributions and participation, help greatly the diocesan bishop in his legislative power of governance.

Furthermore, of the four general assemblies voting on recommendations, two were moderated by lay people. A good number of position papers were also presented to the synod general assembly by lay people.

3.4.3 —Implementation Phase of the Synod

After the celebration of the synod, the bishop appointed a post-synodal committee and gave it the responsibility of editing, codifying and publishing the synodal acts. The synodal acts comprised decrees, exhortations, five-year plan, and 15 position papers. The position papers were presented to the synod general assembly. From them recommendations were given by the synod participants which the bishop studied and consequently promulgated as decrees and issued exhortations and a five-year plan for the diocese based on them. The select members of the post-synodal committee which included the laity edited the position papers and made them ready for publishing along with all the synodal acts. To date, only decrees, exhortations, and the five-year plan are published, and thanks to the post-synodal committee, a translation of the same in the local language, *Rumyantore*, has been published so that they may be accessible to as many people in the diocese as possible.

3.5 —Summary

A diocese is defined in canon law as “a portion of the people of God” (canon 369). This definition puts “flesh and blood” to the juridic structure, the diocese, which would otherwise be an abstract reality. So the diocese is “a community of the baptized confessing the Catholic faith, sharing in the sacramental life, and entrusted to the ministry of the bishop.”¹²⁷ As a community of people it grows and undergoes experiences that mark it with characteristics which may distinguish it as a local Church from other local Churches. The lay Christian faithful are among those agents in the diocese that enhance its growth and

¹²⁷ T.J. GREEN, “Particular Churches and their Groupings,” in J.A. CORIDEN, T.J. GREEN, D.E. HEINTSCHEL, eds., *The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, p. 316.

development. By the means of pastoral conferences and the synod, the diocese of Mbarara has been enabled to move from one step to another in its mission. By the same means the people of God in Mbarara Archdiocese have expressed unity among themselves and with their bishop as participants in the pastoral and administrative aspects of the diocese.

We have so far discussed mainly the role played by the lay faithful at the diocesan pastoral assemblies—the pastoral conferences and the synod. We focus in the next chapter on how the synod in its teaching saw the role of the lay faithful in the mission of the Church in Mbarara Archdiocese.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LAY CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL AND THE SYNOD: DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS OF THE SYNODAL ACTS, AND EVALUATION

The first synod of Mbarara Archdiocese took place at Kitabi, the diocesan minor seminary, from 26 August to 6 September 1986. The guiding theme of the synod was: United in Christ our Redeemer, which is at the same time the motto of the diocese. The participants in the synod submitted 265 recommendations to the bishop for consideration, which he studied and consequently published in the form of decrees, exhortations, and a five-year plan. These were published on 2 March 1987.

The published acts, therefore, are in a tripartite structure, namely decrees, exhortations and five year plan. The decrees have the force of (particular) law and they bind either all Catholics or particular groups of Catholics in Mbarara Archdiocese, as their nature and content specify.¹ They assumed the force of law on 1 May 1987, having been promulgated on 2 March 1987. The exhortations concern issues that the bishop recommended to the Catholics in Mbarara Archdiocese for observation. They are not laws but points and reminders which could help the faithful of Mbarara in their respective duties.² The five year plan contains those ideas that needed a longer period of time to be realized.³ Their realization would greatly depend on the particular participation of each of the faithful in the mission of the Church in the archdiocese.

The objective of this chapter is to study the role of the lay Christian faithful in Mbarara Archdiocese in light of this synod. Synodal documents will be analyzed following the format of the published acts, highlighting especially the role of the lay Christian faithful in the

¹ See J.BKAKUBI, "Act of Promulgation," in *Mbarara Diocese Synodal Acts (Decrees, Exhortations, Five Year Plan)*, Mbarara Diocese Synod I, 26 August-6 September, 1986 (= *Synodal Acts*), p. 2. Cf. canon 29. It is important to note, however, that not all the decrees in the synodal acts have the force of law. Some, although not specifically indicated in the acts, are in the category of general executory decrees because they do not institute new laws but define more precisely the manner of applying laws or urge the observance of laws already instituted in the Code of Canon Law (canon 31, § 1). The fact that they were issued by the bishop, although he is the sole legislator in the diocese, does not in itself make them laws unless they are instituting new laws. Although the general executory decrees are not laws, they are binding. They must be observed by the faithful in the archdiocese for whom they are issued.

² See *Synodal Acts*, p. 2.

³ See *ibid.*

threefold mission of the Church, namely, the teaching, sanctifying, and governing. There will also be an evaluation of the synod and practical suggestions towards a more effective involvement of the laity in the mission of the Church in Mbarara.

4.1 —The Lay Faithful and the Teaching Mission of the Church

Every member of Christ's faithful shares in the responsibility of building up the Body of Christ.⁴ So it is proper that the diocesan bishop consult with diverse people in the diocese so as to enhance the Christian service rendered to the Church in the name of Christ.

A diocesan bishop deals with many matters which affect the lives of that portion of the People of God entrusted to him (canon 381). Hence he needs to consult others before he reaches decisions on very important issues and decisions in the diocese. The diocesan synod is one means of doing such a consultation.

Although the diocesan bishop carries the responsibility of publishing the synodal acts as his own, the major input in terms of the content is largely the efforts of the synod participants. Moreover, the mission and right of the Church to preach the gospel to all people devolves upon all the members of the Church, the clergy, religious, and laity, but in varying degrees.⁵ Canon 747, § 1 states:

It is the obligation and inherent right of the Church, independent of any authority, to preach the gospel to all peoples, using for this purpose even its own means of social communication; for it is to the Church that Christ the Lord entrusted the deposit of faith, so that by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, it might conscientiously guard revealed truth, more intimately penetrate it and faithfully proclaim and expand it.⁶

This canon was for the synod of Mbarara a guiding principle in the formation of the decrees on the teaching mission of the Church. Thus the decrees are structurally arranged in two parts, namely the agents of the teaching mission, and the means of carrying out the mission.

⁴ Cf. *Apostolicam actuositatem*, nos. 2, 7, in FLANNERY I, pp. 768, 774. Cf. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 777, 790-791.

⁵ See *Synodal acts*, p. 3.

⁶ Cf. J.I. ARRIETA, "The Active Subjects of the Church's Teaching Office (Canons 747-748)," in *Studia canonica*, 23 (1989), pp. 247-256.

The agents include the bishop, priests, religious, catechists, parents, baptismal sponsors, school teachers. The synod singled out the means of exercising the teaching mission as, catechumenate, religious education in schools, bible reading and meditation, liturgical celebration, lay apostolate activities, small Christian communities, and mass media.

The synod position paper on the teaching mission of the Church emphasizes that “the laity are full members of the Church and so together with the clergy they are responsible for the whole Church. They should therefore be active in looking after it (the Body of Christ), feeding it in the world.”⁷ By doing this, the laity are fulfilling a mission that springs from their baptismal calling. Thus the Code of Canon Law states:

The lay members of Christ’s faithful, by reason of their baptism and confirmation, are witnesses to the good news of the gospel by their words and by the example of their Christian life. They can also be called upon to cooperate with bishops and priests in the exercise of the ministry of the word.⁸

The synod is not just a bishop’s event but one that concerns all members of Christ’s faithful in the diocese as agents of the Church’s mission as well as the means of this mission’s realization.

4.1.1 —Catechumenate

For the Church to grow she has to make disciples. One of the ways of making disciples is through catechesis which is a totality of the Church’s efforts to make disciples; to bring people to believe in Jesus so that they may have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the body of Christ.⁹ The catechumenate is an organized programme in the Archdiocese of Mbarara by which catechesis is given. It is the equivalent of RCIA. By it the candidates are “gradually brought both liturgically and

⁷ E. NKAJIANABWO, “The Teaching Mission of the Church,” Synod Position Paper, no. 1, 1986, p. 5, no. 11, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

⁸ Canon 759.

⁹ See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 4. Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechism in Our Time, Catechesi tradendae*, 16 October 1979, nos. 1, 2, in A. FLANNERY, gen. ed., *Vatican Council II: More Post Conciliar Documents* (= FLANNERY II), vol. 2, Northport, New York, Costello Publishing Company, 1982, pp. 762-763.

catechetically into Church membership.”¹⁰ There are three categories of catechumenates in Mbarara. There is the school catechumenate that comprises unbaptized and the unconfirmed primary school pupils. This takes three years. There is the parish catechumenate which comprises the unbaptized and baptized but not confirmed youth who are not in school. These reside at the parish for a full year of Christian instruction. Then there is the village catechumenate that comprises adult catechumens who have not been baptized or baptized but not confirmed, living in villages. These follow their Christian instruction at their village churches. Their courses are conducted by catechists.

Prior to the synod, there had not been in the diocese any consistent catechumenate programme. Each parish organized its own. The synod found out that Christian instruction in some parishes was not adequate. Consequently, the bishop, basing on the propositions of the synod participants, issued five decrees concerning the catechumenate. Four of these decrees somehow touch on the role that the lay faithful need to play in this important mission of the Church. Moreover, it is the lay faithful, especially the catechists, who carry out the instruction in the catechumenate programme at all levels including even the parish. Synodal decree 4 on the catechumenate states: “Priests in parishes shall personally give instruction to catechumens frequently, and they shall occasionally supervise the preparation and or teaching done by catechists.”¹¹ This points to the fact that the role of Christian instruction in catechumenate programmes by lay faithful belongs to them as their rightful responsibility in the teaching mission of the Church. This is in accordance with canons 229, 774, § 1, and 781 which state that lay people have the right and duty to collaborate in catechetical formation, and the teaching of the sacred sciences.¹²

Furthermore, the synodal decrees conferred on the diocesan pastoral commission the responsibility of designing a uniform syllabus and catechumenate programme for the whole diocese. This duty, too, involves the lay Christian faithful in the teaching mission of the Church, since they form part of the commission.

¹⁰ P.M.J. STRAVINSKAS, ed., *Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Dictionary*, Huntington, Indiana, Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1993, p. 119.

¹¹ *Synodal Acts*, p. 3.

¹² Cf. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 906.

The synod also saw the role of baptismal sponsors as an important aspect in the Christian formation of the catechumenate candidates. The bishop decreed that these “be chosen early during the catechumenate and (...) be present at all the ceremonies whenever possible.”¹³ Their responsibility, therefore, does not just begin at the baptism of their sponsored candidates, but from the beginning of the Christian instruction so as to accompany them through the Christian initiation process. The role of sponsors is vital in the formation of the young Christians, especially if the aim of the catechumenate as was emphasized at the synod is to be realized. The synod members emphasized that the catechumenate must be a real training period in Christian life. It was not seen to be sufficient just to impart doctrine and Church precepts for knowledge’s sake. The catechumenate must be an initiation into Christian living, both liturgical and apostolic.¹⁴ The sponsors, therefore, must give good example to their sponsored neophytes on how to lead a Christian life inspired by the teaching of Christ and the Church. This resonates with what the *1997 General Directory for Catechesis* emphasizes about the role of catechesis. Catechesis gives rise to a type of Christian who is conscious of his faith and who acts consistently with it in his or her life so that there is no dichotomy between life and faith. Catechesis encourages:

- a new and vital experience of God as merciful Father;
- a more profound rediscovery of Jesus Christ, both in his divinity and his humanity;
- a sense of coresponsibility for the mission of the Church in the world; and
- a raising of consciousness with regard to the social obligations of faith.¹⁵

The sponsors are almost exclusively lay members of Christ’s faithful. Their role as has been shown above is a great contribution to the mission of the Church.

4.1.2 —The Role of Teachers and Parents

The role of teachers and parents in the teaching mission of the Church is essentially that of education of children. The education that the Church promotes is one that “must pay

¹³ *Synodal Acts*, p. 3. Cf. E. NKALIANABWO, “The Teaching Mission of the Church,” p. 10, no. 17.

¹⁴ See E. NKALIANABWO, “The Teaching Mission of the Church,” p. 9, no. 17. Cf. A. HASTINGS, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. I, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1968, p. 238.

¹⁵ See *General Directory for Catechesis*, 1997, no. 24, pp. 26-27.

regard to the formation of the whole person, so that all may attain their eternal destiny and at the same time promote the common good of society.”¹⁶ This is the education that aims at forming children as good Christians and good citizens. J. Coriden describes this type of education as holistic, developmental, social, and personal. It is holistic because it “seeks the integral formation of the whole person and concerns itself with the development of physical, moral, and intellectual endowments.”¹⁷ It is developmental because it fosters a sense of gradual formation, an evolution of talents, and a sense of responsibility and use of freedom, while conscious of the changes and growth that children and young people experience.¹⁸ It is social because it aims at society’s common good and it insists on a refined sense of responsibility and the right use of freedom for active participation in the life of the human community.¹⁹ It is personal because “it strives for the formation of the human person, fully endowed with responsibility and freedom, and directed towards that person’s final destiny—life with God.”²⁰

The responsibility of the education of children first and foremost lies with their parents. As the educator is someone who “begets” in the spiritual sense,²¹ so parents, since they have given life to the children (canon 226, § 2) have the obligation to educate them, thus begetting their children both in the physical and the spiritual sense. John Paul II in his letter to families stresses: “By giving life parents share in God’s creative work, it is also true that by raising their children they become sharers in his paternal and at the same time maternal way of teaching.”²² Parents possess a fundamental competence as educators of their children because of their role as parents.²³ They are the first teachers of their children and their families are the first “schools,” the basic church where the children come to learn first about God. Y.

¹⁶ Canon 795.

¹⁷ J.A. CORIDEN, “The Teaching Office of the Church,” p. 565.

¹⁸ See *ibid.*

¹⁹ See *ibid.*, pp. 565-566.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 566. Cf. E. NKALIANABWO, “The Teaching Mission of the Church,” p. 7, no. 14.

²¹ See John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, 2 February 1994, no. 16, English translation, Sherbrooke, Éditions Paulines, 1994, p. 57. Cf. R. SHAW, *Understanding Your Rights: Your Rights and Responsibilities in the Catholic Church*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Servant Publications, 1994, pp. 184-188.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ See *ibid.*

Congar enunciates well the role of parents. He says:

As regards the participation of lay people (in the Church's mission of making disciples of all nations and baptizing them (Mt 28:19)), parents are in an exceptional position, in that their natural authority and their apostolic responsibility coincide, their natural office and their Christian office merge into one. Their responsibility as Christians occurs at the very root of the life and growth of mankind. When they bring a child to birth, they can bring a disciple to birth too. It is through Christian parents that the substance of the human world, in the very act of its increase, turns into the Body of Christ and into the Church. Families are actually and literally cells of the Church.²⁴

Parents, however, are the first but not the only teachers of their children. They share this responsibility with others such as school teachers, catechists, pastors, and the Christian community. As John Paul II says:

(...) The mission of education must always be carried in accordance with a proper application of the *principle of subsidiarity*. This implies the legitimacy and indeed the need of giving assistance to the parents, but finds its intrinsic and absolute limit in their actual capabilities. The principle of subsidiarity is thus at the service of parental love, meeting the good of the family unit. For parents by themselves are not capable of satisfying every requirement of the whole process of raising children, especially in matters concerning their schooling and the entire gamut of socialization.²⁵

The synod of Mbarara promoted the same line of education. This can be seen in the synod's reiteration of canon 774 that parents are bound to form their children by word and example in the faith and Christian living. The synod stated that this obligation belongs also to godparents, directors of boarding schools and all those entrusted with the care of children. They have the duty to prepare the children for the reception of sacraments, especially the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist, and to live exemplary Christian lives.²⁶

On teachers, canons 796 and 804 were reiterated. Keeping in mind the *principle of subsidiarity*, the teachers are to collaborate closely with parents in the education of children.

²⁴ Y.M.J. CONGAR, *Lay People in the Church: A Study For A Theology of Laity*, translated by D. ATTWATER, rev. ed. with additions by the author, Westminster, Maryland, The Newman Press, 1967, p. 202.

²⁵ JOHN PAUL II, *Letter to the Families*, no. 16, p. 60.

²⁶ See E. NKAJIANABWO, "The Teaching Mission of the Church," p. 8, no. 15.

The principle of subsidiarity notwithstanding, however, the teachers in their own right have an important role to play in the education of children. It takes more than a parent to raise a child into a committed Christian and a good citizen. However, concerning canon 804, § 2, the local ordinary in the Archdiocese of Mbarara is handicapped in implementing it. The canon states: "The local ordinary is to be careful that those who are appointed as teachers of religion in schools, even non-Catholic ones, are outstanding in true doctrine, in the witness of their Christian life, and in their teaching ability." There is not much the local ordinary can do to implement this canon given the fact that all the schools in the Archdiocese except the two seminaries, two senior secondary schools, one secretarial college, and one farm school are government controlled. The local ordinary has practically no influence on either the appointment of teachers of religion or the religious education syllabus in government schools. The little influence the ordinary may have is in the appointment of the head teachers and principals in the government schools whose founding body is Catholic. The bishop however, appoints the Catholic chaplains in the schools but their role is more pastoral-spiritual than educational. Perhaps the role of school chaplains could be extended to teaching religion in schools. Also some Catholic teachers could be trained as catechists so that some arrangements could be made with administrators of schools for these teachers to teach religious education along with their other subjects. That way, the local ordinary may be able to follow the teachers of religion whom he has jurisdiction over as catechists. Be that as it may, Catholic teachers, even if they are teaching in non-Catholic schools, motivated by their faith, can educate the children to be committed believers, good and responsible people; those teachers that happen to be teaching religion can do so with commitment. In line with this the Catholic bishops of Uganda said: "Catholic teachers have great responsibility in giving good example as regards Christian life and professional competence, in their sense of duty and their dedication in leading young people to full human and Christian maturity through an integral education."²⁷

In view of the importance of teachers and parents in the education of children, the

²⁷ CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF UGANDA, *Pastoral Letter, With a New Heart and a New Spirit*, Kampala, St. Paul Publications - Africa, 1986, no. 121, pp. 61-62.

synod thought it important to educate them about their respective roles. It was thus decreed that:

—courses be given from the *hiika* to the diocesan levels to train parents in the important role of educating their children in the faith;

—teachers of religious education receive refresher courses on Christian formation and instruction.²⁸

The method of preparing parents and teachers to educate the children has far-reaching results. First, the courses do not have to be repeated frequently. Once the parents and teachers have been educated, the same ones will keep educating the children as new ones are born or enrolled in schools. Secondly, this kind of Christian education is integral. It becomes part and parcel of raising up children in families and schools. It ceases to be just imparting of religious knowledge, it becomes part of the life of children as they grow. Thirdly, it is another way of equipping the parents and teachers as agents of evangelization and partakers in the teaching mission of the Church.

4.1.3 —Role of Religious Leaders

Synodal decree 9 about the teaching mission of the Church, states:

Lack of enlightened faith on the part of the faithful who engage in syncretistic practices, along with lack of appropriate pastoral care by pastors, is one of the causes of such practices. For that reason, pastors shall endeavour to instruct those concerned with suitable pastoral care.²⁹

This decree was born out of the suggestions and recommendations by the members at the synodal assembly. It was observed that there was a prevalence of syncretistic practices in the diocese. Syncretistic practices were defined at the synod as a “concubinage of [African] traditional religious elements and the Christian elements.”³⁰ These were seen to be stemming

²⁸ See *Synodal Acts*, p. 3.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁰ E. BAINGANAMUNTU, O. NDYABAHIKA, and V. TINKUMANYA, “Syncretistic Practices in Mbarara Diocese,” Synod Position Paper no. 10, 1986, p. 1, no. 1, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives. Cf. B. TURYOMUMAZIMA, “The Traditional Healer Among the Bacwezi-Bashomi of Ankore Uganda: Lessons for the Healing Ministry in the Church,” in *Grace and Truth*, 16 (1999), p. 19.

from:

- lack of knowledge of the nature and treatment of psychological and mental ailments;
- lack of modern medical facilities;
- insufficient provision for emotional expression in liturgy;
- lack of faith by the faithful who practice syncretism, as well as the general decline of the priests in the pastoral care.³¹ The decree, therefore, serves as a pointer to one of the solutions towards this complex pastoral challenge. It is a foundational decree on which the rest of the decrees in the section on the role of religious leaders hinge. Hence decrees 8 and 10 of the same section emphasize the point that religious leaders have solicitude for their role as teachers of the word of God in schools. For, in schools, future leaders of the Church and society are formed.

The use of the term *religious leaders*, however, in the decree is ambiguous. Decree number 8, for instance, states: “religious leaders shall show more interest in schools by visiting them, initiating or animating religious movements in them, and celebrating the liturgy for them as much as possible.”³² Although *religious leaders* may even include leaders of other non-Catholic religious denominations over which the Catholic bishop has no jurisdiction, we can only infer that *religious leaders* used in the decrees of this section refers to priests. For example, the decrees of this section give responsibilities to:

- priests in parishes to be in charge of schools (decree 8);
- pastors (priests) to provide suitable pastoral care to those engaged in syncretistic practices (decree 9); and
- priests in-charge of schools to make sure that all schools in their respective parishes receive the benefits of Christian formation (decree 10).³³

Given the complexity of the syncretistic practices among the faithful, the solution to this pastoral challenge should not be in the hands of priests alone but in the hands of all the

³¹ See Recommendations by the synod on Position Paper no. 10, “Syncretistic Practices”, p. 1, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

³² *Synodal Acts*, p. 3.

³³ See *ibid.*

pastoral workers in the diocese right from the grassroots. These pastoral workers include priests and lay Christian faithful. Moreover, the priests are not always with the people in their outstations. Most of the day-to-day pastoral responsibilities that keep the Christian communities alive are handled by lay Christian faithful, both catechists and other lay leaders of Christian communities. The catechists and leaders of Christian communities are *de facto* religious leaders and should be considered as such by the diocesan authorities.

4.1.4 — Homilies

The synodal decree 11, on homilies reads:

“Priests and catechists shall prepare their homilies very diligently and deliver them clearly, normally within fifteen minutes. Priests and catechists shall prepare and give their homilies according to the needs, the lives and actual circumstances of the faithful to whom they are ministering.”³⁴

Immediately the question arises “can lay catechists give homilies?” Canon 767, § 1 defines a homily as the most important form of preaching that is part of the liturgy itself and is reserved to a priest (*sacerdos*) or deacon. In the homily, the mysteries of faith and the rules of Christian living are to be expounded from the sacred text in the course of the liturgical year.³⁵ This definition presupposes that there are other forms of preaching and the homily is one of them. D. O’Donnell gives four basic types of preaching, namely: evangelical preaching, catechetical preaching, preaching in a church, and preaching a homily.³⁶ Whereas the members of Christ’s faithful “may be allowed “ to preach in a church or oratory if in certain circumstances it is necessary, or in particular cases it would be advantageous (canon 766), they are not to preach a homily.

In 1987 the Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code of Canon Law gave a negative response to the dubium “whether the diocesan bishop can dispense from the norm of canon 767, § 1, which reserved the homily to a priest or deacon.”³⁷

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁵ Cf. *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 52, in FLANNERY I, pp. 17-18.

³⁶ See D.M. O’DONNELL, “Liturgical Preaching in the 1983 Code,” in *The Priest*, 44 (1988), p. 39.

³⁷ *AAS*, 79 (1987), p. 1249, English translation in L.G. WRENN, *Authentic Interpretations on the*

Some canonists hold that the laity cannot preach a homily because, by definition, “by constitutive law the homily is a form of preaching that can only be done by a priest or deacon at the liturgy.”³⁸ And that is why even the bishop cannot dispense from this norm.³⁹ Huels holds that “if a priest or deacon preaches outside the liturgy, he cannot give a homily because a homily by definition is liturgical preaching. Similarly, a lay person can never give a homily because by definition, a homily is form of preaching which can only be done by a priest or deacon.”⁴⁰ The Holy See on the other hand has attached the homily to the clerics’ functions of teaching and sanctifying. The Holy See maintains:

The homily (...), during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, must be reserved to the sacred minister, either presbyter or deacon to the exclusion of non-ordained faithful, even if these should have responsibilities as “pastoral assistants” or catechists in whatever type of community or association. This exclusion is not based on the preaching ability of sacred ministers nor their theological preparation, but on that function which is reserved to them in virtue of having received the sacrament of orders. For this reason the diocesan bishop cannot dispense from the canonical norm since this is not merely a disciplinary law but one which touches upon the closely connected functions of teaching and sanctifying.⁴¹

Fox remarks that “while all preaching is an exercise of the prophetic function of Christ, liturgical preaching or the homily is an act of Christ the priest.”⁴² He further says:

In liturgical worship, Jesus acts as priest, victim and also as king, as head of his mystical body. In relation to the assembly he is the leader and presider, in relation to the Father, he gathers the prayers and homage of all into a singular act of worship. (...) The primary function proper to the ordained minister is the sacramental representation of Christ the head.⁴³

1983 Code, pp. 41-43.

³⁸ J.M. HUELS, *More Disputed Questions in the Liturgy*, Chicago, IL, Liturgy Training Publications, 1996, p. 180.

³⁹ See J. FOX, “The Homily and the Authentic Interpretation of Canon 767, § 1,” in *Apollinaris*, 62 (1989), p. 87.

⁴⁰ J.M. HUELS, *More Disputed Questions*, pp. 180-181.

⁴¹ CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY et al., Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests, *Ecclesiae de mysterio* (= *Ecclesiae de mysterio*), 15 August 1997, art. 3, § 1, in *AAS*, 89 (1997), pp. 852-877, English translation in W.H. WOESTMAN, *The Sacrament of Orders and the Clerical State: A Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1999, p. 293.

⁴² J. FOX, “The Homily and the Authentic Interpretation,” p. 137.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

Given the current law on lay preachers, did the bishop's synodal decree on catechists preaching homilies contravene the norm of canon 767, § 1? According to canon 135, § 2 a lower legislator cannot validly make a law which is contrary to that of a higher legislator. The diocesan bishop for instance cannot by decree or otherwise make a law that is contrary to the law of an ecumenical council or the supreme pontiff. In the case of the synodal decree on homilies by the bishop of Mbarara the following observations can be made:

1 —the said decree is law as such, but a general executory decree that defines precisely the manner of applying the law on preaching in Mbarara Archdiocese;

2 —the decree, since it is not law, does not contravene canon 135, § 2 nor is it a dispensation by the bishop to lay people to preach homilies;

3 —the decree does not derogate from nor is it contrary to the law on preaching homilies. It si be interpreted within the context of time and place in which it was issued. As has been indicated in the previous chapters, the Archdiocese of Mbarara relies heavily on the lay catechists as full-time pastoral workers and leaders of Christian communities in parishes. In Mbarara one does not talk of priestless parishes⁴⁴ but of Christian communities without priests. In such communities Sunday and feast days celebrations are conducted by lay catechists. In those circumstances in which only catechists are available to lead Christian communities, preaching by them during liturgical celebrations takes place. It is within this situation that the bishop issued the said decree on homilies. This is the catechists' way of playing an "indispensable role in the work of evangelization, by helping to establish and nourish the Christian community" as is stipulated by the catechists conditions of service of Mbarara Archdiocese.⁴⁵ In view of their ministry of preaching, a course in homiletics is offered to the catechists at the interdiocesan catechists training centre situated in the Archdiocese of Mbarara. The decree in no way promotes the preaching of homilies by lay catechists at liturgical celebrations presided by priests; and so it is not a law that is contrary to the law of the higher legislator as stipulated in the code of canon law.

⁴⁴ Parishes have priests but these cannot possibly reach all the outstation communities every Sunday.

⁴⁵ J.B. KAKUBI, *Mbarara Diocese Catechists Conditions of Service*, n.d., p. 2, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

What the decree promotes is the purpose for which liturgical preaching is done—that the word of God proclaimed to the faithful be explained and accommodated to the mentality of the time.⁴⁶ Moreover, “a homily is understood as an explanation from the sacred text or some aspect of the readings of sacred scripture or another text from the Ordinary or Proper of the Mass of the day with regard to the mystery which is celebrated or the particular needs of the listeners.”⁴⁷ The lay catechists, who are familiar with conditions and circumstances of their people, fulfill these roles in their worship services as much as priests do in the celebration of the Eucharist and other liturgical celebrations. Fox argues that this view relegates a homily to the level of simply a catechetical exercise, simply an exercise of the prophetic mission of the Church other than worship.⁴⁸ The purpose of the homily, he says, is to draw attention to the difference between head and members, between pastor and flock, between the bridegroom and the bride, in the liturgy of the word we are met with a difference of the one who acts in the name of Christ. This view would apply in those instances where the laity would preach in liturgical celebrations in the presence of priests. But in Mbarara, where lay catechists preside at liturgical services without priests, they play the role of the aforementioned head or pastor. Their preaching, more than a catechetical exercise, acquires a liturgical aspect. Although the catechists’ preaching may not be referred to as a homily since by definition a homily is that preached by priests or deacons, the terminology used in decree 11 of the synod should not be considered as rendering the decree invalid because the context and the spirit behind it are in accord with the law of the Church. It can be said that the word ‘homily’ referring to catechists is used analogously.

4.2 —The Lay Faithful and the Sanctifying Mission of the Church

The synod preparatory commission on the sanctifying mission of the Church observed that members of the Church are not only to be instructed in the teaching of Christ (the

⁴⁶ See S. CONGREGATIO CULTO DIVINO, *Directorium de Missis cum pueris*, 1 Nov. 1973, in *AAS*, 66 (1974), pp. 30–46, no. 48.

⁴⁷ S. CONGREGATIO RITUUM, *Instructio inter oecumenici*, 26 September 1964, in *AAS*, 56 (1964), pp. 877–900, p. 890, no. 54.

⁴⁸ See J. FOX, “The Homily and the Authentic Interpretation,” p. 163.

teaching mission), but they have also to become like Christ, the holy one.⁴⁹ The sanctifying mission of the Church entails the role of the Church in making her people holy.⁵⁰

In her sanctifying mission, the Church offers worship to God. This worship is offered in a special way through liturgy which is the exercise of the priestly office of Christ.⁵¹ Canon 834, § 1 states that in the liturgy the mystical body of Christ, the head and members offer a complete public worship to God. So the liturgy is not a domain of any one particular group of Christ's faithful but of all the members. "All the faithful, each according to his or her vocation, participates in this sanctifying office of Christ who calls us to the holiness of his Father and to the perfection of charity,"⁵² the synodal acts reiterated. The worship, however, is conducted in the name of the Church by persons lawfully deputed and through actions approved by Church authority (cf. canon 835, § 2). The Code of Canon Law gives four categories of people involved in the liturgical offices and ministries. These are: the diocesan bishop (canon 835, § 1), the priests (canon 835, § 2), the deacons (canon 835 § 3), and the other (lay) members of Christ's faithful. The first three categories (the ordained ministers) play a more leading role as the deputed ministers of the sanctifying mission of the Church (according to their order). The latter category's role (the lay faithful) is seen by the Code as that of "active participation in celebration of liturgy especially in the Eucharist in their own way," (canon 835, § 4) in the office of sanctification. For instance, the parents share in the office of sanctification in a particular way by leading a conjugal life in the Christian spirit and by seeing to the Christian education of their children (canon 835, § 4). This teaching fits the ordinary structure of the Church with bishops, priests, deacons, and laity, each at their role as prescribed in the code of canon law. There are, however, instances whereby the laity are directly involved as leaders in the Church's sanctifying mission especially at liturgical celebrations, preparation and or celebration of some sacraments. This is the case in the Archdiocese of Mbarara and it is the focus of our study in this section, following the synodal

⁴⁹ See J. BARUGAHARE et al., "The Sanctifying Role of the Church," Synod Position Paper no. 7, 1986, p. 1, no. 2, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

⁵⁰ See *ibid.*

⁵¹ See J.A. CORIDEN, *An Introduction to Canon Law*, p. 115.

⁵² *Synodal Acts*, p. 4.

acts. The Church also carries out its role of sanctifying her members by other means, such as prayers, sacred hymns, devotions, and works of penance and charity.⁵³

4.2.1 —The Lay Faithful and the Liturgy

Canon 834 states: "In the liturgy, by use of signs perceptible to the senses our sanctification is symbolized and, in a manner appropriate to each sign, is brought about."

Already talking about signs perceptible to senses places us in a cultural milieu. Whereas there are some signs that are universally understood either naturally or by convention, there are many other signs that can only be deciphered and understood in a cultural or social context. In line with this, synod decree 13 stipulated that there be a study of inculturation of the liturgy in view of making necessary adaptations in the rituals. It was further decreed that the diocesan pastoral commission "set up a liturgical committee with branches in parishes."⁵⁴ The committee's role was to "advise on appropriate symbolic postures and gestures for liturgical celebration, or suitable music and art, keeping in mind our cultural heritage as well as the dignity of formal liturgical celebrations."⁵⁵ A people's faith is expressed among other ways in worship and worship becomes more meaningful if it is expressed in the people's own language and cultural concepts. As the bishops expressed in their 1987 synod, "a faith that did not permeate a culture would not be a faith fully received, rightly understood or vitally assumed."⁵⁶

The 1994 Instruction on Inculturation and Roman Liturgy from the Congregation for Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments called on episcopal conferences to make use of competent people in the liturgical tradition of the Roman rite and in the appreciation of local cultural values, as well as the advice of wise people of the country whose human wisdom is enriched by the light of the gospel, to help in the inculturation of the liturgy.⁵⁷ The

⁵³ See J. BARUGAHARE, "Sanctifying Role of the Church," p. 2, no. 4.

⁵⁴ *Synodal Acts*, decree 13, p. 4.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Proposition 34 of the 1987 Synod of Bishops, see *Origins*, 17 (1987), p. 506.

⁵⁷ See CONGREGATION FOR WORSHIP AND SACRAMENTS, Instruction, Inculturation and the Roman Liturgy, *De Liturgia romana et inculturatione*, 25 January 1994, no. 30, in *Notitiae*, 30 (1994), pp. 80-115, English translation in *Origins*, 23 (1994), p. 751.

Archdiocese of Mbarara can implement these by turning to its faithful among whom the laity form a large number as translators of liturgical texts and the bible into the local language, and composers of sacred/liturgical music. The synodal preparatory commission on the sanctifying role of the Church noted:

So far in Mbarara [...], the most visible move towards authentic liturgical inculturation has been the use of the vernacular in the liturgy, and in particular also in liturgical hymns and psalms with their local tunes and rhythms. There has been a number of composers who have shown their talents in composing liturgical hymns based on the people's cultural heritage. These hymns have shown (and) enhanced the faith of the people and facilitated their active participation in the liturgy.⁵⁸

Even looking at the liturgical commission, the members who include largely the laity are chosen mostly on the basis of their expertise in inculturating the liturgy. In this area the laity play a vital role in the sanctifying mission of the Church.

4.2.2 —Participation in Sacraments

Sacraments are a means of sanctification. Through them "faith is expressed and strengthened, worship is offered to God and our sanctification is brought about" (canon 840). It is remarked in the synod position paper on the sanctifying role of the Church: "The synod is an opportunity to reflect seriously on the place of sacraments in the Christian life of this diocese and on the pastoral needs of preparation before, and follow-up after, so that by meeting Christ in these means of salvation, the faith of our Christians may be deepened and the commitment to the Lord and his people be strengthened."⁵⁹ Reflecting on the place of sacraments in the Christian life of the Archdiocese of Mbarara, the emphasis of this study is on the role of the laity thereof as expressed in the synodal acts.

4.2.2.1 —Baptism

Decree 15 of the synodal acts entrusted the council at the grassroots of the structure

⁵⁸ J. BARUGAHARE, "The Sanctifying Role of the Church," pp. 39-40. Names of some composers were given, e.g., S. Munungu, F. Biteesigirwe, Fr. Barugahare, P. Njendwoha, J. Babigaba, B. Mubangizi, all except one priest are lay faithful.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

of the Church in Mbarara, *the hiika* council, with the responsibility of assessing the family background of the children to be baptized and to advise the priests accordingly. This is in order to fulfill the conditions of canon 868, § 2 whereby the council members, who know well the families of the children to be baptized because they live in the same neighbourhood, are able to ascertain that children to be baptized will be brought up in the Catholic faith. The sacrament of baptism then becomes more meaningful as one bringing the baptized into the one family of God. Responsibility towards the baptism of the child lies not only with the parents but also with the whole community.

Furthermore, decree 18 concerns baptism conferred in sickness.⁶⁰ It calls for due diligence that befits the sacrament on the part of the minister, parents and godparents. The decree used the term *minister* of baptism, unlike in decree 15 where the term priest is used. This means that decree 15 refers to baptism in ordinary circumstances where the ordinary minister, usually a priest, is available to baptize (canon 861, § 1). Decree 18 refers to those cases of necessity (in this case, sickness) whereby the ordinary minister of baptism is absent or impeded from baptizing (canon 861, § 2). In Mbarara, in case a baptism is to be conferred in sickness, usually there is no cleric available to do it because of long distances between parishes and most of the parishioners. Decree 18 is an indirect acknowledgment of this fact, and therefore an invitation to the lay faithful in Christian communities to participate more actively in this part of the sanctifying mission of the Church.⁶¹

⁶⁰ "Baptism in sickness shall be administered with due correctness and dignity that befit the sacrament, and the minister, parents and God-parents shall subsequently assume their responsibility" (*Synodal Acts*, p. 4).

⁶¹ In fact, in the recommendations by the synodal participants, catechists had been recommended for this role. The bishop, in the synodal decree reformatted the recommendation and broadened the role from *catechist* to *minister* thus allowing any person with requisite intention to baptize in case of sickness (canon 861 § 2) (cf. H. LANE and L. BUSHARIZI, "Recommendations by the Synod on Position Paper no. 7," Baptism During Sickness, REC/93/SR, in Archdiocese of Mbarara archives). Perhaps the bishop could have used the leeway provided in canon 861 § 2 to allow catechists in outstation churches to act as officially appointed extraordinary ministers of baptisms on a stable basis. The canon provides for the local ordinary to deputize a catechist or some other person to baptize if a cleric is absent or impeded. Well, the circumstances prevailing in Mbarara satisfy the fact that priests are absent in most of the outstation churches most of the time because there are not enough priests in the diocese, and the distances they have to make to outstation churches are impeding factors since they are very long, and means of transport are not sufficient. The same reason that was given by the synod participants for the petition to allow a catechists to anoint the sick could be the reason for this pastoral measure, except that need for anointing of the sick is in most cases a case of emergency, but only priests can confer this sacrament.

4.2.2.2 —Eucharist

Not much was discussed in the synod about the role of the lay faithful in the celebration of the Eucharist. Of the four decrees on the Eucharist, two concerned directly the laity. Decree 20 stipulated that the extraordinary ministers of Communion be properly trained for their ministry and be appointed by the diocesan bishop. The synodal recommendation on which this decree is based had suggested appointment of permanent ministers of Holy Communion. The decree used the term extraordinary minister for the sake of a proper (canonical) terminology (canon 910, § 2). The spirit behind the recommendation, though, is the appointment of ministers on a more stable basis in Eucharistic centres where priests do not frequently come to celebrate the Eucharist, which is in fact the practice in the Mbarara Archdiocese.

Another involvement of the lay faithful in the celebration of the Eucharist was suggested by the synod's preparatory commission on the sanctifying role of the Church. This was the formation of liturgical committees in parishes and other smaller outstation churches to organize and animate Eucharistic liturgies and other worship services without a priest.⁶²

Furthermore, as much as the parents are obligated to teach their children the Christian faith, they are also obligated to prepare them to receive first holy communion, as well as other sacraments such as confirmation and penance. This is an important role the synod acknowledged that lay faithful do in order to enhance the sanctifying mission of the Church.

4.2.2.3 —Sacrament of Reconciliation

The sacrament of reconciliation was not discussed in direct relationship with the role of the lay faithful. But it is a vital part in their lives as they are involved in the mission of the Church. It is a good means in the living of their Christian call to holiness. The Ugandan bishops emphasized this point well in their pastoral letter issued two months before the synod of Mbarara. They said:

Just as all Christians are called to holiness, so they are called to apostolate, as this is the first manifestation of love and charity. True

⁶² See J. BARUGAHARE, "The Sanctifying Role of the Church," p. 16, no. 32.

apostolate finds its source in a living union with Christ, “whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty, for cut off from me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5).

There is no true apostolate without personal holiness, there is no holiness without intimate union with Christ to be achieved through the reception of sacraments and a continuous growth in faith and charity.⁶³

The lay faithful’s role in the mission of the Church springs from their union with Christ, which union is strengthened, among other things, by frequent use of the sacrament of reconciliation. Hence the synodal acts obliged priests “to be more available for individual and integral confession and absolution.”⁶⁴ It should be noted that the lay faithful can cooperate in the preparation of those children and adults preparing for their first confession. Parents, teachers and catechists are in the best position for this role.

4.2.2.4 —Anointing of the Sick

Canon law stipulates that only a priest can validly administer the sacrament of anointing of the sick.⁶⁵ There is no provision for an extraordinary (or lay) minister of anointing of the sick. Be that as it may, how can the lay faithful play an active part in the celebration of this sacrament? The sacrament of anointing of the sick involves also the pastoral care of the sick. The role of the lay faithful comes in as the provision of pastoral care for the sick. As it is stated in the general instruction to pastoral care for the sick, it is “fitting that all the baptized Christians share in this ministry of mutual charity within the Body of Christ by doing all that they can to help the sick return to health by showing love for the sick, and by celebrating the sacraments with them.”⁶⁶ It was noted by the synod preparatory commission on the sanctifying mission of the Church that the sacrament of anointing the sick

⁶³ CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF UGANDA, *Pastoral Letter, With a New Heart and a New Spirit*, no. 93, pp. 49-50. Cf. *Christifideles laici*, no. 17.

⁶⁴ *Synodal Acts*, decree no. 24, p. 5

⁶⁵ See canon 1003 § 1.

⁶⁶ *The Rites of the Catholic Church* : The Roman Ritual revised by decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and published by authority of Pope Paul VI; prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy a joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' conferences ; approved for use in the Dioceses of the United States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and confirmed by the Apostolic Sec, vol. I, Study ed., New York, N.Y., Pueblo Publishing Co, 1990, no. 33, p. 786.

is not yet well understood by many of the faithful in Mbarara. Hence decree 25 that more catechesis based on the rite of anointing the sick (which was translated into the local language) be used to educate the faithful on this sacrament.⁶⁷ This would enable the faithful to play their part in visiting the sick, praying for and with them, preparing them for the sacrament of the sick, and taking *viaticum* when a priest is not available (canon 911, § 2). Furthermore, decree 26 stipulated that the diocese set aside a specific day for the faithful to pray for, visit and help the sick and the aged.⁶⁸

In order to address the problem of scarcity of priests, the synod participants proposed that the bishop inquire about the possibility of allowing catechists to administer the sacrament of anointing of the sick in special circumstances.⁶⁹ This was not the first time nor was it the last that such a concern was expressed by the faithful of Mbarara. The first time was during the 1968 pastoral conference,⁷⁰ and another time was in 1994 in Rome during the special assembly for Africa of the synod of bishops. At the synod's thirteenth general congregation, Paul Bakyenga, Bishop of Mbarara had this to say in his intervention: "there is a need for more involvement and sharing of lay people in the priest's ministry. Would catechists be allowed to administer anointing of the sick, especially as they are nearest to the sick people?"⁷¹

The current law of the church provides for only a priest can validly administer the anointing of the sick (canon 1003, § 1). The intervention of Bishop Paul Bakyenga perhaps satisfies the recommendation made by the synod participants, but so far there has not been any direct reaction from the Holy See about it. The proposal of Bishop Bakyenga is not an isolated incident. Some other bishops had expressed similar opinions. For instance, German bishops had sought permission from Holy See to allow deacons to anoint,⁷² the Ukrainian

⁶⁷ See *Synodal Acts*, decree no. 25, p. 5. See also J. BARUGAHARE, "The Sanctifying Role of the Church," p. 20, no. 38.

⁶⁸ The date chosen is February 11, which is at the same time the world day for the sick.

⁶⁹ See L. BUSHARIZI and SR. HELEN, "Recommendations by the Synod on Position Paper No. 7, "Sanctifying Role," p. 4, REC/107/SR. See also *Synodal Acts*, five year plan, no. 21, p. 20.

⁷⁰ See *Pastoral Conference* 1968, session on "Tasks and Powers of Catechists," 12 January 1968.

⁷¹ B. MAURA, *The African Synod: Documents, Reflections, and Perspectives*, Compiled and edited by the Africa Faith & Justice Network, Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books, 1996, p. 112.

⁷² See J.MCAREAVEY, "The Sacraments: Canons 879-1007," in *Letter and Spirit*, p. 544.

Archbishop of Philadelphia (USA), suggested to the synod of bishops in Rome that a sacramental be created of anointing with appropriate prayers which could be administered by the laity to the increasing number of older people in hospitals and institutions.⁷³ The stand of the Holy See on this issue is expressed in the 1997 *Instruction on certain questions regarding the collaboration of the non-ordained faithful in the ministry of priests*. The instruction states:

With regard to the administration of this sacrament, canon law reiterates the theologically certain doctrine and the age-old usage of the Church which regards the priest as its only valid minister.

It must also be affirmed that the reservation of the ministry of anointing to the priest is related to the connection of this sacrament to the forgiveness of sin and the worthy reception of the Holy Eucharist. In no way can another person act as ordinary or extraordinary minister of the sacrament for such constitutes simulation of the sacrament.⁷⁴

Furthermore, the Holy See warned against the use of sacramentals by the non-ordained faithful that may make them be regarded as “sacraments whose administration is proper and exclusive to the bishop and to the priest.”⁷⁵ For instance, on anointing, the Holy See emphasized: “Since they are not priests, in no instance may the non-ordained perform anointings either with the oil of the sick or with unblessed oil.”⁷⁶ The question of anointing of the sick by the laity is more of a theological than a canonical debate.⁷⁷ It is not our intention in this study to delve into the debate, but to see within the limits of the present law, how the lay faithful can better participate in this sacrament. Our view is that their involvement in the pastoral care of the sick is an invaluable contribution to the ministry of the sick. Part of this pastoral care is what the Holy See recommended in the aforementioned instruction:

Innumerable works of charity to the sick are constantly provided by non-ordained faithful either individually or through community apostolates. These constitute an important Christian presence to sick and suffering of the greatest

⁷³ See V.J. POSPISHIL, *Eastern Catholic Church Law*, Revised and augmented ed., Staten Island, NY, Saint Maron Publications, 1996, p. 416.

⁷⁴ *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, art. 9 § 2.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, art. 9 § 1.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* Cf. J.M. HUELS, “Interpreting an Instruction Approved *in forma specifica*,” in *Studia canonica*, 32 (1998), p. 35.

⁷⁷ Cf. J.MCAREAVEY, “The Sacraments: Canons 879-1007,” p. 544.

importance. The non-ordained faithful particularly assist the sick by being with them in difficult moments, encouraging them to receive the sacraments of penance and the anointing of the sick, by helping them to have the disposition to make a good individual confession as well as to prepare them to receive the anointing of the sick.⁷⁸

4.2.2.5 — Matrimony

The sacrament of matrimony makes the married couple participate in a special way in God's love for his people. It makes them give praise to the Lord, it sanctifies the conjugal union and the life of the Christian faithful who celebrate it, and gives rise to the Christian family, the domestic Church, the "first and living cell of society" (*Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 11).⁷⁹

So, the more the families live their matrimonial commitment, the better they participate in the mission of the Church as living witnesses of the teachings of Christ in their families. The synod of Mbarara discussed marriage under five points, namely: need for marriage preparation, the problem of divorce, involvement of small Christian communities in marriage preparation and marriage counseling, the problem of bride price, and the implementation of the *AMECEA* Bishops' message to Catholic families in Eastern Africa. In one way or another the Church's concern and attention to each of these areas involves the laity as active participants thereof. For instance, in cooperation with priests the lay faithful can participate in giving the marriage preparation courses and counseling. From the wealth of their marital experience and by their witness as spouses, their marriage can become good news contributing greatly to evangelization and ensuring the future of the society. Although the synod decreed that premarital instruction be among the priorities of priests' apostolate (decree 28), it also decreed that: "marriage counseling committees, composed of exemplary married couples and of pastors shall be established in each parish" (decree 30). Effective action of anyone, in our case, effective apostolate of the lay faithful, springs from the status of that person (*agere sequitur esse*). Thus the well-being of Christian families in the

⁷⁸ *Ecclesiae de mysterio*, art. 9, § 1.

⁷⁹ See PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE FAMILY, *Guidelines, Matrimony and the New Evangelization: Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage*, 13 May 1996, no. 9, in *Catholic International*, 7 (1996), p. 376.

Archdiocese of Mbarara will produce good fruits of the apostolate in the mission of the Church therein. Hence the need for marriage preparation for, and to a great extent by, the lay faithful. A synod decree stated: "Courses and retreats shall be organized to help married people especially those with difficulties" (decree 29). It was also decreed that the pastoral commission set up a committee to research into Catholic marriage in all its aspects in view of enhancing the pastoral care for married people (decree 31). As A. Mendonça puts it: "marriage is rooted in human nature and, therefore is affected by the cultural and historical conditions of every people."⁸⁰ And John Paul II, in the post-synodal exhortation, *Familiaris consortio*, stated:

God's plan for marriage and the family touches men and women in the concreteness of their daily existence in specific social and cultural situations, the Church ought to apply herself to understanding the situations within which marriage and the family are lived today, in order to fulfill her task of serving.⁸¹

The research committee comprising lay, religious, and ordained faithful would be the means by which the Church would apply herself to understanding those cultural and social situations in which marriage and family are lived in Mbarara Archdiocese, and finding means of ministering to them. The points of study would include the issue of bride price and the implementation of the message of the *AMECEA* Bishops to Catholic families in Eastern Africa.⁸²

⁸⁰ A. MENDONÇA, "Recent Rotal Jurisprudence from a Sociocultural Perspective," part I, in *Studia canonica*, 29 (1995), p. 31.

⁸¹ JOHN PAUL II, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, 22 November 1981, no. 4, in *AAS*, 73 (1981), pp. 81-191, English translation in FLANNERY II, p. 817.

⁸² Bride price, in Eastern Africa, is the price in form of money or materials such as cows, goats, clothes, etc. that a man offers to family of his future wife before so as to marry. Sometimes the bride price is too high beyond the groom's means. In which case the couple either give up marrying each other or elope. The Church discourages excessive bride price because the latter sometimes hinders Christian marriage.

In May, 1986 the bishops of the *AMECEA* countries held their ninth plenary assembly in Moshi, Tanzania. Their study session concentrated on finding solutions that best suit the cultural situations, so as to help families in Eastern Africa "grow more and more into "truly Christian and truly African families." The bishops identified polygamy, broken marriages, migrant labour, cultural differences in cases of transcultural marriages, premarital cohabitation, mixed marriages, drunkenness, and marital infidelity as some of the major problems affecting Eastern African families. Initiatives hitherto taken to address these problems included the promotion of Marriage Encounter Programmes, Natural Family Planning, Christian Family Movement, Pioneer Movement or Alcoholics Anonymous, the discouragement of excessive bride-price, among others. The bishops came up with new initiatives. They produced guidelines for a *Catechesis for Christian Families*. The catechesis included suggestions for deepening sacramental life, biblical nourishment, family spirituality,

On a spiritual level, it was decreed by the synod that there be in the diocese a fitting liturgical celebration and festivities on the Feast of the Holy Family. Families were encouraged to participate in the liturgy as a family unit (decree 32).

Furthermore, it is curious to note that concerning the celebration of marriage, the synod participants did not welcome the use of the canonical provision in canon 1112, § 1 whereby the diocesan bishop in accordance with the norm of law can delegate lay persons to assist at marriages.⁶³ A recommendation was suggested at the synod assembly that: "Due to the scarcity of priests (a) catechist (s) be allowed to witness at the Sacrament of Matrimony in special case (s)."⁶⁴ When this recommendation was put to vote, 44 voted *yes*, 85 voted *no*, 16 *abstained*, and there was 1 *invalid* vote.⁶⁵ It is rather ironical that this recommendation was turned down by the majority of the synod participants who had in the same assembly recommended that inquiries be made about the possibility of allowing catechists to anoint the sick.⁶⁶ The recommendation on the lay witnesses at marriage which is allowed in canon law was rejected by the majority vote but the one on lay faithful as ministers of anointing the sick which is not allowed in law was passed. One would have thought that for the same reasons the recommendation for anointing of the sick by lay people was suggested, the provision of lay witnesses at marriages would have been welcomed and enthusiastically recommended to be implemented. Despite the synod's rejection by the majority vote of the recommendation for the lay witnesses at marriage, the diocesan bishop took it up and placed it among the areas to be focused on in the five year plan.⁶⁷ It is almost fourteen years now since the celebration

and emergence of ministries to deal with these problems according to the needs of the local Church. For these initiatives to be effective required involvement of all the faithful in Eastern Africa. Involvement of lay faithful would be an indispensable contribution in this pastoral enterprise (See AMECEA Bishops, "Message to the Catholic families in Eastern Africa," in *AFER*, 28 (1986), pp. 265-269).

⁶³ Canon 1112, § 1: "Where there are neither priests nor deacons, the diocesan Bishop can delegate lay persons to assist at marriages, if the Bishops' Conference has given its prior approval and the permission of the Holy See has been obtained."

⁶⁴ L. BUSHARIZI and SR. HELEN, "Recommendations by the Synod on Position Paper No. 7," REC/113/SR, p. 5.

⁶⁵ See Final results, "Recommendations on the Sanctifying Role of the Church," Position Paper no. 7, p. 2, REC/113/SR.

⁶⁶ "In view of the scarcity of priests, the Bishop shall find out if catechists can be allowed to anoint the sick." Voting: 94 Yes, 34 No, 16 Abstention, 2 Invalid (REC/107/SR).

⁶⁷ See "Five Year Plan," no. 21, in *Synodal Acts*, p. 20.

of the synod and this plan has not been implemented.

In 1994 at the special assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, the bishop of Mbarara in his intervention brought up this point. He asked a rhetorical question whether catechists should be allowed to witness at marriages especially as they are nearest to the people.⁸⁸ This points to the need of implementing this provision but its implementation depends on the initiative of the diocesan bishop with the approval of the episcopal conference and the permission of the Holy See (cf. canon 1112).

The motivating factor for the implementation of canon 1112 § 1 is the absence of clerics (where there are neither priests nor deacons). This phrase may be interpreted in line with Kelly's opinion:

(The)delegation may be given only where priests and deacons are not and will never be available, or as meaning that it may be given where priests and deacons are not available for some length of time. The latter interpretation is more in keeping with the practice of the Church prior to the (new) code. By analogy with 1116, § 1 2°, the absence of a priest or deacon for more than a month is sufficient to warrant the delegation of a lay person. Moreover, it would appear that the absence of priests or deacons may also be interpreted as the absence of suitable or qualified priests or deacons, since permission has been given by the Holy See for lay persons to assist at marriages of emigrants and refugees who do not speak the language of the country.⁸⁹

The point here is not so much the similarity of the reasons abiding in the Archdiocese of Mbarara with those given by Kelly, as the circumstances prevailing in any given place that make the priests and deacons absent. The circumstances prevailing in Mbarara are: the large size of parishes in which one or two priests are appointed to each parish, poor means of transport, and a great number of parishioners living far from the parish centres. So lay people, especially catechists, could be delegated to witness, including doing marriage preparation, arranging for obtaining of dispensations from the diocesan chancery when the wedding couples need them.

⁸⁸ See B. MAURA, *The African Synod: Documents, Reflections, and Perspectives*, p. 112.

⁸⁹ D. KELLY, "The Sacraments: Canons 1008-1165," in *Letter & Spirit*, pp. 625-626.

4.3 —The Lay Faithful and the Power of Governance

Canon 129, § 1 states that those who are in sacred orders are capable (*habiles*) of the power of governance. Paragraph two of the same canon states that lay members of Christ's faithful can cooperate (*cooperari*) in the exercise of the power of governance.

besides [the] apostolate [that] belongs to absolutely every Christian, the laity can be called in different ways to more immediate cooperation in the apostolate of the hierarchy. (...) They have, moreover, the capacity of being appointed by the hierarchy to some ecclesiastical offices with a view to a spiritual end.⁹⁰

The canon contains two terms whose interpretation leads to the proper understanding of the place of the laity in the exercise of the power of governance. The terms are: *habiles* (capable, § 1) and *cooperari* (cooperate, § 2).

Some canonists have argued that designating those in sacred orders capable for the power of governance excludes the lay faithful for the exercise of this power.⁹¹ Some others argue that the laity can be given a share in the power of governance.⁹² But as J. Beal notes:

While the term is sometimes used to distinguish the *habiles* from the *inhables*,⁹³ it is also used simply to call attention to the suitability, aptness, or eligibility of particular persons for a given task. For example, no one would claim that by designating lay people as *habiles* to receive a mandate to teach the sacred sciences, canon 229, § 3 meant to declare the ordained *inhables* to receive this mandate.⁹⁴

Beal further notes that "the designation of the clerics as *habiles* simply calls attention to their special suitability for functions involving the power of governance; it does not disqualify lay

⁹⁰ *Lumen gentium*, no. 33, FLANNERY I, p. 391.

⁹¹ Some of the proponents of this view include: Jaeger (cf. J.P. BEAL, "The Exercise of the Power of Governance by Lay People: State of the Question," in *The Jurist*, 55 (1995), pp. 70-71); Aymans (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 72-74, *Studia canonica*, 17 (1983), pp. 63-93); and Corecco (cf. *The Jurist*, 55 (1995), pp. 74-76: "Nature et structure de la 'sacra potestas' dans le doctrine et dans le nouveau code de droit canonique," in *Revue de droit canonique*, 34 (1984), pp. 366-368

⁹² Proponents of this argument include: Beyer (cf. *The Jurist*, 55 (1995), pp. 76-85), 76-85; Ghirlanda (cf. *ibid.*); Hervada (cf. *ibid.*); Urrutia, "Delegation of the Executive Power of Governance," in *Studia canonica*, 19 (1985), pp. 339-355.

⁹³ See canons 124 § 1; 1057 § 1; 1674; 241 § 1.

⁹⁴ J.P. BEAL, "Lay people and Church Governance: Oxymoron or Opportunity," in NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS SUBCOMMITTEE ON LAY MINISTRY, *Together in God's Service: Towards a Theology of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*, Washington, DC, United States Catholic Conference, Inc., 1998, pp. 117-118.

people from performing those functions should the diocesan bishop deem it necessary or appropriate."⁹⁵ This would also be our opinion on this issue.

The proponents of the nonparticipation of the laity in the power of governance interpret *cooperari* in canon 129, § 2 as limiting the role of the laity in Church governance to consultative and merely administrative functions.⁹⁶ J. Beal, on the other hand, traces the use of the term *cooperari* and its variants in the Code to show that the term "does not support the claim that it limits lay people to a merely consultative and ancillary role in the exercise of the power of governance."⁹⁷ Cooperation, for example, is used in canon 369 to describe the working together of the diocesan bishop and the priests (*presbyterium*) to provide the pastoral care of the faithful in the diocese. Canon 545, § 1 refers to assistant priests as cooperators of the parish priests. Beal observes that the *cooperation* of the *presbyterium* with the diocesan bishop and of the assistant priests "is not a merely consultative and ancillary involvement in the bishops' or [parish priests'] ministries. Rather they *cooperate* by assuming many of the functions of bishops and [parish priests]."⁹⁸ Thus priests and assistant priests "proclaim the word of God, gather communities for the celebration of the Eucharist and other sacraments, and govern the communities or aspects of communities entrusted to them under the authority, respectively, of the diocesan bishop and [parish priest]."⁹⁹

The lay faithful can be called upon to *cooperate* with bishops and priests in the exercise of the ministry of the word (canon 759), and the capacity to cooperate springs from their baptism and confirmation. The areas of cooperation in the ministry of the word include preaching in churches and oratories in certain circumstances (canon 766), and giving catechetical formation (canon 776). "One would hardly describe any of these forms of cooperation in the ministry of the word as merely consultative and ancillary,"¹⁰⁰ Beal

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁹⁶ See *ibid.*

⁹⁷ See *ibid.* See also *ibid.*, p. 128, footnote 42 ("For use of *cooperari*, see canons 208; 328, 529 § 2; 625 § 4; 759; and 796 § 2. For use of *cooperator*, see canons 245 § 2; 545 § 1; 651 § 2; 652 § 1; and 757. For the use (of) *cooperatio*, see 275 § 1; 296; 369; 434; 680; 708; 713 § 2; 782 § 1; 791; 820; 1096 § 1; 1274 § 4").

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

concludes.

It is worth noting that even in those circumstances whereby the lay faithful serve in merely consultative and ancillary capacities in Church governance, their role is very important. There is more to Church governance than the definite decisions of the ecclesiastical authorities. Kelly aptly substantiates this point in his essay on *shared responsibility in ecclesial decision-making*.¹⁰¹ He gives five components of a decision-making process, namely: gathering of factual data, proposing creative ideas, making a choice, implementing the choice, and evaluation. Kelly differentiates between choice-making and decision-making. The former entails the power to make a final choice. This lies with the authority with a deliberative vote, such as a bishop at a diocesan synod. The latter entails a process of coming to a choice. Thus Kelly observes, "decision-making, whether undertaken by an individual acting alone or by a small group or large communities, is a complex process; it involves several stages, only one of which is the making of a choice, and all of which entail the exercise of influence and power."¹⁰² So in those situations whereby decisions are made that affect the mission of the Church, the involvement of the lay faithful is important and should be engaged even if it may be consultative. Their contribution in terms of the factual data, proposition of ideas, drawn from their expertise and experience may greatly help the effecting of the deliberative vote of the ecclesiastical authority. The same lay faithful can be instrumental towards the implementation of the choice thus made and evaluating its progress as time goes by. This applies very well to a diocesan synod. As has been so far shown, the lay faithful in the Archdiocese of Mbarara have made a tremendous input of organizational skills, information, discussions, and recommendations at the 1986 diocesan synod. Although their vote was consultative, it helped the bishop to come to the drafting and promulgation of the synodal decrees and publication of the exhortations and the five year plan. The success of the implementation of the synodal acts depends to a great extent also on the cooperation of the lay faithful as active agents and subjects of this implementation.

¹⁰¹ See R. T. KELLY, "Shared Responsibility in Ecclesial Decision-Making," in *Studia canonica*, 14 (1980), p. 23.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

This section will examine how the synod viewed the role of the lay faithful in the power of Church governance in the Archdiocese of Mbarara.

4.3.1 —Lay Faithful and Power of Governance in Diocesan Structures of Mbarara

On Church administration, the synodal acts stated that the different diocesan administrative structures be geared towards having all the faithful actively participate in the building of the Body of Christ.¹⁰³ As the bishop is the only legislator in the diocese, and since he cannot delegate this power validly unless the law explicitly provides otherwise (canon 135 § 2), there was not much discussed at the synod concerning the role of the lay faithful in the legislative power of governance. Decree 106 of the synodal acts states:

The bishop is the head of the diocese. In the administration of the diocese he is assisted by the following:

a) At the diocesan level

i— the diocesan curia which shall include among others, the vicar(s) general, and episcopal vicar(s), chancellor, notaries, treasurer, heads of diocesan commissions, representative of the council of priests, religious, laity, and catechists;

ii— diocesan synod

iii— the pastoral council

iv— the deanery, and

v— parish

b) At parish level

— the parish priest and the parish council, zone (optional), *centre* and *hiika* officials and organs.¹⁰⁴

The decree integrates all the roles that pertain to the mission of the Church in the diocese by all the Christian faithful under the authority of the bishop. As for the lay faithful there was no particular demarcation of their involvement in the three functions of the power of governance, namely legislative, executive, and judicial. In fact the only explicit indication of the lay faithful's participation in the legislative power of governance is the diocesan synod. The rest of the decree deals with the executive power of governance in which the lay faithful

¹⁰³ See *Synodal Acts*, p. 15.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

participate as members on diocesan commissions, in the pastoral council, and parish pastoral councils.

One of the areas provided by the synodal decree for the lay faithful's involvement is the diocesan curia. Canon 469 on the diocesan curia states: "The diocesan curia consists of those institutes and persons who assist the bishop in governing the entire diocese, especially in directing pastoral action, in providing for the administration of the diocese, and in exercising judicial power." The diocesan curia embraces the lay faithful in its composition, purpose and scope. It is composed of institutes and persons that are clerical and lay whose purpose is "to offer assistance to the diocesan bishop in a stable manner in the governance of the entire diocese."¹⁰⁵ The scope of collaboration of persons and institutes of the diocesan curia covers pastoral, administrative (executive) and judicial realms.

The synod position paper on Church administration in Mbarara diocese emphasized, "it is necessary to include lay people (...) in the curia because by virtue of their baptism, they have the right to participate in the administration of the diocese. The curia planning committee shall be assisted by parish planning committees which shall be organs of the parish council."¹⁰⁶ This proposal gave birth to decrees 110 and 111 of the synodal acts that stated:

— "Involvement of the laity and the religious in administrative decision-making at the parish and diocesan levels is a right and duty. Their opinions shall not be lightly discarded" (decree 110);

— "The various diocesan and parish commissions and committees shall have some religious and lay persons incorporated" (decree 111).¹⁰⁷

This is a step forward for Mbarara in the promotion of the lay faithful's involvement in the Church's power of governance. The administrative decision-making organs that are encouraged to involve the laity are those mentioned in decree 105 referred to above—the curia, commissions and committees at diocesan and parish levels. The synod position paper on church administration stated that "since lay people are also members of the Church, the

¹⁰⁵ A. MENDONÇA, *Diocesan Curia*, Class notes for the private use of students, Ottawa, Faculty of Canon Law, Saint-Paul University, 1995-1996, p. 42.

¹⁰⁶ L. BUSHARIZI, "Church Administration in Mbarara Diocese," p. 48, no. 123.

¹⁰⁷ *Synodal Acts*, p. 16.

hierarchical and bureaucratic administrative system that excludes them from getting involved in decision-making shall be modified."¹⁰⁸ Well, the tone of this statement seems to indicate that the laity had been sidelined in Church administration at least on the diocesan level. So after the synod the membership of the diocesan commission was revised to allow in more lay people. Presently, membership at these commissions stands as follows: pastoral commission, 5 lay people, 4 priests, no religious;¹⁰⁹ education commission, 13 lay people, 2 priests, 2 religious (sisters); justice and peace commission, 9 lay people, 2 priests, 1 religious (sister); social services and development 1 lay person, 11 priests, 2 religious (sisters); personnel commission, 6 lay people, 9 priests, 1 religious (sister); economic commission, 7 lay people, 7 priests, 1 religious (sister).

The role of these commissions is, as pointed out by the bishop of Mbarara in his 1984 letter that:

each of these five commissions, be fully charged with the (...) responsibility and competence of researching, studying, planning, and evaluating all the various aspects of (the) subject within its field of activity and presenting the concrete proposals to the diocesan administration board who will be enabled to direct the competent body/person to take relevant, appropriate and enlightened action for the good of the people.¹¹⁰

This reemphasises the point expressed in *Christus Dominus* 17:

Close collaboration and coordination of all the apostolic works under the direction of the bishop should be promoted. (...) Thus all the undertakings and organizations, whether their object be catechetical, missionary, charitable, social, family, educational, or any other pastoral end, will act together in harmony, and the unity of the diocese will be more closely demonstrated.¹¹¹

Diocesan commissions are good avenues for the lay faithful to participate in the mission within the Church structures (cf. canon 208) and make their needs known to their pastors (cf.

¹⁰⁸ L. BUSHARIZI, "Church Administration," p. 48, no. 121.

¹⁰⁹ The commission has 14 members but the names of the 5 members could not be obtained neither from the diocesan archives nor from the diocesan pastoral coordinator. This may be an indication that the structures may be in place but not active.

¹¹⁰ J. B. KAKUBI, letter, "Revised Reconstruction of Diocesan Administration," 26 June, 1984, in L. BUSHARIZI, "Church Administration," p. 53.

¹¹¹ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, *Christus Dominus*, 28 October 1965, no. 17, in *AAS*, 58 (1966), pp. 673-701, English translation in FLANNERY I, pp. 573-674.

canon 212, § 2).

Through these commissions, those general principles of pastoral rule that guide the bishop to fulfill his pastoral duties in the diocese are exercised. These are the principles of: the common good, unity, responsible cooperation, subsidiarity, coordination, placing the right people in the right places, renewal of pastoral action, knowing the flock, acquaintance with the state of the diocese, socio-religious survey, and organized pastoral action in the diocese.¹¹² In light of what has so far been discussed as the role of the lay Christian faithful in Mbarara, one can see the contribution of the laity through the commissions at work in each and everyone of the aforementioned principles. The 1986 diocesan synod, in which the lay faithful featured prominently, was an amalgam of these principles. The contribution of the laity in the synod has been extended on a stable basis in Church structures that involve them in their plans and organization.

Although we can infer from decree 106 the role of the lay faithful in the Church's power of governance as seen by the synod, their involvement in the exercise of judicial power is conspicuously lacking in the synod proceedings and acts. The only mention of their involvement was by way of suggestion by the synod preparation commission on Church administration. The commission thus noted:

In our diocese the involvement of clerics in Church administration poses no particular problems. However, the participation and collaboration of religious and lay people have not been sufficiently sought. That is why this commission, recognizing the contribution of lay and religious people towards the apostolate in Mbarara (Arch)diocese, strongly recommends that they be incorporated in those diocesan organs which help and advise the bishop in decision making and taking. Offices which do not require holy orders, like being chairman of the different commissions, being notaries and judges in the ecclesiastical tribunal, should be considered.¹¹³

To date, there has not been any involvement of the lay Christian faithful in the diocesan tribunal ministry due to lack of trained personnel and resources to train them.

At the parish level, the lay faithful's participation in the power of governance, apart from the ministry of catechists, is through the parish pastoral council and the committees

¹¹² See *Ecclesiae imago*, nos. 93-105.

¹¹³ L. BUSHARIZI, "Church Administration," p. 51, no. 130.

related to it. According to the constitution of the parish councils in the Archdiocese of Mbarara, the number of the parish council members is between twenty and forty people who include the parish head catechist, heads of parochial religious groups or their representatives, representatives of organized lay apostolate movements and the nominees of the parish priest who should not exceed ten members.¹¹⁴ These are all lay people, except the few religious (if there are any) working in the parish. The constitution states the tasks of these members as:

- to assist and work with the priests of the parish for the smooth running of the parish;
- to bring about and encourage a spirit of mutual love among the parishioners;
- in union with the priests in the parish, to initiate, implement or cause to implement parish projects for the spiritual and material well-being and development of the parish;
- to assist the parish priest to plan and carry out suitable celebration of Sundays and Feast days; and
- to promote social interaction among the parishioners.¹¹⁵

These duties pertain to the mission of the Church and they are fulfilled in the parish pastoral council as a whole or in its committees. There are planning, liturgical, vocations, education, finance, land, social, youth, and disciplinary committees and any other committees, as the needs and circumstances of the time and place may require,¹¹⁶ of the parish pastoral council. By carrying out these duties, the lay faithful fulfill a role that properly belongs to them as the lay faithful and at the same time cooperate with the Church hierarchy in its pastoral ministry. A parish without this participation of the lay faithful would not carry out its mission successfully.

4.3.2 —Church Structures Below the Parish Level

Although the presentation of the parish structure paints a bright picture of the collaboration of all, but most especially the lay members of Christ's faithful in the mission of

¹¹⁴ See DIOCESE OF MBARARA, *Constitution of a Parish Council*, Mushanga Pastoral Centre, 1982, p. 1.

¹¹⁵ See *ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

¹¹⁶ See *ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

the Church in parishes, there is a reality of the existence of other Christian community structures below the parish level in the Archdiocese of Mbarara, if not all the dioceses of Uganda. These are called *centres*, and *hiikas*.¹¹⁷

The parish is seen as the basic community of the Christian people.¹¹⁸ Canon 515, § 1 defines a parish as: “a certain community of Christ’s faithful stably established within a particular Church, whose pastoral care, under the authority of the diocesan bishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor.” The use of the term *community* to define a parish is meant to signify:

a group of individuals and families who know each other, share common values and relate to one another. They live near each other in a neighbourhood.

The members of the community interact with one another and realize that they are dependent upon another in their religious lives. They worship together, grow in the faith together and face the crises of life together. They join in celebrating family births and baptisms, marriages and funerals. There are multiple bonds between them.¹¹⁹

This reality, as described by J. Coriden, is realized in the Archdiocese of Mbarara, more in *centres* and *hiika* than on the parish level. Of course *centres* and *hiikas* are part of the parish structure, but in them Christians live closer to each other and in this way the idea of the Church as family of God¹²⁰ is concretized. Even the view of the parish in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa* parish is more realized at the *centre* and *hiika* levels than at the parish level. *Ecclesia in Africa* views a parish as “the ordinary place where the faithful worship and live their Christian life, express and practice the initiatives that faith and Christian charity bring to the attention of the community of believers.”¹²¹ Christians in *centres*

¹¹⁷ *Hiika* (singular), *Amahiika* (plural), for the sake of clarity *amahiika* will be referred to as *hiikas* in this study. *Centres* and *hiikas* are called invariably by different names in different dioceses in Uganda.

¹¹⁸ See *Christifideles laici*, no. 26.

¹¹⁹ J. A. CORIDEN, *The Parish in Catholic Tradition: History, Theology and Canon Law*, New York, Mahwah, NJ, Paulist Press, 1997, p. 60. Cf. IDEM, “The Rights of Parishes,” *Studia canonica*, 28 (1994), p. 296.

¹²⁰ Cf. J. PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa* (= *Ecclesia in Africa*), to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious, and All the Lay Faithful on the Church in Africa and Its Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000, 14 September 1995, no. 63, in *AAS*, 88 (1996), pp. 5-82, English translation, Ottawa, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, offset reproduction of the English edition, Vatican Polyglot Press, 1995, pp. 64-65.

¹²¹ See *ibid.*, no. 100, p. 105.

and hiikas know each other. Parishes in the Archdiocese of Mbarara are made up of groupings of *centres* and centres are in turn made up groupings of *hiikas*. On average a parish has about ten *centres* and 30 *hiikas*. It is very difficult for people in parishes to know each other. It is in *centres* and *hiikas* that the role of the lay faithful in the mission of the Church is more effectively realized. There is exuberance of Christian faith at these levels. The parish church is in terms of distance far removed from the faithful. Many Christians may take years without going to parishes.

Although the *centres* and *hiikas* are part of the parish and they are ultimately under the authority of the parish priest, they are entirely run by the lay faithful both catechists and other lay Christian leaders and committee members. The spiritual pulse that is seen in parishes springs from *centres* and *hiikas*. It is these that principally give financial support to parishes through the quotas that are levied on them by parishes. Since each and every parishioner belongs to a given *centre* and *hiika* and not directly to a parish, the community aspect that canon law attributes to the parish is in fact transferred from it to the *centre* and *hiika*.

Centres and *hiikas*, however, do not have a juridic personality. They are part of parishes. Nevertheless, they have acquired property which they administer in the name of the Church. The catechists and council members of these communities act as their official representatives. Their properties *de facto* belong to them but *de iure* belong to their respective parishes. They have therefore become stable structures in the organization of the Church in Mbarara. So diocesan plans for more effective involvement of the lay faithful in the mission of the Church in Mbarara ought to focus more on *centres* and *hiikas* than the diocesan level. It is in these communities that the lay faithful are seen to be more active in the prophetic, sanctifying, and governing roles of the Church.

Since the 1982 pastoral conference of Mbarara,¹²² emphasis has been put on establishing and developing small Christian communities as basic structures of the organization of the Church. There has been a leap from the parish to small Christian communities while overlooking the *centres* and *hiikas* in between. Perhaps their existence has

¹²² Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.3.4 of this study. 1982 pastoral conference theme was on building small Christian Communities.

been taken for granted because they are well established structures in Church organization. There is a need, however, for a deeper study and reflection on *centres* and *hiikas* in view of clarifying their status in the Church structures of Mbarara. There is need for statutes to govern them lest their organization falls prey to the whims of the parish priests as their hierarchical superiors. Lack of statutes could jeopardize the stability and continuity of activities taking place in these communities.

Although some study has been done by the Archdiocese of Mbarara on Eucharistic centres, this is a special provision of availing Holy Communion to some churches far from parish churches. Not all centres are, will, or should be Eucharistic. Centres are not *quasi* parishes nor are they parishes in the making, although some could be earmarked for future parishes. The following could be an attempt at a definition of what *centres* and *hiikas* are compared with the definition of a parish. A *centre* is a community of Christ's faithful stably established within a parish whose care is under a catechist as a representative of the parish priest. A *hiika* could be defined as a community of Christ's faithful established within a centre whose care is under a catechist as a representative of the parish priest, having the centre catechist as his/her immediate superior. The stable establishment of centres, then, would require that statutes be made to govern them.

Decree 106 of the 1986 synod of Mbarara refers to these structures as avenues of the members of Christ's faithful to assist the bishop to lead the diocese. Apart from their mention, their significance and relevance in the mission of the Church in the archdiocese were regrettably not discussed at the synod.

For the aforementioned participation of the lay faithful in the Church's power of governance, for it to be more meaningful and effective, it ought to be knowledgeable and open to continual learning.¹²³ Hence decree 107 of the synod stated: "Courses in administration shall be given in our Church institutions of learning and of formation and to all who hold administrative positions in the diocese."¹²⁴ As a consequence seminars are occasionally held in the archdiocese for different lay leaders, priests and religious. A

¹²³ Cf. R.T. KELLY, "Shared Responsibility in Ecclesial Decision-Making," p. 6.

¹²⁴ *Synodal Acts*, p. 15.

catechetical centre at Ibanda (in Mbarara) caters for the formation and educational needs of catechists. There is also a social development centre at Mushanga (also in Mbarara) and ongoing formation renewal of priests at St. Augustine Institute in Kampala. These also cater, partly, for the education and formation requirements of the faithful involved in ministry in the archdiocese so as to render effective service for the well-being of the people of God in Mbarara.

4.4 —Lay Faithful's Involvement in the Vocation and Formation of the Clergy and Religious

The synodal commission on vocation and formation of the clergy and the religious, in their position paper, impressed on the synodal assembly that “vocation to priesthood (and religious life) is not purely a personal affair. It concerns God, the Church and the individual.”¹²⁵ From God, there is need for the call (God calls), from the Church, there is need for support (of the one called), and from the individual there is need for discernment of the call and response to it. The vocation and formation of the clergy and religious is realized through the concerted efforts of the diocesan bishop, the director of vocations, priests, religious, and the lay faithful in the archdiocese. From the position paper the assembly made twelve recommendations to the bishop from which he issued decrees and exhortations.

Decree 60 calls on Christians to be aware of their responsibility to volunteer accurate information on candidates for priesthood and religious life as required by the diocesan authorities. Decree 61 stipulates that “a network of vocations committees be established at all levels to work with the vocations director.” The underlying factor in these decrees is that all the members of Christ's faithful and most especially the lay faithful play a role in nurturing the vocation of the candidates for priesthood and religious life. By giving information about the candidates to the formators, they are not acting as spies on the candidates but helping in nurturing in their future ministers those values espoused by the Church as a whole and by the people of God in Mbarara in particular. These can be well achieved through the concerted

¹²⁵ B. BIRUNGI and G. EECKHOUT, “Vocation and Formation,” Synod Position Paper no. 13, 1986, p. 1, no. 3, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

efforts of the members of the vocations committees. The constitution for parish councils of Mbarara, lists the responsibilities of parish vocations committees, among others as:

- recruitment of suitable candidates for formation to priesthood and religious life;
- ensuring that there evolve in parishes good Christian families.

Perhaps it is from this background that the bishop of Mbarara at the 1994 special assembly of the synod of bishops for Africa in Rome stated:

Leadership should be first proven in the local community. The training of priests in the local community and the evaluation of candidates by the local community where they work should be taken seriously. A number of priests are not good leaders and yet they are put at the head of communities and they feel ill at ease. To remedy this, candidates for priesthood should be approved first by the community, before being ordained.¹²⁶

So decrees 60 and 61, if put into practice would be a good means of realizing this proposal.

Furthermore, decree 64 of the synod states: “there shall be established a board of governors for seminaries consisting of priests, religious and lay people.” The board was set up after the synod. Its role, however, does not preclude the role of the bishop as the overall person in charge of the seminarians in the diocese. The board helps the bishop and his representatives (rector and staff) to fulfill their responsibility of catering for the formation of clergy in the diocese. Mbarara, however, does not have a major seminary at the moment. The diocesan seminaries referred to in decree 64 are the *preparatory* and minor seminaries.¹²⁷

The role of parents in nurturing vocations for priesthood and religious life was emphasized at the synod. They have an “irreplaceable obligation to give a good education to their children and also encourage their children who may feel inclined to the religious life or priestly vocation.”¹²⁸

Formation for priesthood and religious life is multifaceted. There are academic, spiritual, pastoral, social, and even economic components involved. Christian communities contribute to some of these components in the formation of the candidates. Thus decree 67

¹²⁶ B. MAURA, *The African Synod: Documents, Reflections, and Perspectives*, p. 112.

¹²⁷ Preparatory seminary is the seminary at the level of primary school. It is not a seminary in the strict sense. It enrolls candidates and prepares them for two years for entry into the minor seminary (See B. BIRUNGI, “Vocation and Formation,” p. 12, no. 25).

¹²⁸ B. BIRUNGI, “Vocation and Formation,” p. 7, no. 19.

stipulated that Christian communities welcome seminarians and involve them in the life of the Christian community and thereby help them to be exposed to, and encourage them to live up to, the demands of their vocation.

As for the candidates to religious life, their particular communities or institutes have particular laws that guide their formation. However, the synodal acts exhorted the Christian communities to materially support candidates who are unable to support themselves during the formation.¹²⁹

In conclusion the contribution of the lay faithful in the vocation and formation of the clergy and religious is an indispensable one in the Archdiocese of Mbarara. They are involved in the selection and evaluation of the candidates, their material, moral, and spiritual support. By living and working with the candidates during their pastoral apprenticeship they help to nurture their pastoral vision and aptitudes.

4.5 —Lay Faithful and Social Services

The synod of Mbarara did not look at the role of the laity in the religious sphere only. It also discussed those areas in which the lay faithful play prominent roles in the secular world: politics, education, medical health care, means of social communication, and self-reliance. These are referred to in this study as social services. This study will only focus on those areas that the Archdiocese of Mbarara is directly involved in, that is, education, medical health care, and self-reliance. Whereas these areas of human progress are secular in character, they truly belong to the mission of the Church, because the Church has never failed to promote the human progress of peoples in whom she brings the Christian faith.¹³⁰ Moreover, human progress is ordered to the sovereign Good—the salvation of souls.¹³¹ Through these services the Church reaches out to the world in its cultural, social, economic, religious, and political diversities. As lay faithful, their special vocation is to engage in temporal affairs and direct them according to God's will.¹³² This can be realized among other things through the

¹²⁹ See *Synodal Acts*, exhortation 10, p. 17.

¹³⁰ See *Populorum progressio*, no. 12.

¹³¹ Cf. Canon 1752. See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2420.

¹³² See *Lumen gentium*, no. 31, in FLANNERY I, p. 389.

areas of education, health care, and self-reliance projects that the lay faithful participate in or manage in the name of the archdiocese. Through these services the lay faithful carry out an apostolate that properly belongs to them as lay members of Christ's faithful (cf. *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 13).

4.5.1 —Education

The synod viewed education as offering children and young persons in Mbarara a “balanced formation, to develop their physical, moral and intellectual talents for a sense of responsibility, and right use of freedom and to be ready to take on an active part in life.”¹³³

Priorities for the Archdiocese of Mbarara in the field of education are, according to decree 87, on primary, secondary, nursery, technical, teacher, business, agricultural, and university education in their respective order. All these institutions, with the exception of the university, have been established in the archdiocese. However, analyzing the synod position paper on education, the recommendations drawn from it, and the final decrees, and the diocesan five-year plan for education, it is clear that the synod did not strictly deliberate on Catholic education or Catholic schools as such but on the status of education in schools started by the Catholic Church, controlled by Catholic parents, and the education status of Catholics in Mbarara.

In the early years of Mbarara diocese, Catholic founded schools were controlled by the Church. In 1964 the government of Uganda took over the control of schools. Churches (Catholic and Anglican), as founding bodies, retained only the right to supervise religious instruction in their schools and the ownership of school buildings on their land.¹³⁴ There seems to be a misconception in Mbarara of the schools started on the Church's property by Catholic parents as *ipso facto* Catholic schools. Canon 803 stipulates: § 1, “A Catholic school is understood to be one which is under the control of the competent ecclesiastical authority or of a public juridic person, or one which in a written document is acknowledged as Catholic

¹³³ *Synodal Acts*, p. 11.

¹³⁴ See A. BIRAKWATE and J.M. BOONABAANA, “Formal and Non-Formal Education,” Synod Position Paper no. 2, 1986, p. 2, no. 7, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

by ecclesiastical authority,” and § 3, “No school, even if it is in fact Catholic, may bear the title ‘Catholic school’ except by the consent of the competent ecclesiastical authority.” So judging the schools of Mbarara Archdiocese by the norm of canon 803, one would not call most of them Catholic.¹³⁵ By the time of the synod there were 251 primary schools and 34 post-primary schools. Of all these schools, 4 would be categorized as Catholic, 3 having been started by the diocese, and one by a religious institute of the Brothers of Saint Charles Lwanga.

All these institutions, whether government controlled or private (controlled by Catholic parents), have a link with the diocesan education office headed by an education secretary in the name of the Archbishop. They are referred to as Catholic founded schools. This link brings them together more like an association of Catholic founded schools than Catholic schools. Would this arrangement be the Archbishop’s tacit approval to these schools being called Catholic? The answer would probably be ‘yes’ for the private Catholic parents’ schools since the diocese has some control over the running of these schools, but the same would not be said of the government controlled Catholic founded schools. These schools were started by Catholic parents as private schools and some later handed over to the government for sponsorship. They, however, maintain a Catholic environment and have a privilege (but not a right) of being headed by Catholic principals and guided by principles of Catholic doctrine to some extent. All these schools both ‘Catholic’ and Catholic founded contribute much to the well-being and development of the diocese. This is so because these lay faithful train in these schools; even the clergy and religious, before going to the seminaries and formation houses, train in these schools. These institutions would not be able to operate

¹³⁵ Morrisey draws from the Code of Canon Law “six criteria to be applied, or six consequences arising from the fact that a school is Catholic: under the control of the competent ecclesiastical authority, or acknowledged as Catholic (canon 803 § 1); principles of Catholic doctrine must be the basis for the formation and education given (canon 803, § 2); the competent ecclesiastical authority has given consent for the use of the term ‘Catholic’ (canon 803 § 3); religious education is subject to the authority of the Church (canon 804 § 1); teachers of religion are to have certain qualifications relating to doctrine, witness of Christian life, and teaching ability (canons 804, § 2; 805); there is a right of visitation by the ordinary (canon 806)” (F.G. MORRISEY, “What Makes an Institution ‘Catholic’?”, in *The Jurist*, 47 (1987), pp. 537-538). Judging the schools of Mbarara by these criteria, very few of them are in fact “Catholic.” Many have none of these criteria fulfilled.

without the Catholic parents and other lay faithful starting them to begin with, and their continual support in terms of administration and finances.¹³⁶ This support of the lay faithful is certainly a contribution to the mission of the Church. In Catholic schools and the Catholic founded ones it is the lay faithful who teach in these schools and advise the diocese on the education policies to put in place in running the Catholic schools and coordinating the Catholic founded ones.

4.5.2 —Medical Health Care

The Church promotes the education of its flock, but also cares for their physical well-being. It cares for the people to have life in its fullness—spiritual and physical. The Archdiocese of Mbarara is a major health care provider in its three civil districts of Mbarara, Bushenyi and Ntungamo. This is part of its ministry of healing. The diocesan health care services are channeled through the diocesan commission for social services and development. According to the synod decrees, this commission is responsible for:

- improving existing health care services (decree 92a);
- planning a proper and equitable distribution of diocesan medical units (decree 92b);
- coordinating the diocesan medical health care services to the national offices, and
- promotion of preventive and primary health care programmes through education and sensitization in all the areas of Mbarara Archdiocese (decree 95).

Community health care programmes (CBHC) were established in Mbarara to involve the participation of the whole community in solving their own health related problems within their communities.¹³⁷ By the time of the synod the programme had enrolled 250 CBHC members. Through these and more trained community health care workers, the diocese reaches out to address the health needs of the people. Their involvement is seen more as a role in the mission of the Church than a job. Furthermore, the social services commission, although largely composed of clerics and religious, has co-opted lay people competent in the

¹³⁶ Cf. A. BIRAKWATE, "Formal and Non-Formal Education," p. 16, no. 46. Cf. *Synodal Acts*, decree 90, p. 12.

¹³⁷ See F. PFAFF, M. KASANDE, and R. MWITANIRWA, "Medical Health Care," Synod Position Paper no. 4, 1986, p. 5, no. 14, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

medical field to plan for the medical services in the diocese. There are presently 14 health care centres including 2 hospitals¹³⁸ that are run by Mbarara Archdiocese. Many of these would not have been built had it not been due to the generous contributions of the lay faithful in Mbarara Archdiocese. The presence of dedicated medical personnel (nurses, midwives, doctors) in them is motivated by service with a healing mission.

4.5.3 —Self-Reliance

The term 'self-reliance' was used in the synod of Mbarara synonymously with development. The term also carried the connotation that the Church in Mbarara had depended on foreign aid for its sustenance. So the synod deliberated on the means and ways of making the Church in Mbarara materially self-reliant. This section will focus on the role of the lay faithful in the search for self-reliance of the Church as an institution and in the self-reliance of the people of God in Mbarara Archdiocese as individuals and as communities.

Since its beginning as a diocese, Mbarara depended largely on foreign aid from individuals and charitable Christian organizations in Europe and North America, and to a lesser extent on contributions from its Christians in parishes through the tithing system.¹³⁹ In pursuit of self-reliance, the synod discussed the economic strategy of the diocese and made recommendations to the bishop. The result of some of the recommendations are the decrees on self-reliance that the bishop promulgated in the synodal acts. For instance, decree 105 stipulated that the existing viable diocesan enterprises be developed further and new projects be undertaken on the basis of a sound feasibility study. The idea behind this decree is that if self-reliance is to be achieved, it takes more than mere ownership of property or economic projects. Managerial and entrepreneurial skills must be employed in running these projects. This is where the lay faithful come in. Those lay faithful with expertise in the field of finance are to be involved in the economic planning of the diocese. The synod economic commission noted, that the bishop and the financial administrator are the persons responsible for the funds

¹³⁸ Cf. *Uganda Catholic Directory*, 1994, p. 156.

¹³⁹ Cf. F. MWEBESA, "Towards Self-Reliance in Mbarara Diocese," Synod Position Paper no. 6, 1986, p. 7, no. 15, in Mbarara Archdiocese archives.

and goods of the diocese. They are assisted by a finance committee. Their work is made much easier if modern accounting techniques are adopted. This involves employing the services of a qualified accountant who will feed them with the proper accounting data to enable them to make decisions.¹⁴⁰ The synod commission proposed that in addition to the full-time accountant in the financial administrator's office, an assistant be employed to coordinate parish and diocesan institutions' books, and a qualified person also be employed for diocesan projects. All these structures are now in place in Mbarara. They are mostly run by the lay faithful. Their attitude while working in these projects is not to be of employees but one contributing to the mission of the Church using their talents. When the lay faithful are involved in this way, they feel that the Church is theirs and they get involved in the cash generating projects to support it.¹⁴¹

On involving the lay faithful in self-reliance on the parish level, synodal decree 104 required the establishment of financial committees in each parish. Their responsibilities are:

- drawing up the parish budget, and submitting it for approval by the parish council;
- coordinating *centre* and *hiika* finance committees;
- ensuring proper administration and accountability of the parish funds; and
- seeing to the proper administration of parish property.¹⁴²

This decree was provoked by the observation of the economic commission that:

A number of parishes had very successful agricultural projects but later often failed, because the parish priest was transferred and he had not involved the parishioners. If this had been the case (involvement of parishioners), the new parish priest could be initiated (into) the project by the parishioners to the advantage of the project's continuity.¹⁴³

Development of Church economic projects is necessary so that the Church is able to carry out her mission (cf. canon 1254, § 2), but self-reliance would not be complete if the status of the individual Christians and their families are not facilitated to be self-reliant. Canon 222 § 1 obliges the faithful to provide for the needs of the Church, "so that the Church has

¹⁴⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 5, no. 10.

¹⁴¹ See *ibid.*, p. 10, no. 28.

¹⁴² See *Synodal Acts*, p. 15, no. 104. Cf. F. MWEBESA, "Towards Self-Reliance in Mbarara Diocese," p. 6, nos. 12-14.

¹⁴³ F. MWEBESA, "Towards Self-Reliance in Mbarara Diocese," p. 13, no. 35.

available to it those things which are necessary for divine worship, for works of the apostolate and of charity and for the worthy support of its ministers.” However, it would be unrealistic of the Church to invoke this obligation on the faithful who are living in dire poverty. It ought to help in promoting their economic and social welfare. In line with this, decree 100 of the synod stipulated: “The Social Services and Development Commission, and when necessary, in liaison with other commissions, shall help to promote the development of our people, at all levels.”¹⁴⁴ Decree 101 stressed the education of the faithful in banking, money generating projects, and environmental protection so as to ameliorate their situation.

So the self-reliance the synod promoted was one that benefitted both the individual faithful by improving their economic situation, and the diocese to carry out its mission. The result of this is, as the synod economic commission put it, the lay faithful and the Church hierarchy will help one another, support their Church, institutions, and ministers, and will pay just wages to the people they employ and they will help the poor and the needy.¹⁴⁵ It is important to note that self-reliance, whether for the people or the Church in Mbarara Archdiocese, involves the lay Christian faithful. It can hardly flourish without them.

4.6 —Conclusion: Evaluation of the Synod

This study has taken us through the acts of the 1986 synod of Mbarara. We have laid emphasis on those areas that stressed the role of the lay faithful in the mission of the Church in the Archdiocese of Mbarara. We have analyzed mainly the synod decrees, and to some extent the exhortations and the five-year plan.

The synod was a remarkable event in the life of the Church in Mbarara. It exhibited the wealth of talent, and the faithful's (especially the laity's) willingness to be at the service of the Church. The lay faithful's well written position papers that were presented to the synod assembly testify to this. It is from these position papers that most of the synod decrees that have been analyzed in this study were formulated.

¹⁴⁴ *Synodal Acts*, p. 13. Cf. F. MWEBESA, “Towards Self-Reliance in Mbarara Diocese,” p. 6, no. 11.

¹⁴⁵ See F. MWEBESA, “Towards Self-Reliance in Mbarara Diocese,” p. 5, no. 9.

The synod was a big success right from its preparation stage to its celebration. Its success would have been less had the synod not involved the lay faithful. With the participation of the lay faithful it was logistically possible to have a balanced representation of the faithful, from as many spheres of life in the archdiocese as possible—spiritual/pastoral, economic, educational, and cultural, to mention but a few. The lay faithful themselves became aware that the mission of the Church in Mbarara is not a domain of only the clergy and religious, but that the lay faithful have an equally important role to play in it. The lay faithful constitute a larger part of the believers in any Church, compared to the clergy and the religious; the laity are “called to make the Church present and operational in real life and environments where the people actually live. They are called to be the salt of the earth and the leaven of the world”¹⁴⁶ (cf. Mt 5:13-16).

Comparing the recommendations from the participants and the bishop’s synod decrees and exhortations leads one to conclude that the 1986 synod of Mbarara was a *communio* event. The recommendations are reflected in the decrees, exhortations and the five-year plan, signed and published by the bishop. They are reflected not only in letter but also in their spirit. They are “truly the product of all the members of the synod who ultimately represented the diocesan faith community.”¹⁴⁷

This being the first synod of Mbarara, there were many issues on its agenda. In fact the synod tried to cover almost all the areas that pertain to the mission of the Church in Mbarara Archdiocese, allowing little time to discuss any single issue exhaustively. This would later affect the implementation of the synod decisions. So, whereas the preparation and celebration phases of the synod were very successful, the same may not be said of the implementation phase. The issues arising from the synod were too many to be entirely implemented; at least not until another synod. There were 113 decrees, 24 exhortations, and 58 items for the five-year plan. These, especially the decrees and exhortations, set the pace for the mission of the Church in the archdiocese, but the five-year plan proposals were too many to be realized within that period of time. Indeed, fourteen years now since the synod

¹⁴⁶ E.B. KILIWA, “Lay Apostolate—Christ’s Command,” in *AFER*, 28 (1986), p. 144.

¹⁴⁷ A. MENDONÇA, *Diocesan Curia*, p. 28.

celebration, many of them have not yet been realized.

The lay faithful's role is crucial in as far as the implementation of the decisions of the synod is concerned. The ultimate success of the synod depends on the lay faithful's living the spirit of the synod in their daily practice of the faith.

Although the synod had a wide spectrum of pastoral issues to discuss and plan for, there was an important pastoral issue that was not discussed. This is the problem of refugees from Rwanda living in Mbarara Archdiocese since the early 1960s. Many of these refugees are Christians. Although Mbarara Archdiocese has reached out to them, both materially and spiritually, it would have been good had the synod discussed the Church's ministry to refugees and the lay faithful's role in reaching out to them.

Another synod may be due in Mbarara so as to enhance further the growth of this particular Church. It is hoped that the next synod will discuss fewer topics than those that were handled by the first one.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The mission of the Church is essentially to build up the Body of Christ and to work for the salvation of souls. This mission is not limited to the spiritual realm but it embraces both the spiritual and the material realm in as far as they concern the human person as an embodiment of body and soul, and their relationship to God, to one another and to the world.

The Church carries out her mission through three functions, namely, teaching all nations, sanctifying those who believe in Christ, and governing God's people.¹ The role of carrying out the mission of the Church belongs to all Christ's faithful, albeit each one according to his or her own condition and office (canon 208).

This study has particularly concerned the role of the lay Christian faithful in the mission of the Church in the context of Mbarara Archdiocese. This topic has been narrowed by focusing on the 1986 synod of Mbarara as our road map through the study.

Vatican II acknowledges that the lay Christian faithful have the vocation of building up the Church and seeing to its continual sanctification, and to make the Church present and fruitful in those places and circumstances where it is only through them that she can be salt of the earth (*Lumen gentium*, no. 33). The Council further teaches that the lay faithful, besides their proper apostolate, can cooperate in the apostolate of the hierarchy, especially in those regions in which there is a scarcity of priests or in which priests are hindered by force of circumstances in performing their tasks (*Lumen gentium*, no. 33; *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 1). These two aspects have been expounded in this study. The first dealt with the secular character of the lay Christian faithful which is proper and special to them and by which they diffuse in the world the spirit of the gospel through the ordinary circumstances of their lives. The second aspect has dealt with the lay faithful's direct involvement in the spiritual realm of the mission of the Church.

The history of the Church in Uganda, in general, and in Mbarara, in particular, has manifested the important role the lay faithful have played in the inception and spread of Christianity in central Uganda to begin with, and to the four corners of the country and all the

¹ See J.A. CORIDEN, *An Introduction to Canon Law*, p. 49.

areas of Mbarara. The Catholic faith in Mbarara that is now a century old has been growing from strength to strength thanks to the efforts of the founding missionaries and the diocesan priests, but these have relied very much on the cooperation of the lay Christian leaders and lay catechists who are still pillars of the propagation of the faith and Christian leaders in all the outstation churches in the Archdiocese of Mbarara.

The pastoral aspect of the role of the lay faithful in the mission of the Church in Mbarara is neither isolated from that of the clergy nor a usurpation of the clergy's role. This study has shown that it has been one of cooperation with the clergy in the teaching, sanctifying, and governing of the people of God in the archdiocese. The 1986 diocesan synod, building on the work that had already been accomplished by the preceding pastoral conferences, delineated the secular and the spiritual/pastoral role of the lay faithful in the mission of the Church. The delineation does not show a dichotomy between the laity and the clergy but emphasizes that while each category fulfills the role particular to it, the laity are to be brought to cooperate with the clergy in the pastoral life of the archdiocese. In view of this, the synod emphasized the involvement of the laity in the diocesan and parish commissions, councils, and committees.

The study has addressed the four objectives² which the first synod of Mbarara aimed at achieving, while emphasizing the role of the lay faithful in each of the objectives. Thus, the part played by the lay faithful in the proclamation of the Word of God was studied as well as their participation in fostering sacramental life in their Christian communities, their prophetic witnessing of the good news in their communities, and their role in the administration of the temporal goods of the church in the archdiocese and parishes. The study, therefore, has shown the lay person in the mission of the Church in Mbarara as an evangelizer, catechist, Christian/spiritual leader, parent, educator, and social worker. This is a combination of the religious and secular characters of the mission of the Church. Their role has been shown as a participation in the mission of the Church by right of their baptism and confirmation, and as a participation in the ministry of the hierarchy as one of the means of addressing the

² See J.B. KAKUBI, *The Proposed Diocesan Synod*, p. 1. See also J.B. KAKUBI, *Opening Speech at the First Diocesan Synod*, p. 2.

problem of the scarcity of priests to minister frequently in many of the outstation churches in Mbarara.

Furthermore, this study has shown that there is a lively practice of the faith in those structures below the parish level. Here the presence of the priest is infrequent. At this level lay people are seen to be more actively involved in the pastoral ministry of the Church than at the parish and diocesan levels. At this level the principle of subsidiarity has been seen to work. Such a scenario points to the need of the Church in Mbarara to rethink the parish structure. The value of *communio* underlying the structure of the parish as the basic structure of the Church is lived more in the structures below the parish (*hiikas* and centres). From the sociological point of view, solidarity among the people of Mbarara is expressed in villages where people live close to each other. Likewise, pastorally speaking, *communio* is best lived in the village churches where people live close to each other. The definition of a parish as a community is in this context, therefore, foreign. The parish in Mbarara is a consortium of many village church communities.

The situation described implies that the Archdiocese of Mbarara ought to strengthen the role of the laity in the mission and ministry of the Church more at the sub-parish structures. Let the lay faithful be delegated to baptize, be Church witnesses at marriages, as they have been administering Holy Communion, at these levels. This is because it would be more meaningful that sacraments be celebrated where communities gather for celebration of their life events such as births, marriages, initiation rites, and deaths. Structural adaptation of the Church ministry is an important aspect of inculturation—for an inculturation that touches the beliefs and cultural practices of a people, must also touch the structures that govern their society.

This dissertation is by no means a conclusive study of the mission of the Church in Mbarara Archdiocese. It is intended to be a contribution to this mission while focusing on just one aspect of it—the lay faithful's role. It is hoped that it will help in the implementation of the teaching of the 1986 synod of Mbarara.

This study, it is hoped, will make a twofold contribution outside the confines of Mbarara Archdiocese. Firstly, by its practical application of the canons on the diocesan synod,

and the canons related to the lay faithful's role in the mission of the Church, it contributes to the interpretation and application of the norms of canon law in the local Church. Secondly, no particular Church can be said to be complete in its pastoral organization. As the bishops in the 1987 synod on the laity noted, "individual churches receive from the riches of other churches."³ So the wealth of the pastoral adaptations of the church in Uganda and Mbarara in particular could be adopted by those churches especially the older ones (in Europe and North America) which are experiencing a dearth of priests. Their situation, though, is different from the one of Mbarara and many other African dioceses. The older Churches have parishes closer to the people and had sufficient priests to minister to them. Now a number of their parishes are without priests. The younger Churches did not have priests to begin with and still do not have them in most of their Christian community churches. So sub-parish structures were created to address this situation. This is where the lay faithful play an active part in the Church's ministry to keep the Christian faith growing. The priestless parishes in older churches could use this approach of lay ministry and Eucharistic centres discussed earlier in this study.

The older churches gave Africa the faith. In turn, from the African church these churches could learn how to adapt to the circumstances whereby there are no priests in some Christian communities. These churches gave the African church missionary priests, and now from Africa they may learn and adopt the ministry of the catechist not only as teacher of faith but also as a minister of worship and a Christian community leader.

Africa has been seen as the hope of the Church due to its growing numbers of Catholics. Mbarara Archdiocese is certainly among the growing churches. This growth is fostered to a great extent by the lay Christian leaders and catechists in the sub-parish village churches. For as Vatican II teaches, a Church cannot fully live without the involvement of the lay faithful (*Ad gentes*, no. 21).

³ Proposition 27 of the 1987 Synod of Bishops, see *Origins*, 17 (1987), p. 505.

APPENDIX
MBARARA DIOCESE SYNODAL ACTS¹
(DECREES, EXHORTATIONS, FIVE YEAR PLAN)

PREFACE

The participants in the First Diocesan Synod of Mbarara Diocese submitted 265 recommendations to the Bishop for his consideration. These considerations were consequently studied and examined by His Lordship. With the help of his consultors, the Bishop went on to divide the said recommendations into three main categories under which they are herein presented, namely Decrees, Exhortations and a Five Year Plan.

The Bishop then appointed a Post Synodal Committee to which he entrusted the responsibility of editing, codifying and publishing the Synodal Acts. Among these Acts are the 15 Position Papers which will be published at a later date. Because of the need to make public the Synodal Acts and to start working on them, the Post Synodal Committee decided to publish a photostat text of the Decrees, Exhortations and a Five Year Plan. A printed form of all the Synodal Acts will be put out at a later date.

The Post Synodal Committee would like to express its gratitude to Miss Anne Bororoza for having typed the part of the Synodal Acts that is contained in this booklet. Members of the Post Synodal Committee.

¹ The formatting of the synodal acts has been altered from the original text to conform to the formatting used in the dissertation.

ACT OF PROMULGATION

To my brothers in the Priesthood, Religious and other fellow Christians in Mbarara Diocese,

You have all been eagerly waiting to see what came out of our First Diocesan Synod which we celebrated in Kitabi Seminary from 26 August to 6 September. After prayerful consideration and due consultations, and in the spirit of the theme of the Synod, "United in Christ Our Redeemer" I am happy to promulgate today, 2 March 1987, the Synodal Acts. In doing this I am deeply grateful to all those who have devoted their time and energy to the preparation and celebration of the Diocesan Synod, and more especially to the members of the Post Synodal Committee to whom I entrusted the responsibility of editing and codifying the Synodal Acts. I would like to draw your attention to the importance of these decrees and declarations in the triple form they are fundamentally drawn from the synodal recommendations that were submitted for my consideration by the participants in the Synod.

The adjustments which have been done were made in the light of the voting on the recommendations during the Synod and also by taking into consideration the good of the whole Diocese as a part of the universal Church.

In the first place, we have synodal decrees which by their very nature are particular laws binding either all Catholics or particular groups of the people of God in Mbarara Diocese, as the nature and content of these decrees specify. In this regard, I would like to inform you that on 1 January 1987 I promulgated statutes for priests in Mbarara Diocese. These statutes will serve as directives containing guidelines to help priests in carrying out the duties.

Secondly, there are exhortations which concern issues that I recommend to the Catholics of this Diocese for observation. Although they are not laws, they nevertheless contain points and reminders which will help us in carrying out the duties entrusted to us. The third category of the Synodal Acts is made up of ideas for a Five Year Plan. This section contains ideas that need a certain period of time before they can be realised. I call upon all those concerned with their execution to start working on them immediately. In this regard, the Planning Committee of the Diocesan Curia and the Planning Committees at other levels are called upon to act promptly and diligently.

With the promulgation of the Synodal Acts, we are embarking on the third phase of

the Synod, namely the implementation period. This period, like the first two, viz. preparation and celebration, needs our prayers and concerted efforts so that each one of us can come to the full participation in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ. Moved by the Spirit of Christ, let each one of us apply himself/herself assiduously, individually or communally, in carrying out what will be asked of us in this period. I am asking the Post Synodal Committee to devise means of explaining these Acts to all the Catholics of Mbarara Diocese. In order to give ourselves time to study and understand the decrees in particular, I decree that they shall assume force of law on 1 May 1987.

For the greater glory of God, let us joyfully enter this new phase in the life of our Diocese seeking to promote and build on the work started by the first missionaries. I commend you to the protection and intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, of the Holy Martyrs and of St. Augustine, our Diocesan Patron.

Given at my house, Nyamitanga, on the 2 March 1987.

+ J. B. Kakubi

BISHOP OF MBARARA

DECREES

CHAPTER I: THE TEACHING MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Christ has entrusted the deposit of faith to the Church, so that by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it might guard the revealed truth, penetrate it more intimately, proclaim it faithfully and explain it. (Can. 747).

It is the mission and the right of the Church to preach the Gospel to all peoples, using effective means of social communication. This mission and right devolve upon all the members of the Church, but in varying degrees.

In view of the importance of this Mission, I decree that:

CATECHUMENATE

1. The Pastoral Commission shall organize a comprehensive syllabus for the Catechumenate programme be divided into three stages as a policy of uniformity in the Diocese.

The whole period from the time a non-baptised person or a child not at school comes for instruction up to the end of the catechumenate shall be 3 years.

2. a) The pastoral Commission shall establish a uniform syllabus and time table for the stages and make available books recommended for the Catechumenate.

b) The liturgical rites leading to Baptism shall be divided throughout the Catechumenate as suggested by Vatican Council II.

3. Sponsors shall be chosen early during the Catechumenate and they shall be present at all the ceremonies when possible.

4. Priests in parishes shall personally give instruction to Catechumens frequently, and they shall occasionally supervise the preparation and/or teaching done by catechists.

The best time to do that would be morning hours for the Catechumenate at the parish.

5. Where possible all catechumens shall attend their *mugigi* at the parish.

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS AND PARENTS

6. Courses shall be given at different levels, parish, centre and *hiika*, to train parents in their important role of educating their children in the faith.

7. Teachers of Religious Education shall receive refresher courses on Christian formation and instruction, according to their teaching level.

This shall be done at the parish, deanery and diocesan levels. The Education Commission shall organize these courses, or encourage parishes and deaneries to implement them.

ROLE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS

8. Religious leaders shall show more interest in schools by visiting them, initiating or animating religious movements in them, and celebrating the liturgy for them as much as possible.

Each parish shall have a priest in charge of schools where there are two priests or more; otherwise the parish priest shall take on this responsibility.

9. Lack of enlightened faith on the part of the faithful who engage in syncretistic practices, along with lack of appropriate pastoral care by pastors, is one of the causes of such practices. For that reason, pastors shall endeavour to instruct those concerned with suitable pastoral care.

10. The priest-in-charge shall see to it that all schools within his parish receive the benefits of Christian formation and that this be arranged in conjunction with the Education Commission and relevant government authorities where and if necessary.

HOMILIES

11. Priests and catechists shall prepare their homilies very diligently and deliver them clearly, normally within 15 minutes.

Priests and Catechists shall prepare and give their homilies according to the needs, the lives and the actual circumstances of the faithful to whom they are ministering.

CHAPTER II: THE SANCTIFYING ROLE OF THE CHURCH

“The Church carries out its office of sanctifying in a special way in the sacred liturgy, which is an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. In the liturgy, by the use of signs perceptible to the senses, our sanctification is symbolised and, in a manner appropriate to each

sign, is brought about,” (can. 834). All the faithful, each according to his or her vocation, participates in this sanctifying office of Christ who calls us to the holiness of His Father and to the perfection of charity. In view of enhancing this holiness, I decree that:

12. A study of the inculturation of the liturgy shall be initiated in view of making necessary adaptations in the rituals.

13. The Diocesan Pastoral Commission shall set up a Liturgical Committee with branches in parishes. The Committee will advise on appropriate symbolic postures and gestures for liturgical celebrations, on suitable music and art, keeping in mind our cultural heritage as well as the dignity of formal liturgical celebrations.

MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION

14. A child born into a good practising Catholic family shall be baptised within the first few weeks, (can.867).

15. The *hiika* Council shall be responsible for finding out whether the conditions for baptising a child are fulfilled and advise the priest accordingly.

16. With regard to baptising the children of the lapsed Catholics the provision of can. 868 shall be followed.

17. Christians who want to convert to the Catholic faith shall receive an instruction of at least three months, and a special rite of receiving them into the Catholic Church shall be drawn up and followed.

18. Baptism during sickness shall be administered with due correctness and dignity that befit the sacrament, and the minister, parents and god-parents shall subsequently assume their responsibility.

19. The school children who like to receive confirmation shall have completed primary 6 and/or have preferably attained the apparent age of 14 years.

20. Extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist shall be trained in the proper discharge of their duties prior to being appointed by the Bishop.

21. To cater for the needs of the children and the youth, Holy Mass adapted to their interests and needs shall be regularly celebrated for them.

22. For Holy Communion to be administered to children the requirement of having attained "sufficient reason" in can. 913, shall be adhered to.
23. Parents shall be explained their role of preparing the child for receiving holy Communion, and the priest shall ensure that the child has received this preparation before admitting him/her to Holy Communion.
24. Priests shall endeavour to be more available for individual and integral Confession and absolution as a rule; general absolution shall be given as an exception in accordance with can. 961.
25. More Catechesis based on *Omugyenzo gw'okusiiga n'okwecurengyera abarwaire* shall be used to explain the sacrament of anointing the sick.
26. The Diocese shall set aside a specific day for the faithful to pray for, visit and help the sick and the aged.
27. The clergy shall respond as promptly as possible to sick calls unless the priests are lawfully impeded.
28. Giving pre-marital instructions shall be taken as one of the priorities of the priests' apostolate, and they shall see to it that these instructions are given, preferably to young people, even before they are engaged.
29. Courses and retreats shall be organised to help married people especially those with difficulties.
30. Marriage counselling committees, composed of exemplary married couples and of pastors shall be established in each parish.
31. The Pastoral Commission shall set up a committee to research into Catholic marriage in all its aspects, in view of enhancing pastoral care for married people.
32. In Mbarara Diocese the Feast of the Holy Family shall be a day for families, and shall be celebrated with fitting liturgical ceremony and festivities. Families shall be encouraged to participate in the liturgy as a family unit.
33. Priests shall give greater attention to sacramentals whose significance shall be explained to the faithful. A ritual of various blessings in Runyankore-Rukiga shall be composed and published.

34. Since syncretistic practices exist partly because of insufficient provision for the emotional expression in our liturgies, the Pastoral Commission shall take immediate steps to correct this deficiency and make more room for sacramentals in the pastoral activity of the Church.

35. Family prayer shall be encouraged, in which, in particular, men shall be encouraged to participate and to foster. A simple prayer book shall be made available.

36. The Feast Day of St. Augustine, the Patron of Mbarara Diocese, shall be celebrated in the whole diocese with due solemnity.

37. With regard to abstinence and mortification, the Catholics of Mbarara Diocese shall follow the universal church law and that approved by the Uganda Episcopal Conference.

That law reads: "Every Friday of the year is a day of Penance. All Catholics from the age of fifteen are bound to do Penance: either to abstain from meat, or from some other food of their choice or from alcohol or tobacco, or they should perform some exercise of piety or work of charity".

38. The Holy Martyrs of Uganda shall be made more known to and venerated by our people.

39. Pastors and christian communities shall adapt a compassionate and understanding attitude towards lapsed catholics who shall be received into the community and to the sacraments after proper instruction.

CHAPTER III: ECUMENISM

The Vatican II Council Fathers recognised the action of the Holy Spirit in prayer, word and deed, towards unity of those who believe in Christ. All Catholics are called upon to play their part in the search for movement towards this unity. In view of promoting this unity and the spirit of ecumenism in Mbarara Diocese, I decree that:

40. As animators of the faithful, Catholic leaders shall be the first:-

a) To study and understand in particular, the aim, objectives and the need for Christian Unity (Jn. 17; I Cor 13).

b) To examine the serious causes of divisions amongst Christ's followers, distinguish between matters of faith and those of Church structure, acknowledge points of agreement and disagreements, focus on the positive elements and accept that unity does not mean uniformity.

c) To reflect upon their personal attitudes towards the Church leaders and communities of other denominations, and to strive after a real spirit of conversion and reconciliation.

d) To understand and respect each denomination's liturgical and other forms of worship and traditions, and to adopt ecumenically agreed terminology and joint Bible translation throughout.

e) To educate the Catholic faithful ecumenically in all the above areas, fostering in them the true spirit of christian charity and unity.

41. There shall be an exchange of formal and informal contacts between Catholics and other Christians.

42. Among the formal contacts, the following are to be noted:

a) Co-operating with Christians of other denominations in works of charity and non-profit-making social development projects, such as fund raising in support of social, educational and health care projects.

b) Co-operating in undertaking and supporting joint religious projects, such as the Joint Bible translation and dissemination of other good literature.

c) Praying together, particularly on public civic occasions, and more specifically during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

d) Reviving a Diocesan Council for promoting ecumenical relations. Its membership shall include people of various backgrounds.

43. In granting permission for a mixed marriage, the local Ordinary shall make sure that conditions of canon 1125 are fulfilled:

a) "The Catholic party is to declare that he or she is prepared to remove dangers of defecting from the faith, and is to make a sincere promise to do all in his or her power in order that all the children be baptised and brought up in the Catholic Church;

b) The other party is to be informed in good time of these promises to be made by the Catholic party, so that it is certain that he or she is truly aware of the promise and of the obligation of the catholic party;

c) Both parties are to be instructed about the purposes and essential properties of marriage, which are not to be excluded by either contractant."

44. A Catholic can validly marry a non-baptised party if conditions of canon 1125 are fulfilled, and especially if the two parties are already in cohabitation.

CHAPTER IV: SYNCRETISTIC PRACTICES

Syncretism is an observable pastoral problem in Mbarara Diocese. It is understood as the fusion of some elements from Christian faith and religious practice with some elements from African Traditional Religions, brought about by Christians and resulting in the blurring of the real nature of the Christian religion. In view of ascertaining the exact nature of this phenomenon and finding pastoral solutions to the problems it raises, I decree that:

45. Due to the insufficient knowledge on syncretistic practices, both on the part of the faithful and the clergy, a Diocesan team composed of experts in relevant fields, such as sociology, psychology and psychiatry shall be set up to study and research into these practices and recommend appropriate pastoral action.

46. Steps shall be taken to educate the faithful and the religious leaders on the problem of syncretistic practices. Religious leaders shall avoid condemnatory attitudes, and shall instead deal with the people who are affected in a sympathetic way.

CHAPTER V: PRIESTLY LIFE

"By sacred ordination and by the mission they receive from their Bishops, priests are promoted to the service of Christ, the Teacher, the Priest and the King. They share in His ministry of unceasingly building up the Church on earth into the People of God, the Body of Christ, and the Temple of the Holy Spirit" (*Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, no. 1).

To enhance this service of priests in Mbarara Diocese, as defined by Vatican II, I decree that:

47. a) Since the gift of celibacy is a prerequisite to priesthood in the Latin Church, special care shall be taken in finding out if candidates to the priesthood have this gift, and thereafter human and spiritual means shall be provided by the formators to nurture and protect this gift as recommended by canon 277.

b) The competent authority and the priests themselves shall look for ways of fostering a balanced social and emotional life which help in preserving the said gift.

48. Priests have a special obligation to seek holiness. To further this end, priests in Mbarara Diocese shall adhere to what is prescribed by canon 276 and by particular law.
49. Since scriptural life needs to be sustained by assiduous intellectual exercise, priests shall not content themselves with Major Seminary intellectual formation, but shall do private study and avail themselves of the facilities at their disposal for their on-going formation. An On-Going Formation Committee for priests shall be set up to further this end.
50. Priests shall form an association to help them know each other better and support one another spiritually and materially.
51. The Bishop shall see to it that his priests live a decent life as befits their dignity and office.
52. Priests in Mbarara Diocese shall get some allowance apart from Mass stipends. This allowance shall be fixed and evaluated from time to time.
53. Priests shall follow the rules of prudence and moderation in drinking and in dealing with other people, as recommended by canon law and moral theology.
54. There are natural differences which exist, e.g. differences in age, qualifications, places of origin, material and economic standards, appointments, etc... In his ministry as a unifier, a priest shall not entertain any form of division, ill feeling, sectarianism or discrimination based on these natural differences. Let all concerned work for promoting the bonds of brotherhood as recommended in canon 275.
55. If divisions exist among priests, and fraternal correction fails to bring about reconciliation, a competent diocesan authority shall advise and correct the priests concerned. If this fails, this same authority shall take stern measures against the offenders in accordance with law.

CHAPTER VI: CONSECRATED LIFE

Consecrated life is a gift of the Spirit to the Church, a gift which calls the individual religious and his/her community to live a life modelled on that of Jesus Christ, and continue the mission of Christ, which consists in making the merciful love of God known to the world. The religious responds to that call of God by living a life of prayer and by embracing the evangelical counsels, i.e. the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. Recognizing this special gift of consecrated life in its multiple forms in our diocese, I decree that:

56. The Diocesan Director of Vocations and the Directors/Directresses of Vocations in the different Institutes of Consecrated life in the diocese shall form an association to promote vocations to the consecrated and priestly life.

57. Religious men and women working for the diocese shall be remunerated according to their qualifications, experience and the work they do, and according to the prevailing government salary scales.

58. The Diocesan authorities, and the Institutes of Consecrated Life serving in the diocese jointly have a long term plan for the needs of the diocese and plan for and train the personnel accordingly.

CHAPTER VII: VOCATION AND FORMATION

Each vocation is associated with the plan of the Father whose holiness we are all called to imitate. Each vocation also is associated with the salvific mission of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. For that reason it becomes radiant and strong in the light of God and of the Holy Church. Because of the importance of priestly and consecrated life in particular, and because of the need to discern and promote such vocations, I decree that:

59. The nature of vocation shall be clearly explained to the faithful. Literature on priestly and religious vocation shall be made available, especially to the youth, setting down the requirements and conditions of admission to seminary training and consecrated life.

60. Christians shall be made aware of their responsibility to volunteer accurate information required by the Bishop, or Director of Vocations concerning candidates for priesthood or consecrated life.

61. A network of Vocations Committees shall be established at all levels to work with the Vocations Director. Lay Apostolate Movements, youth movements, renewal movements and Altar servers shall be used as channels for promotion of vocations among the youth from an early age.

62. A Vocations Day shall be observed in a special way in the Diocese each year.

63. In Mbarara Diocese, there shall be a preparatory and minor seminaries where vocations to the priesthood shall be nurtured.

64. There shall be established a Board of Governors for the seminaries, consisting of priests, religious and lay people.
65. The staff in seminaries shall be carefully appointed; the staff in the Minor Seminary, shall include a rector, a vice-rector, a spiritual director and a dean of studies to be appointed by the Bishop.
66. Seminarians shall report to the Parish Priest from time to time during the holidays so that he knows them individually and can enlist their help when necessary. Priests in parishes shall make a point to meet and know the seminarians from their parish.
67. Christian communities shall welcome seminarians, involve them in the life of the Christian community and encourage them to live up to the demands of their vocation.
68. A clear cut policy on fostering vocations outside the minor seminary shall be drawn up by the competent authority and shall be made known to the public.

CHAPTER VIII: CATECHISTS

The Report on the Plenary Assembly of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples (April 1970) states: "The Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, calls certain members of her faithful as co-workers to the special vocation of the catechist, inspired by the same Holy Spirit, they respond to this call and thus receive from God a special charism, recognised by the Church, enabling them to render witness to Christ." In view of enhancing the work of catechists I decree that:

69. The ministry of the catechist in Mbarara Diocese shall rightly be presented and explained to the clergy and the laity.
70. The Bishop's "Pastoral Directives regarding Catechists and their Work" shall be revised in the light of the Synod's recommendations.
71. The institution of Head Catechist shall be maintained, revived or started in all the parishes of Mbarara Diocese. The Parish Priest in consultation with his parish council shall define the duties of the Head Catechist.

72. The Bishop, in consultation with the Diocesan council of catechists, shall appoint a disciplinary committee to which matters of catechists' misconduct or disputes shall be referred. It shall devolve upon the Ordinary to dismiss a trained catechist.

73. A catechist under formation shall receive an allowance to help him look after his family adequately. The amount of this allowance and who is to provide it shall be determined in advance by the Bishop.

CHAPTER IX: LAY APOSTOLATE

The laity, like all Christ's faithful, are deputed to their apostolate by baptism and confirmation, and by this apostolate they share in the salvific mission of the Church. Hence they have the obligation and right to see that the divine message of salvation reaches all people of all times and places, and for that reason, I decree that:

74. The Church in Mbarara Diocese shall organise and promote the apostolate of the laity so that the different groups which constitute the laity may radiate their influence in the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

75. The constituted Lay Apostolate Movements (LAMs) in the diocese shall review their constitutions and objectives in order to have a more efficient and adapted lay apostolate. In addition to this, the Red Cross, Girl Guides and Boy Scouts movements shall be revived or started in the diocese.

76. Women shall be fully integrated in all lay apostolate work as much as possible and shall be given such duties as befits them.

77. The youth shall be involved in lay apostolate work at all levels and special attention shall be paid to solving their social, economic and political problems.

78. The lay people shall pay attention to the problems of the sick in hospitals.

79. At parish level, priests shall take more interest in LAMs and shall help in establishing Lay Apostolate Councils at all levels, which shall meet at least three times a year.

80. The Diocesan Secretary General for Lay Apostolate shall organize and coordinate lay apostolate activities in the diocese with the advice of a chaplain, according to the constitution of the lay apostolate.

81. In order to help in the promotion of the lay apostolate, a competent full-time Chaplain shall be appointed.

CHAPTER X: POLITICAL AWARENESS

Political education and awareness are important for all citizens. "The (Second Vatican) Council exhorts Christians, as citizens... to perform their duties faithfully in the spirit of the Gospel". (*Gaudium et spes*: no.43).

Political structures shall be engaged in by all citizens to effectively play an active role in the establishment of the foundations of the political life of the community, and in the administration of public affairs... (based on *Gaudium et spes*: no.75).

Taking into account the imbalances in the political history of Uganda, and in particular the difficulties faced by Catholics in political and civil administration spheres, I decree that:

82. Catholics shall attend political rallies and meetings. They shall be ready to participate in political activities, in accordance with each one's calling and abilities.

83. In order to promote political awareness, relevant literature on topics of political ideology and history, and on related economic systems, plus other political publications, shall be made available, and where possible, in the vernacular.

84. A Diocesan branch of the Justice and Peace Commission, with sub-branches in all parishes shall be established. Its duties shall include organising political education. All Catholic leaders shall attend political education courses for promoting human rights which are to be given by experts in the field.

85. Catholics exercise their rights, and fulfil their duty of democratically electing legitimate government at all levels; and conversely, of rejecting bad government, using just means.

86. Catholics who hold political office shall give good example by rendering honest and dedicated service.

CHAPTER XI: EDUCATION

Education should offer our children and young persons balanced formation, to develop their physical, moral and intellectual talents for a sense of responsibility, and right use of freedom and be ready to take an active part in life.

So Catholics shall consider education as of great importance and schools as the principal means of helping parents to fulfil their role in education... (cc. 795 & 796).

87. Priorities for our Diocese in the field of education shall be as follows:

- a) Primary Education**
- b) Secondary Education**
- c) Nursery Education**
- d) Technical Education**
- e) Teacher Education**
- f) Business Education**
- g) Agricultural Education (Farm Schools)**
- h) University Education**

88. More opportunities for girls' education shall be provided at all levels.

89. There shall be chaplains for schools and educational Institutions. In the absence of chaplains, priests working in parishes shall make school apostolate an important part of their pastoral programme, in order to help pupils, students and teachers.

90. There shall be a Diocesan Education Fund to help primary, and post-primary schools and the needy children.

91. The Diocesan Education Commission in conjunction with the Social Services and Development Commission and the lay apostolate council shall organize and promote adult education.

CHAPTER XII: MEDICAL HEALTH CARE

Recognising the invaluable gift of health, which should embrace the whole person, and in view of improving and expanding the existing services to enhance medical health care in our diocese, I decree that:

92. a) The Diocesan Social Services and Development Commission, through the Medical Health Care Committee, shall be charged with the duty of improving existing health care services.

b) It shall furthermore be charged to plan a proper and equitable distribution of diocesan medical units.

93. All projects in the medical health care field shall first be submitted to the Social Services and Development Commission, prior to being approved by the competent diocesan authority.

94. In order to enhance co-ordination and concerted action in the medical health care field at diocesan and national levels, the Diocesan Social Services and Development Director shall be responsible for co-ordinating the activities of the different medical health care units and services.

95. a) The Diocesan Social Services and Development Commission shall have as one of its priorities the promotion of preventive medical health care.

b) Since information and education are the basis for promoting effective preventive medical health care, Primary Health Care (P.H.C.) programmes, shall be extended to cover all areas in the diocese, in order to inform sensitize and educate people about the need for improved hygiene and action to eradicate diseases.

CHAPTER XIII: THE MEANS OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Catholic Church, particularly in the Decree of the Second Vatican Council on the "Means of Social Communication" (*Inter Mirifica*, 1963); and in its subsequent "Pastoral Instruction on the Means of Social Communication" (*Communio et Progressio*, 1971), recognizes the importance of the press, radio, television, sound/video tape, the cinema and other means of social communication, in the secular and religious fields, and accordingly encourages their promotion and effective utilization in evangelisation. In that regard, I decree that:

96. The faithful of Mbarara Diocese shall be exhorted to pray, particularly on the occasion of World Social Communications Day and to give generously, for the promotion and effective use of the means of social communication in evangelisation at diocesan, national and AMECEA levels.

97. The *Ageeteeraine* shall emphasize as its main aim and objective, the promotion of dissemination and fostering of christian values. It shall also cater for the promotion of political and other secular values.

93. Writing for, circulation, reading and dissemination of the *Ageeteeraine* and of other religious-oriented and secular publications, shall be promoted at all levels of Christian community, through the leadership of Social Communication Committees.

99. Formation of a reading habit amongst our people shall be fostered through increased circulation of *Ageeteeraine*, of other newspapers and periodicals, books of *Omuhandagw'Okumanya* and others. Those reading materials shall be made available in Diocesan Bookshops, and in book stalls at parish and centre levels.

CHAPTER XIV: SELF-RELIANCE

"Development is the promotion of the good of the people, every person and the whole person: the whole person in both the spiritual and material aspects of life, and every person, the young, the old, the rich, the poor and the middle class.

If the Church is the people, and any development is for the people, all people should be involved in their development, so that their human dignity is preserved and the development is meaningful to them. No projects should, therefore, be imposed on them, nor demands for money made without their understanding of the aim and utility." (Pope Paul VI, *The Development of People: Populorum Progressio*, encyclical of 1967). In order to promote the above, I decree that:

100. The Social Services and Development Commission, and when necessary, in liaison with other Commissions, shall help to promote the development of our people, at all levels.

101. a) People shall be educated to appreciate more the advantages of co-operative effort, e.g. wholesale purchase and distribution of farm-implements and livestock-drugs, sale of farm-produce, such as coffee, etc.

b) Participation by Catholics in Savings and Credit Societies, and in the newly established Rural Centenary Development Trust (Bank) shall be encouraged.

c) (i) Agricultural projects shall be promoted at all levels in the diocese; and some communal farming projects shall be embarked upon.

(ii) In particular a keen interest shall be taken throughout the diocese by families, communities and institutions, in afforestation on small and large scale.

d) Literacy programmes shall be promoted in liaison with relevant government ministries.

102. a) All diocesan enterprises shall have well kept accounts, separately from other funds of the Diocese.

b) The Church financial year shall be uniform for all parishes and institutions.

103. The *kishare* system shall be used for the levying of tithes throughout the Diocese.

104. Financial Committees shall be established in each parish, and shall be charged with:-

a) Drawing-up of the parish budget, and submitting it for approval by the Parish Council.

b) Coordinating Centre and *Hiika* Finance Committees.

c) Ensuring that parish funds are properly received, administered and accounted for.

d) Seeing to it that all parish property is well cared for.

105. a) Existing viable diocesan enterprises shall be developed further.

b) Some new projects shall be undertaken, on the basis of sound feasibility study. They shall include:

(i) purchase and development of commercial and residential premises.

(ii) Re-establishment of a Diocesan Brick and Tile Factory.

c) Diocesan vehicles could be made available for hire-service.

CHAPTER XV: CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

The Church concept of power and authority is based on the ecclesiology of Vatican II which presents the hierarchy as servants and the end of Church law as the salvation of mankind. The ecclesiological and canonical doctrines also require that all the faithful actively participate in building the Body of Christ. The different diocesan administrative structures ought to be geared towards this end.

The following, therefore, are pertinent decrees:

106. The Bishop is the head of the diocese. In the administration of the diocese he is assisted by the following:

a) At diocesan level

(i) The diocesan curia which shall include, among others, the Vicar(s) General and Episcopal Vicar(s), Chancellor, Notaries, Treasurer, Heads of diocesan commissions, representative of the councils for priests, religious, laity and catechists;

(ii) diocesan synod;

(iii) the pastoral council;

(iv) deanery and

(v) parish.

b) At parish level

The parish priest and the parish council, zone (optional), centre and *hiika* officials and organs.

107. Courses in administration shall be given in our church institutions of learning and of formation and to all who hold administrative positions in the diocese.

108. The suitability and competence of a candidate for any administrative office in the Church shall be in accordance with the norms of universal and particular law, and these qualities shall be periodically reviewed by the competent authority.

109. There shall always be a moderator of the diocesan curia, whose responsibility shall be to ensure that decisions taken by different ecclesiastical organs are duly implemented.

110. Involvement of the laity and the religious in administrative decision-making at Parish and diocesan levels is a right and duty. Their opinions shall not be lightly discarded.

111. The various diocesan and parish commissions and committees shall have some religious and lay persons incorporated.

112. a) The administrative functions of planning, delegation, co-ordination, communication, writing reports, keeping records and periodic evaluation shall be effected by all church office bearers.

b) There shall be a planning committee in the diocesan Curia, in each diocesan commission and parish council.

113. a) Competent authority shall clearly spell out conditions of employment and service for all persons employed by the Church in accordance with the provisions of Church and civil law, and human decency.

b) For the remuneration of Church employees, the employer shall pay a just wage and give inducement and fringe benefits to the employee where possible.

EXHORTATIONS

THE TEACHING MISSION OF THE CHURCH

THE BIBLE

1. In our family catechesis let a) Religious leaders encourage and promote the daily use of the Bible in the family and Basic Ecclesial Communities, b) parishes organize popular Bible Courses for B.E.C. leaders, c) teachers, catechists and all religious leaders give time each day to Bible reading study and prayer.

HOMILIES

2. Let priests and catechists at the monthly meeting devote part of that time to sharing on the reading of the Bible in preparation of their homilies.

3. Let all preachers provide for and make use of the "feed-back" on their homilies.

CHURCH AND SOCIETY

4. Let our Church Leaders in their teaching mission take the initiative of being well informed and have the courage to speak out on matters of social, economic and political import, according to the demands of the times. They will especially denounce any violation of human rights and without delay publicize their statements.

SANCTIFYING ROLE OF THE CHURCH

5. Let parents be considerate in the amount of bride price they ask for.

6. The Pastoral Commission is asked to make available sound literature on devotions and to suggest fitting devotions to the faithful.

7. On certain occasions, the priests are asked to prepare the sick for a communal celebration of the sacrament of the sick.

PRIESTLY LIFE

8. It has been observed with concern that misconduct by some priests is scandalous, tainting the priestly vocation and hampering their ministry. Let the priests and lay people who are friendly to priests who have problems approach, and advise them.

CONSECRATED LIFE

9. Let each Director/Directress of Vocations seek to have information and literature about the existing Institutes of Consecrated Life in Uganda and direct the youth interested in consecrated life accordingly.

10. Let Christian communities do all they can to materially support a candidate to the consecrated life, who is unable to support him/herself in formation. The Bishop is advised to appeal to the financially better-off Christians for sponsorship of the religious in their formation.

11. The religious sisters who train as catechists are encouraged to do pastoral work as catechists.

12. Let women, both religious and lay, be recruited and encouraged to work as catechists.

LAY APOSTOLATE

13. Let attention be drawn to areas which need improvement in the lay apostolate: more education and information concerning the role of LAMs in the Church, diversification of membership in LAMs, involving more men, better qualified leadership and proper supervision at all levels.

14. Let priests, catechists and religious offer leaders of LAMs spiritual and material support, understanding and cooperation.

15. Let parents take the initiative to help their children in solving their problems in relation to leisure and proper attitudes towards sex by providing proper recreational facilities and adapted sex education and instruction. Parents need to be knowledgeable in these areas before they can satisfactorily help their children.
16. Let all efforts be made by the faithful to help the youth to put up self-help projects as proposed by MIJARC-YCW and secure vocational training that will help them get employment.
17. Let husband and wife join movements on family life and attend courses on that apostolate.
18. a) Let responsible parenthood which bases family planning on love between the spouses and on their responsibility to God as co-creators, be explained and emphasised to parents.
b) Let a systematic enlightenment through courses and seminars on the subject be organized by a diocesan team, with special emphasis on the natural method of family planning.
c) In this regard, let the concerns of the AMECEA Assembly at Moshi, 1986 be studied and implemented as soon as possible.
19. Let visits by lay pastoral workers be encouraged in hospitals and prisons.
20. In prisons, a visiting justice shall be proposed for appointment to the Bishop to promote lay apostolate.
21. Let the bishop make arrangements with the competent government authorities and Ordinary of the Forces to get the necessary permission to appoint chaplains and lay apostolate workers in army barracks in the diocese.
22. Let Catholic church leaders acquire greater political awareness through training and through other appropriate means.
23. In order to acquire political awareness, let Catholics be interested and encouraged to attend political education courses.
24. Let it be appreciated that it is the inherent right and obligation of Catholics to seek and to take up government administrative jobs at various levels, despite the sacrifice it may entail.

FIVE YEAR PLAN

THE TEACHING MISSION OF THE CHURCH

1. The School Catechumenate shall have its own syllabus and time table which takes into consideration the time pupils sit for Primary Leaving Examinations.

A source book for a follow up catechesis after the Catechumenate shall be drawn up by the Pastoral Commission with the help of competent people.

ROLE OF TEACHERS AND PARENTS

2. The Education Commission shall examine and evaluate our Catholic educational institutions as to their active participation in the teaching mission of the Church.

3. The Diocesan Religious Education Office shall help to procure text books of religion for use in schools.

4. For Teacher Education (Colleges) the Bishop shall see to it that a tutor for religious education is appointed.

5. The Diocesan Education Office, through the National Education Office, shall continue to collaborate with the government and produce a syllabus for Religious Education in our schools. Such a syllabus shall be revised as need arises.

ROLE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS

6. The Education Commission shall encourage religious leaders to participate in School apostolate.

THE BIBLE

7. The Pastoral Commission shall publish Biblical commentaries and Bible themes for reference in vernacular.

HOMILIES

8. The Pastoral Commission shall publish or make available "guidelines" to aid priests and catechists in preparing their sermons.

9. Refresher courses in homiletics shall be organized for priests by the Pastoral Commission. The priests in turn will organize appropriate courses for their catechists at parish and centre levels.

BASIC ECCLESIAL COMMUNITIES (B.E.C.)

10. a) The Pastoral Commission shall help parishes in their endeavour to initiate and promote B.E.C. by publishing needed guidelines.
- b) The Pastoral Commission shall organize orientation courses for B.E.C. leaders at parish/centre level.
- c) All the parishes shall implement the desire of the Ugandan Bishops, as it has been the policy of the diocese, expressed in their recent Pastoral Letter entitled "With a New Heart and a New Spirit", i.e. to initiate and promote B.E.C., at least a few units in every parish.
- d) There shall be a periodic evaluation of the way they are progressing in pastoral meetings, at various levels, e.g. clergy, catechists, deanery meetings.

CHURCH AND SOCIETY

11. The Bishop shall set up an office to promote catechesis on family planning in accordance with the AMECEA document from the Moshi Assembly of 1986.

SANCTIFYING ROLE OF THE CHURCH

12. A book shall be published in Runyankore-Rukiga explaining the meaning of each sacrament, the preparation and conditions required for its reception, and the ceremony involved, to ensure uniformity of practice in the Diocese.
13. A book shall be published giving clear doctrinal indications to pastors and parents as to what Christians should be instructed about before the reception of each sacrament.
14. The Church shall provide relevant courses and publications to stimulate interest in prayer for youth. Catholic founded schools shall have a regular programme of Mass and prayer, and B.E.Cs shall take a special interest in the youth and try to involve them in prayer.

15. Because of the scarcity of priests, the Bishop shall present for examination by the Uganda Episcopal Conference the canonical and pastoral implications of delegating lay persons to assist at marriages in accordance with canon 1112.

ECUMENISM

16. The Pastoral Commission shall ensure that a sociological research and appraisal of mixed marriages of the past twenty years in carried out throughout the diocese.

PRIESTLY LIFE

17. The diocese shall establish a rest and holiday house for the priests.

18. The problems raised by the practice of the offering made for the celebration of Mass shall be presented for study by the Bishop to the Uganda Episcopal Conference.

CONSECRATED LIFE

19. The Vatican II Document on the Religious Life shall be translated into Runyankore-Rukiga and be made available to the faithful.

20. While encouraging self-reliance projects for every religious community, there shall also be a special diocesan budget to assist the religious in their needs.

21. Without prejudice to can. 1003 §1, the Bishop is asked to find out if catechists can be allowed to anoint the sick. If permission is given some catechists could be allowed to anoint the sick in special circumstances.

22. Selected candidates for formation shall have a sufficient, standard of formal education, at least P.7 for the *mahiika* and S.4 for the centres. These candidates shall receive proper formation to enable them to carry out their ministry effectively.

23. The Diocese shall initiate a programme for training enough qualified catechists, within or outside the Diocese, to cater for the pastoral needs of the Diocese.

24. The Diocese shall occasionally send selected candidates, or those who are already catechists and have the required standards, to higher institutions of learning, within or outside the country.

EDUCATION

The Diocesan Education Commission shall make a comprehensive study of our Church Schools with a view to suggesting means and ways of improving their status, staffing, scholastic materials and other facilities.

26. The Diocesan Education Commission shall help parents to Teachers Association to establish or re-establish Parents Management Committees and Catholic Teachers Guild.

27. The Diocesan Education Commission shall ensure that the District Education office will appoint catholic teachers to head our primary schools.

28. a) Parents shall be encouraged to take greater interest in the education of their children.

b) Priests, Parish Education Committees helped by the Education Commission shall launch a general programme to encourage parents to send their children to Catholic founded schools and to combat drop-outs.

29. The Diocesan Vocational Schools of St. Joseph's and St. and Cecilia's shall remain private, and be improved and expanded to cater for more students.

30. The Education Commission shall identify private schools which cannot be effectively managed by the parents and assist them to apply for appropriate grant aided status from the Ministry of Education.

31. Because of the importance of technical education, provision of more private and well equipped technical schools shall be encouraged.

32. The Diocese shall take it as a priority to provide qualified priests and religious for appointment to Teacher Education Colleges.

33. In view of the enormous work, the Diocesan Education Office should be even more personnel which shall include: Education Secretary, Assistant Education Secretary, Religious Education Adviser, with terms of reference clearly spelt out.

33. Catholics shall be encouraged to form a reading habit.

34. Non-literate people shall be encouraged to attend adult literacy courses.

35. Music shall be taught in school especially in houses of formation.

MEDICAL HEALTH CARE

36. In view of providing better medical and health care services, including procurement of drugs, the Diocese shall continue to co-operate with government authorities, seeking technical and financial help, as much as possible.
37. Recognising the need to ameliorate and extend existing diocesan medical units, the Synod, recommends setting up more dispensaries, maternity centres, and in particular, building one more diocesan hospital.
33. a) Since there is need for more medical personnel, the diocese shall up-grade Ibanda Nurses Training School, and establish a Midwifery Training School.
- b) Each parish shall aim at sponsoring the training of at least one nurse, yearly.
39. The Diocesan Social Services and Development Commission shall provide means for mobile clinics to cater for communities without easy access to medical services.
40. Since the occurrence of syncretistic practices is partly due to lack of sufficient and appropriate medical personnel and facilities, the Diocese shall look into the feasibility of redressing this situation.

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

41. Production of Catholic religious programmes in Runyankore-Rukiga for regular broadcasting by Radio Uganda/Uganda Television, shall be resumed as soon as possible by Mbarara Diocesan Liturgical Committee in collaboration with the Diocesan Social Communication Department.
42. In order to offer variety in such programmes, arrangements shall be made to train different preachers, choirs and worshipping communities to take turns in their production.
43. The editorship of *Ageeteeraine* could be entrusted to a lay staff, having a priest available for consultation on religious and moral issues. The lay editor shall be a good Catholic, a qualified journalist, with a good knowledge of Runyankore-Rukiga.
44. In order to enable the *Ageeteeraine* to publish more pictures and other illustrations, the Diocese shall adopt the off-set lithographic method of printing, or shall acquire a printing-block engraving machine.

45. In order to revise and standardize the literary forms and grammar of Runyankore-Rukiga, the Music and Literature (Muslit) Project Director and the *Ageeteeraine* Editor shall jointly request a relevant government ministry to convene and conduct a language conference, similar to the previous one, held as long ago as 1954.

46. In order to promote the political education and general knowledge of Catholics, a news agency shall be established at diocesan level, to make available for sale various newspapers and periodicals.

47. All book publishing work in the Diocese shall be reorganized, stream-lined, preferably by the *Omuhandu gw'Okumanya*, which shall be established as a fully-pledged publishing house. It shall have a full-time competent staff, provided with offices, other operating premises and appropriate means of transport.

48. The Diocese shall sponsor the preparation and publication of liturgical books, especially a Sunday and Daily Missal, a Lectionary and a revised comprehensive hymnal, up-to-date catechetical manuals and Bible commentaries, all in Runyankore-Rukiga.

49. Talented musicians with appropriate academic standard, could be sponsored by, or through the Diocese, to specialize in music within the country or abroad, with the view to subsequently teach that subject in our schools and to our church communities.

50. A music training school could be established as part of Music and Literature Project.

51. In order to become financially self-supporting, the Music and Literature Project shall organise music, dance and drama programmes for local and national paying audiences. Arrangements shall be made to have the best of such programmes recorded and filmed for broadcasting by Radio Uganda/Uganda Television, and for other uses. Substantial revenue could be earned from sale of music tapes, video-tapes, and from sale of transmission and re-production rights.

SELF-RELIANCE

52. All diocesan self-reliance enterprises shall employ qualified personnel, to enable them to render competent and efficient service.

53. A five year comprehensive self-reliance development plan shall be drawn-up by the competent authority.

54. Some small-scale industrial, commercial and handicraft projects shall be promoted at parish level, as means of generating income.

CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

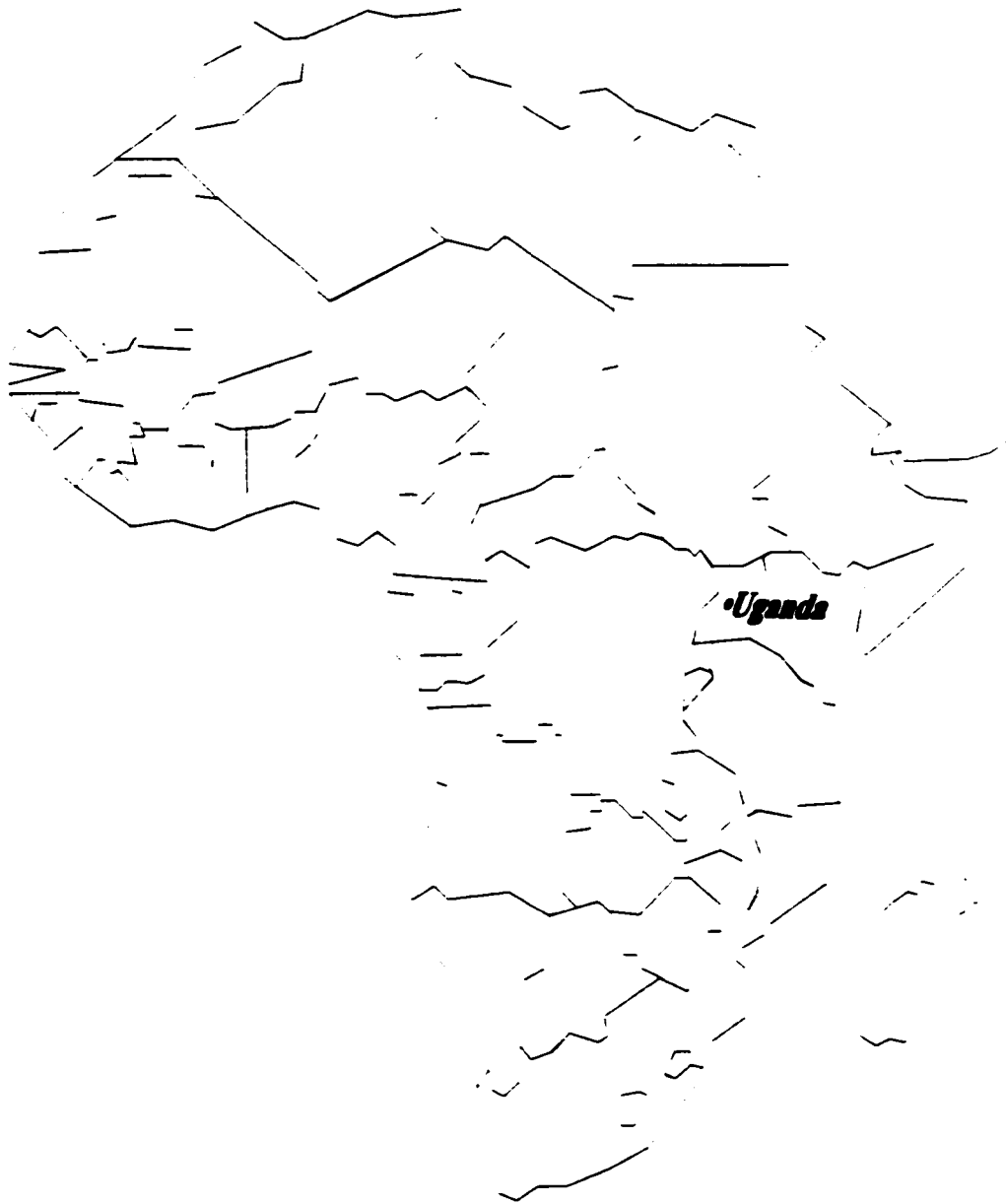
55. The Bishop may create new Diocesan Commissions as need arises, such as a Diocesan Commission for Urban Apostolate.

56. The Moderator of the Curia shall ensure that the heads of commissions complete their composition, i.e. have the members of their commissions appointed and the necessary committees set up.

57. Some of the Diocesan Commissions could be headed by lay persons.

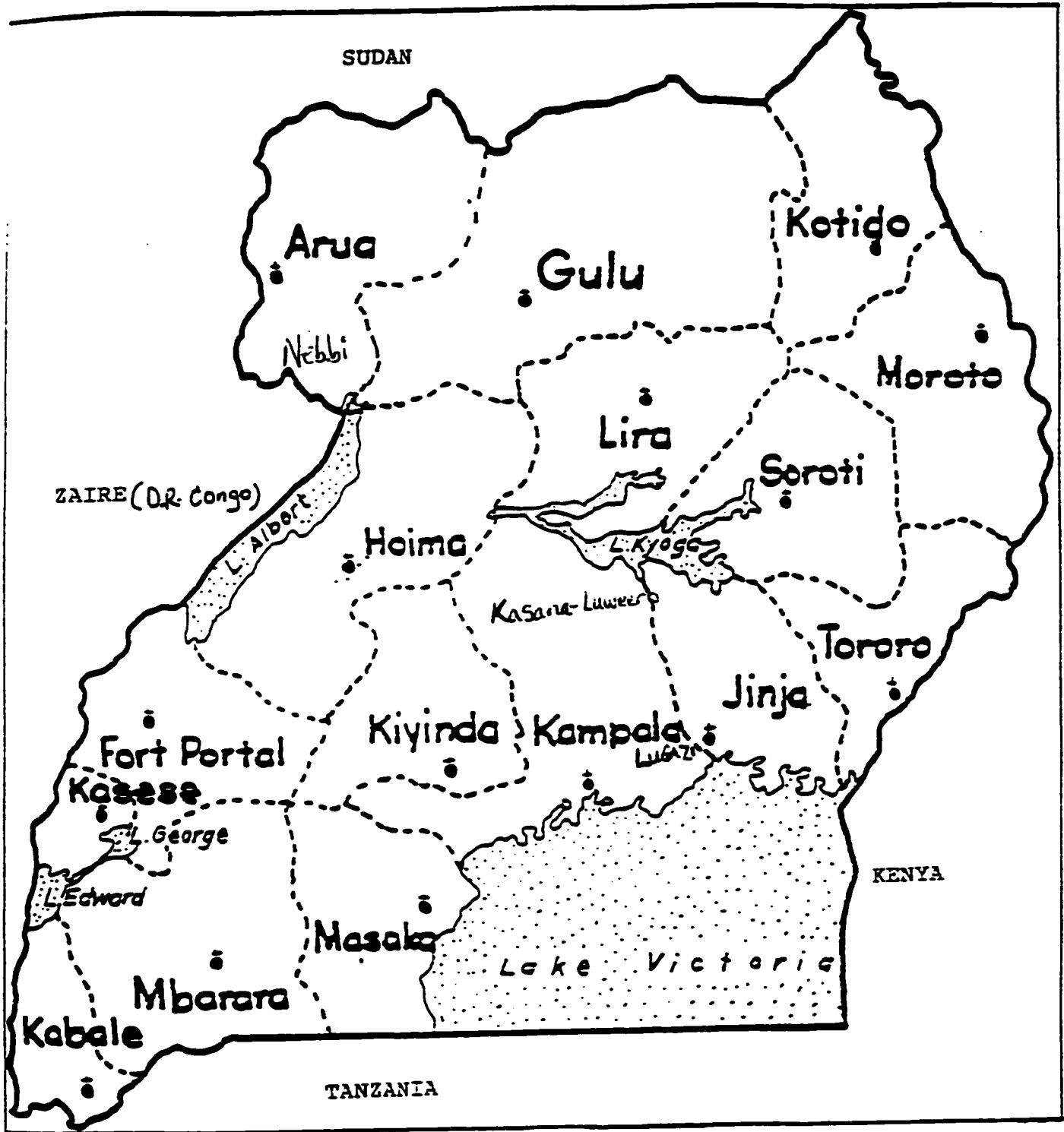
58. In order to serve the needs of the Christians in the two districts of Mbarara Diocese more adequately, the Bishop shall consider having another Vicar General or an Episcopal Vicar to serve in any one of the two Districts.

Africa: Uganda



Source: core\office7\graphics\quickart\world\country maps\Africa

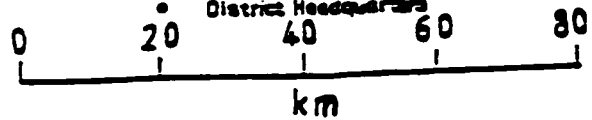
Uganda: Dioceses of Catholic Church



— International Boundary - - - Diocese Boundary

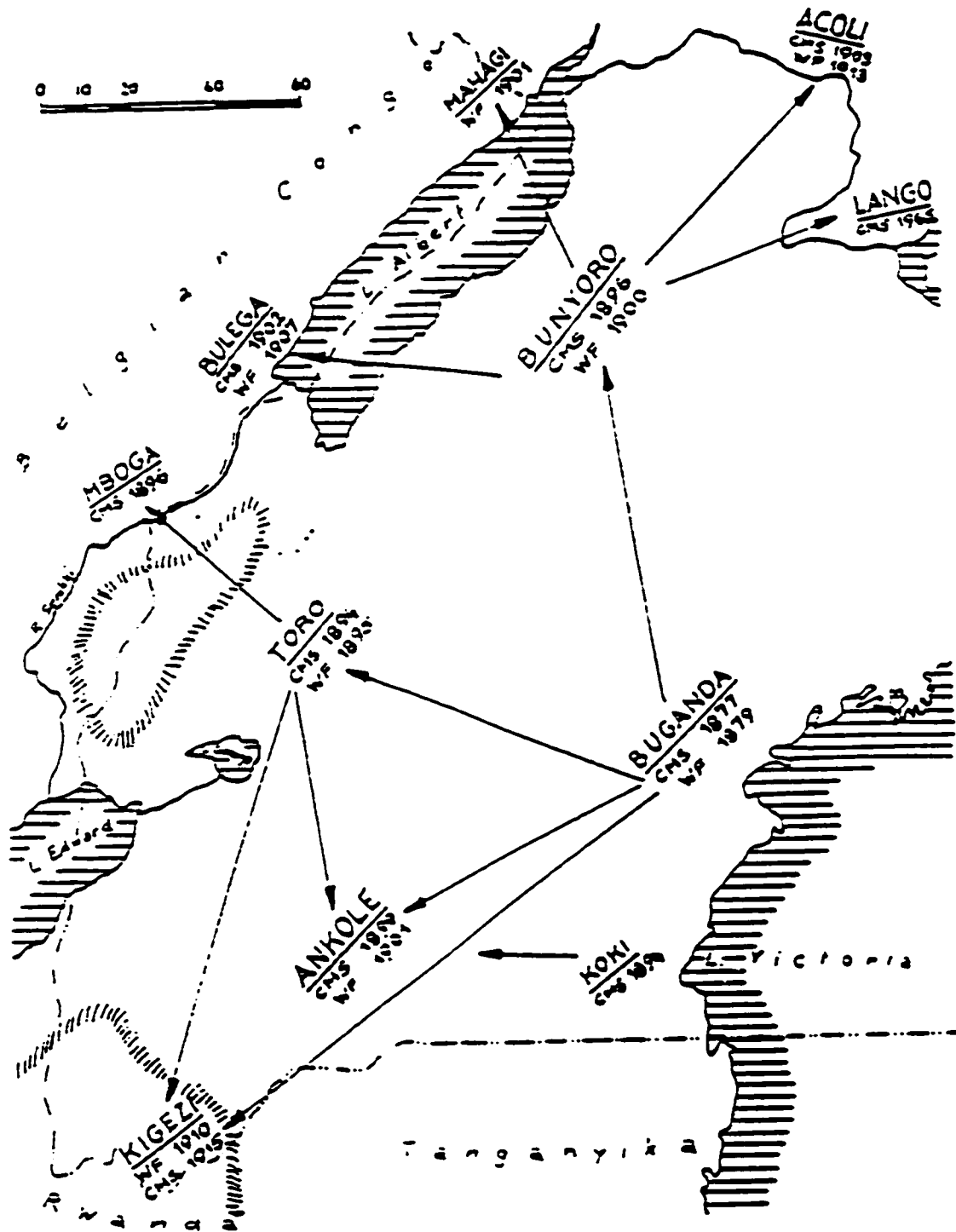


— International boundary
 - - - Diocese boundary
 - - - County boundary
 • District Headquarters



Source: *The Catholic Directory of Uganda*,
 1991, p. 5.

THE ARRIVAL AND SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY



CMS: Anglican Church Missionary Society

WF: Catholic White Fathers

Source: D.M., BYABAZAIRE, *The Contribution of the Christian Churches*, p. 35.

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After three years of parish ministry as curate in Rubindi Parish, Mbarara, he went to Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Canada for canon law studies. He obtained a baccalaureate in Canon Law from Saint Paul University in 1995, and licentiate in Canon Law from Saint Paul University, and a master's degree in Canon Law from the University of Ottawa in 1996.