

Caring for Clergy

As Presented at Vestry School 2010 for the Diocese of Fond du Lac

By Matthew Payne

Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, from whom comes every good and perfect gift: Send down upon our church members, our bishops, priest and deacons charged with the care of souls, the healthful Spirit of your grace: and, that they may truly please you, pour upon them the continual dew of your blessing. Grant this, O Lord, for the honor of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. Amen.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Matthew Payne, Diocesan Administrator
- 1.2. I have a confession to make: I'm a PK. I've seen the clergy-laity relationship from multiple angles.
- 1.3. Both have important and vital roles for the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- 1.4. However, too often clergy and laity may see each other on opposite sides of the aisle.
- 1.5. There is no conflict of interest. Our roles may be different, but the goal is the same.
 - ❶ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in humanity. (*1 Corinthians 12:4-6*)

2. Similarities of clergy and laity

- 2.1. Our Bible says we are all chosen to praise God
 - ❷ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (*1 Peter 2:9*)
- 2.2. Our Catechism in the Book of Common Prayer says we are all supposed to (p.855)
 - 2.2.1. be representatives of Christ and his Church
 - 2.2.2. be followers of Christ
 - 2.2.3. come together weekly for corporate worship
 - 2.2.4. work, pray and give for the spread of the kingdom
- 2.3. Our Ordination Service says that
 - ❸ "...the Church is the family of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. All baptized people are called to make Christ known as Savior and Lord, and to share in the renewing of his world." (*BCP*)

- 2.4. Scripture says in First Corinthians 12 that we are one body made up of many parts and we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body.
- 2.5. Can you think of other similarities between clergy and laity?

3. **Differences of clergy and laity**

3.1. Our Bible distinguishes our roles

④ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (*Ephesians 4:11-14*)

3.2. Clergy are called to a more specific role in the ministry of the Church

⑤ Ordination of a Priest: ...Now you are called to work as a pastor, priest, and teacher, together with your bishop and fellow presbyters, and to take your share in the councils of the Church.

As a priest, it will be your task to proclaim by word and deed the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to fashion your life in accordance with its precepts. You are to love and serve the people among whom you work, caring alike for young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor. You are to preach, to declare God's forgiveness to penitent sinners, to pronounce God's blessing, to share in the administration of Holy Baptism and in the celebration of the mysteries of Christ's Body and Blood, and to perform the other ministrations entrusted to you.

In all that you do, you are to nourish Christ's people from the riches of his grace, and strengthen them to glorify God in this life and in the life to come.”

⑥ Ordination of a Deacon: "...God now calls you to a special ministry of servanthood directly under your bishop. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely.

As a deacon in the Church, you are to study the Holy Scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and to model your life upon them. You are to make Christ and his redemptive love known, by your word and example, to those among whom you live, and work, and worship. You are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. You are to assist the bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God's Word and Sacraments, and you are to carry out other duties assigned to you from time to time. At all times, your life and teaching are to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself.

- 3.3. Clergy are
 - 3.3.1. ordained to administer the Sacraments, laity have limited role here
 - 3.3.2. members of a diocese, laity of a congregation
 - 3.3.3. target audience is primarily church, laity is entire community
 - 3.3.4. make a living by living out a vocation, laity make a living working at jobs (we hope they fulfill their vocation)
 - 3.3.5. often expected to be expert at all aspects of the Church, most laity are not expected to be experts at all aspects of their business.
- 3.4. What are some other differences between clergy and laity?

4. **Clergy Relationship to the Congregation – It’s Complicated**

- 4.1. Clergy are serving in a position of ministry, not as employee of the congregation
 - 4.1.1. Priests are called, elected or placed to share in ministry with a community
 - 4.1.2. Deacons are assigned by the Bishop as his representative to share in ministry with a community, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely.
 - 4.1.3. Partner in a covenanted relationship
 - 4.1.4. Installed into a position, not hired for a job
 - 4.1.5. Immediate supervisor is the Bishop, not the Wardens or Vestry
 - ⑦ Ordination Vows: “Will you be loyal to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of Christ as this Church has received them? And will you, in accordance with the canons of this Church, obey your bishop and other ministers who may have authority over you and your work?”
- 4.2. Ending a pastoral relationship involves all parties, and is not done unilaterally – you can’t fire your cleric, the relationship is dissolved.
- 4.3. Clergy are 'on-call' 24/7, regardless of how much they are paid or status of the position (1/2 time, supply, retired)
- 4.4. Clergy are accountable for the spiritual well-being of their flock, the congregation is held accountable for the temporal well-being

5. **Clergy Relationship to the Law**

- 5.1. ⑧ “Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.” (*Matthew 22:21*)
- 5.2. ⑨ “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...” (*First Amendment of the US Constitution*)
- 5.3. When church doctrinal issues are or may be in conflict with legal issues, especially as it regards the relationship of the church to its clergy, the courts have regularly deferred to the doctrinal issue.
- 5.4. This is most evident in regards to a cleric’s tax status. Do you think your taxes are confusing? Clergy have to deal with having a dual tax status:

- 5.4.1. Employee for Income Tax purposes (Federal and State)
 - 5.4.1.1. Cleric liable because earning income from doing work as an individual (type of work doesn't matter)
 - 5.4.1.2. Church is exempt from mandatory withholding as an organization because doctrine MAY be involved
 - 5.4.1.3. Cleric may ask for voluntary withholding
- 5.4.2. Self-Employed status for Social Security and Medicare
 - 5.4.2.1.1. Church is exempt from paying the employer's portion as an organization because doctrine may be involved
 - 5.4.2.2. Cleric is liable because earning income from doing work as an individual (type of work doesn't matter)
 - 5.4.2.3. Housing exempt from income tax because it is a doctrinal issue – church tells cleric where to live. Not exempt from self-employment because church is legally exempt from contributing.

6. Taking Care of Clergy

- 6.1. Why should we take care of clergy?
 - 6.1.1. Because clergy take care of us
 - 6.1.2. Because clergy need to know they can take risks and still be loved
 - 6.1.2.1. Clergy risk being emotionally hurt when they love unconditionally
 - 6.1.2.2. Clergy risk being disliked if they make an unpopular decision
 - 6.1.2.3. Clergy risk criticism for nearly every choice they make, every sermon they preach, every person they love
 - 6.1.2.4. A recent survey by the Alban Institute of Episcopal Clergy discovered:
 - 50% feel they are unable to meet the demands of the job
 - 90% feel inadequately trained to cope with the demands of ministry
 - 33% have seriously considered leaving ordained ministry.
 - 6.1.3. Because clergy need to know they do not carry the burden of ministry alone. They need to know there are people who will
 - 6.1.3.1. Partner with them
 - 6.1.3.2. Have a vision for the ministry of the church, and
 - 6.1.3.3. Roll up their sleeves and get involved in the real (and sometimes messy) ministry of encouraging, discipling, leading, and teaching.
 - 6.1.4. Because the success of the church depends on it.
- 6.2. Sustaining the Relationship
 - 6.2.1. Requires mutual respect and understanding
 - 6.2.2. Requires honesty and directness
 - 6.2.2.1. Communicate ideas and thoughts without an agenda

- 6.2.2.2. Avoid unhealthy triangulation
- 6.2.3. Be Supportive
 - 6.2.3.1. Pray for your clergy every day...and don't be afraid to tell them
 - 6.2.3.2. Contributed to the Discretionary Fund
 - 6.2.3.3. Take a cleric to lunch
 - 6.2.3.4. Send a note of encouragement and praise
 - 6.2.3.5. Engage in a conversation about the content of a sermon, not just an evaluation
 - 6.2.3.6. Ask about something NOT church related, like a hobby or sports
 - 6.2.3.7. Tell others how you appreciate your clergy (good evangelism tool)
- 6.2.4. Perform a Mutual Ministry Review annually
 - 6.2.4.1. Compare how you each see how things are going, trade written thoughts
 - 6.2.4.2. Establish realistic expectations for the next 12-18 months
 - 6.2.4.3. Ask a neutral third party to facilitated if there is some conflict
 - 6.2.4.4. Report on how things are going to the Bishop
- 6.3. Sustaining Livelihood and wellness
 - 6.3.1. The church provide clergy a **livelihood**, not a **paycheck**.
 - 6.3.1.1. This is model based on Scriptural precedent, not buisness
 - 6.3.1.2. Few enter ordained ministry with illusions about financial rewards
 - 6.3.1.3. Few have resources to compensate for inadequate compensation.
 - 6.3.2. The Church benefits because decreasing worldly concerns of clergy increases their ability to provide for our spiritual well-being.
- 6.4. Adequate Compensation
 - 6.4.1. Consideration for Parish Status: are you self-supporting if your priest says "I wouldn't be able to stay in this position if my spouse wasn't earning a separate income"
 - 6.4.2. Salary / Cash Stipend provided so the cleric can take care of life. Considerations include (but aren't limited to):
 - 6.4.2.1. Diocesan Minimum Compensation
 - 6.4.2.2. Life Experience
 - 6.4.2.3. Education / Continuing Education
 - 6.4.3. Housing Allowance provided in addition to so the cleric has a place to live. Considerations include
 - 6.4.3.1. Meeting actual expenses, including utilities, furniture
 - 6.4.3.2. Adopting Annual Resolution to allow for exempt from income tax

<i>Median Family Income</i>	<i>Wisconsin</i>	<i>FDL Clergy Median Compensation</i>
4 people	80,530	56,458
3 people	68,123	
2 people	57,405	

- 6.4.4. Pension provided so the cleric isn't a burden in the future.
 - 6.4.4.1. Required by National Canon
 - 6.4.4.2. Benefits the Church as a whole
- 6.4.5. Provides for the wellness of the cleric
 - 6.4.5.1. Insurance premiums
 - 6.4.5.1.1. Medical, Dental, Vision
 - 6.4.5.1.2. Life
 - 6.4.5.2. Sabbatical planning
 - 6.4.5.3. Continuing Education allowance
 - 6.4.5.4. Regularly respected time off
- 6.4.6. Provides for the efficiency of doing ministry
 - 6.4.6.1. Travel allowance
 - 6.4.6.2. Equipment needs
- 6.5. Taking care of future Clergy
 - 6.5.1. Identify, encourage and help possible candidates for ordination discern call
 - 6.5.2. Provide financial support to seminaries and seminarians

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