

## **DECLARATION**

### ***RENEWING CATHOLIC MINISTRY***

*This document was adopted unanimously by the executive of the IFRCM on 16 Oct 2009. It was approved at the Second General Assembly held in Detroit on 10 June 2011.*

At a time in the history of the Latin rite of the Catholic Church when

- regular celebration of the Eucharist for many communities is becoming rare as a result of the failure of the hierarchy to make adequate provision
- fewer suitable candidates for the male celibate priesthood are offering themselves for ministry
- there is a growing appreciation among many Catholics of the varieties of ministry exercised by the baptised, women and men
- there is an increasing demand among the educated baptised to have a share with the clergy in the governance of Church structures
- the distinction between ordained ministry and non-ordained ministry is being questioned and clericalism seen as contrary to the Gospel
- there is rampant sexual and financial abuse because there is insufficient accountability

we members of the People of God call for a RENEWAL OF MINISTRY IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. We call for wide discussion and careful consideration of the following:

1. Recognition of ministry as service (Rom 12:3-8, John 13:12-17) and not an exercise of power.
2. Recognition that ministry is the responsibility of *all* the baptised, increasingly women, and is a ministry to the secular world as well as within the Church.
3. Recognition that the ordained are called to serve and not superior to nor essentially different from the unordained (Mt 23:8-12).
4. Recognition of the variety of ministries, removing the mystique surrounding the ordained and including many more in ministry (Eph 4:11).
5. Recognition that many more women and men than heretofore are called to share in the apostolic ministries of sacrament, preaching and governance.
6. Recognition that the faithful may validly celebrate the eucharist by virtue of their baptism without an ordained presider, especially where the bishop fails to provide one.
7. Appointment in each faith community after due training, authorisation, commissioning or ordination by the bishop, of a group of men and women called to function part-time (while maintaining their secular occupations and income) as providers of the various sacraments; some to baptise, some to preside at the Eucharist, some to solemnise marriages, some to conduct funerals, some to offer reconciliation.
8. Appointment in each faith community after due authorisation, commissioning or ordination by the bishop, of a group of suitably qualified women and men called to function part-time (while maintaining their secular occupations and income) as preachers and others as overseers of the community.

9. Re-examination of clerical status to make it less divisive and more inclusive.
10. The abolition of ecclesiastical titles such as 'Father', 'Monsignor', 'Excellency', 'Eminence' etc
11. Abolition of excessive ecclesiastical dress for any ministry.
12. Abrogation of those canons which give absolute power exclusively to the ordained.
13. Abrogation of the requirement that a commitment to celibacy should be required of all candidates for specific ministries.
14. Welcoming back, on a face to face basis, to participation in some form of ministry, particularly sacramental and preaching, of those ordained men who have married and been forced to give up their ministry and who wish to do so.
15. Recognition that there is no reason why women should not exercise all ministries in the Church without exception.
16. Recognition that accountability for ministry should not include marital status, gender, or sexual orientation, but rather the public conduct of office, ability to form authentic Christian community, and a life of personal integrity and honesty.
17. Salvation history begins with the creation of human life and is revealed in some of its concreteness by the Jewish and Christian traditions in which we stand.
18. Catholics should not hesitate to celebrate the Eucharist without an ordained presider, as proposed by the Dutch Province of the Dominicans.
19. Catholics should show their support publicly for the women ordained *contra legem* to the priesthood and the episcopate.
20. Catholics should courageously seek new ways of solidarity with each other, studying the scriptures, celebrating together, following the Spirit and their consciences, living simply in accordance with the Gospel in accordance with Jesus words, "Where two or three are gathered together, I am there." (Mt 18;20)