

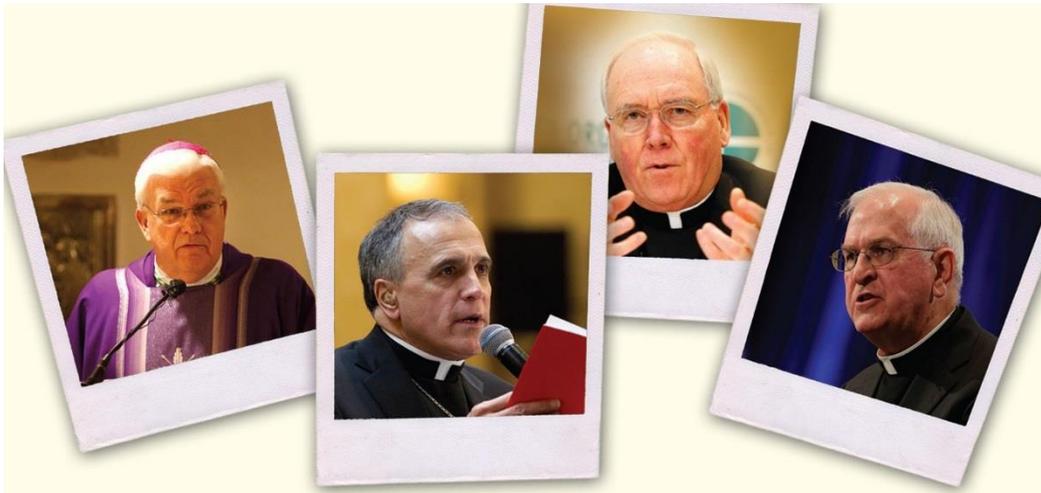
Transcribed Talks and Resources  
For The USCCB



**Sunday Evening to Monday Afternoon, June 7 to 8, 2015**

*Hyatt Regency St. Louis at the Arch – St. Louis, Missouri*

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the bishops'  
pastoral statement *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*



Hosted by the Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth; the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church; and the Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service; in partnership with the Committee on Doctrine; with special thanks to the Catholic Apostolate Center and the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities for their generous support.

**Co-Responsibility for the New Evangelization**  
Fr. Frank S. Donio, S.A.C.

Over the last six years, I have used *Co-Workers* six times in course work; four of them at The Catholic University of America with undergraduates in a program for Certificate for the Practice of Pastoral Ministry, and the last two years in a program that is mostly online at Fordham University in a Theology of Ministry course.

Two stories from those programs: the first is Katrina. Katrina is a child of immigrants. She became very energized in her parish community. She then decided that she wanted to study theology. Her family looked at this rather strangely.

“How is this going to lead you to some type of successful life?”

And yet she decides: “No, I have been affected particularly by what I have experienced in the parish and then also what I have experienced in my college education, and now I want to do ministry full time.”

She then goes onto graduate work in a program that is similar to *Echo*. She then decides that she is going to go into parochial ministry and arrives there, and unfortunately, runs into – as a mid-twenties something – the challenges of day-to-day ministry within a parish, becomes frustrated, and moves into more of a situation where she would be better received. Her frustration didn’t come though, interestingly enough, from the pastor who was there, but instead from other lay ecclesial ministers who felt that she wasn’t experienced enough, even though she had the most theological education of any lay person on the staff.

The second is Nick. Nick was very involved again in his parish community and his Catholic school, and then he goes to college, gets involved in one of these ministry programs in which the students are ministering to other students on the campus, and then graduates. He had gotten an engineering degree, is now working as an engineer now in his mid-twenties, goes to the parish door – and nobody knows what to do with him, this very well-formed person, who has a lot of energy for

mission; and he had to persevere. Now he and his wife had to persevere within the parish to be received as late twenties-somethings to somehow be involved. These are the people who are at our door and want to serve. These are the people we are co-responsible for. And many others.

Do we start them with the premise that co-responsibility is the way of the sent, of those on mission? All the baptized are co-responsible for the mission of Christ and His Church, and they are sent into the world to bear witness to Him in word and deed, to evangelize. Now we can all say documents of the Second Vatican Council – Paul VI, John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis – affirm this view. *Co-Workers* also does when it says at the end of the Introduction, which Dr. Rick McCord quoted last night:

“*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* expresses our strong desire for the fruitful collaboration of ordained and lay ministers who, in their distinct but complementary ways, continue in the Church the saving mission of Christ for the world, His vineyard.”

Collaboration viewed in this way, as we heard in *Co-Workers*, is also co-responsibility. Co-responsibility in collaboration were significant elements of the final report of the Second Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in 1985 on the twentieth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council. Both co-responsibility and collaboration are rooted in an ecclesiology of communion and the fact the final report states that because the Church is communion, there must be participation and co-responsibility at all of her levels. The general principle must be understood in diverse ways, in diverse areas.

From Vatican II has positively come a new style of collaboration between the laity and clerics. The spirit of willingness with which many lay persons put themselves at the service of the Church is to be numbered among the best fruits of the Council. In this is experienced the fact that we are all the Church. Collaboration and co-responsibility among all the baptized does not mean that there is not a diversity of roles, as we have heard. There is a diversity of roles. But the mission is one, and all the baptized participate in this mission. Who’s mission? Christ’s. What mission? Evangelization of all peoples by the baptized.

Pope Francis offers us an important insight in *Evangelii Gaudium*. The Holy Spirit also enriches the entire evangelizing Church with different charisms. These gifts are meant to renew and build up the Church. All of the baptized in their diversity of charisms and roles are then drawn into collaboration with one another and aided in developing co-responsibility. But this isn't simply the work of the baptized. It is also the work of the Holy Spirit. We need to look at the co-responsibility of lay ecclesial ministers, deacons, and priests authorized and encouraged by the local bishop to form people as missionary disciples in the domestic church – the family, the workplace, culture, the public square; living apostolate, witnessing Christ to the world but also serving the needs of the community of faith, the Church, particularly by re-engaging others in the life of faith. Most of this formation is done in the United States, which is somewhat unique – in the United States and Canada – in the parish. But there are now many movements, associations, and personal or group apostolates, as well as the ministries and apostolates of those in consecrated life, that are supplying this formation in person and online. The work of the new evangelization challenges us to change business as usual by moving from maintenance to mission to help all become co-responsible for the mission.

How, then, are we as assembled leaders working to unify these efforts – many, many efforts? Now we do need to raise the small number of those who engage in the life of the parish in comparison to the overall number of Catholics who attend Mass weekly, as we saw in the CARA statistics; forming them to be co-responsible for the mission of Christ and his Church, which then is brought into the parish, other church ministries, and into everyday life.

People such as Nick, who present themselves for service; and again, lay ecclesial ministers like Katrina, are critical in this effort since they, together with priests and deacons with authorization from the bishops, coordinate and provide much of the faith formation for Catholics, whether through parishes, schools, college campuses, hospitals, prisons, and relief and service organizations in both word and deed. Now there is much to do, but many who are and who could do it.

As those in ministry, we are called to help all the baptized realize that they are not simply followers of Christ, not simply disciples, but are sent by Him as apostles, as Vatican II said; as missionary disciples, as  *Aparecida* and Pope Francis have said. As united in our diversity through our collaboration with one another and with the Holy Spirit, we assume that this message, after 50 years,

has gotten through. To many, it has not. It has to some, though, like Katrina and Nick. They encountered Christ, were nurtured, and formed by pastoral ministers and teachers and became energized to participate in His mission. They seek to be a part of it.

As assembled leaders, what is our co-responsibility for them? Thank you.

*Very Rev. Frank S. Donio, S.A.C.  
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