

Carrie A. Monnette & David E. Nantais (Weston Jesuit School of Theology)

Presentation Title: “A Call to Justice in the Formation of Professional Catholic Lay Ministers.”

Abstract:

The Second Vatican Council called for an increase in lay involvement in the Catholic Church, but fell short of addressing professional lay ministry as a valid calling. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has recently addressed the formation of lay ministers, but it has not adequately dealt with the issue of financial assistance. Even in the post-conciliar Catholic Church, lay ministry formation has not gained the level of support afforded to ordained ministry. This disparity is troubling, given the dramatic increase in professional lay ministers and the decrease in ordained priests. We will present current research about Catholic professional lay ministry, along with personal testimonies, and argue that, due to their invaluable service, lay ministers deserve financial support from the Catholic Church. We call upon the Church leadership to examine how its ministry formation resources are used and by whom as a justice issue.

Description of Presentation:

This presentation will begin with a 15-minute introduction laying out the argument that the Catholic Church needs to address the justice issue of financially supporting lay ministry formation. After the introductory remarks, each member of a two or three-person panel will speak to the issue of professional lay ministry formation from their own experience of working within the Catholic Church. Following the panelists' remarks, there will be a facilitated question and answer session, allowing the conference participants to inquire about points raised during the presentation.