

The pope's new document on women and ministry



Pope Francis's little document *Spiritus Domini* on allowing women to be officially invested with the lay ministries of lector and acolyte is a most welcome development. It is a very interesting small brick in his larger pastoral edifice dedicated to implementing the reforms mandated over half a century ago by the Second Vatican Council (1962-65).

Five Challenges.

1. Will communities shift their perception of those who perform the readings from being simply those helping out the priest to those who are taking up part of the baptismal call to witness in word, before the assembly, to the Good News preached by the Christ? Will these women and men see this as a ministry and part of their conforming their lives to the work of Jesus?
2. Will presbyters take this vision to heart when they seek out readers and encourage them to see this as a real ministry? Will they take to heart that this changes their own relationship with the assembly and that this shift is part of the death of clericalism?
3. Will those who help in the ministry of the Table see this as part of their baptismal calling and not just a job to "help out Father"? Acolytes are not just glorified altar boys, but part of the community's celebration of its identity.
4. Will presbyters see that this shift in the law is a reminder of a deeper shift in the Church's understanding that has been going on since the 1950s, but which has often barely affected the Church's practice?
5. Will bishops and episcopal conferences take Pope Francis's letter to heart and actually institute these ministries of lector and acolyte? They can hardly say that it will need a lot of time to think about.

Read more at: <https://international.la-croix.com/news/religion/the-larger-dimension-of-the-popes-new-document-on-women-and-ministry/13651>