

January 15, 2016
First Anniversary of the Visit of Pope Francis

Circular 2016-9
Formation of Lay Liturgical Ministers

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

The period of formation of new lay liturgical ministers and the renewal of those already commissioned in the previous year begins on February 6 and will end on May 14 this year. The seasons of Lent and Easter will be our preparatory period for the commissioning that must take place in the principal Mass of the parish on Pentecost Sunday.

Please be reminded of the following regulations with regard to lay liturgical ministers considered **NORMATIVE** and **OBLIGATORY** in the Archdiocese of Lingayen Dagupan:

1. The Ministry of Readers is open for the Catholic laity between **13 to 30** years old. The Reader must have received **full Christian initiation**, i.e. baptized, confirmed and have received First Communion. If married, they must be canonically married and living exemplary Christian life. They must be fluent in Pangasinan and English.
2. The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must be **MALE** between **25 to 50 years old** and must have received full Christian initiation, i.e. baptized, confirmed and have received First Communion. If married, they must be canonically married and living exemplary Christian life.
3. Readers and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion who have served for three consecutive years and were obliged to take a break from their liturgical ministry may return to the liturgical ministry provided:
 - 3.1 they have engaged in the ministry of catechesis or charity during their leave;
 - 3.2 they undergo the formation seminar for new lay liturgical ministers; and
 - 3.3 their ages are within the age requirements already indicated.

We should have more lay leaders active in society that at the sanctuary. The arena of the laity is social transformation and not altar ministry.

4. It is pastorally necessary to recruit new lay leaders in the parishes and schools in order to insure the continuous transmission of the Christian faith to future generations. Ours is a young Church. **We cannot allow ministries to age.**
5. The probationary Readers and EMHCs who were temporarily deputed last Advent season 2015 must attend the seminar for new liturgical ministers. They cannot continue their probationary ministry beyond Pentecost Sunday 2016.

All the formation seminars will be held at the Lay Formation Center in Bonuan Gueset, Dagupan City according to the schedule enclosed herewith.

The registration fee is PhP 250 to cover expenses for meals and seminar materials of the renewal seminar.

For the new Readers and EMHCs, a **two day** orientation seminar is necessary to receive archdiocesan commissioning. The registration fee for the two day seminar is PhP250 also but the parish priests are kindly requested to **financially assist the youth** who cannot afford the fees considering their situation in life. A **letter of recommendation from the parish priest** will be required from the seminar attendees in order to insure their good standing in the parish community.

I request you to disseminate the schedule and the pertinent information early so that the lay leaders can reserve the dates ahead of time and participate attentively.

Let me reiterate the need to **allow the youth to assume Church leadership**. I state again that the proper sphere for the sanctification of the laity is not inside the church building but in society. Please encourage more lay leaders to be catechists and ministers of social action. **Let the laity be truly leaven in society.**

Thank you for your continuing unity in faith and mission.

Sincerely yours,

+SOCRATES B. VILLEGAS
Archbishop of Lingayen Dagupan