

The Final Movement Has Not Been Heard

“Religious, both ordained and non-ordained, found their lives transformed by the church’s response to Vatican II and the focus on the parish.”

A Concert of Charisms: Ordained Ministry in Religious Life

In 1997, after many years of discussion, dialogue, and study, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men published *A Concert of Charisms: Ordained Ministry in Religious Life*. It summarized and expanded a CMSM project that had been percolating since 1988. The project sought to address practical questions surrounding the identity of religious life in the midst of the ordained ministry and how those questions of identity impacted the efforts of religious institutes since the Vatican II mandate to return to the spirit and charism of our founders.

The 1992 Future of Religious Orders in the United States study (FORUS, more commonly referred to as the Nygren-Ukeritis study) had raised its own questions about the parochialization of U.S. religious life and its impact on fidelity to charism and identity for religious—both ordained and non-ordained. Similarly, CMSM had engaged in work in the early 1990s on the identity of the Religious Brother, culminating in the production of the video *Brother Is a Verb* and the book *Blessed Ambiguity*. The last CMSM Forum produced dealt with an update on some of those questions about the identity of the Brother. Our next issue will concentrate on the identity of religious life today through the lens of the *FORUS* study. The issue you are now reading is concerned with the identity of the religious priesthood.

Dominican Paul Philibert, who wrote the concluding chapter for *A Concert of Charisms*, draws on recent studies to analyze changing dynamics since 1997 that influence the questions of identity. Spiritan Jeff Duaine tackles the questions of identity based on his experiences in a missionary institute where he grew in his identity as a religious priest working in Haiti among the most vulnerable during a time of political and social upheaval, followed by pastoring a diverse urban parish, and finally to education ministry at the high school where he first met the Spiritans. Conventual Franciscan Justin Biase relates the experience of his province in establishing a new community in collaboration with Franciscan sisters, laity, and at the invitation of the diocese of Syracuse, New York to respond to unmet needs in the local church. The continuing efforts to nurture a strong Franciscan communal life while serving the broader community are set out in the article published here.

No one seems to be prepared to say that this effort of retrieving community charism through and in the ordained ministry of the Church has reached fulfillment and clarity in these years since the publication of *A Concert of Charisms*. It is hoped that these papers will help the continuing process and encourage our perseverance.

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