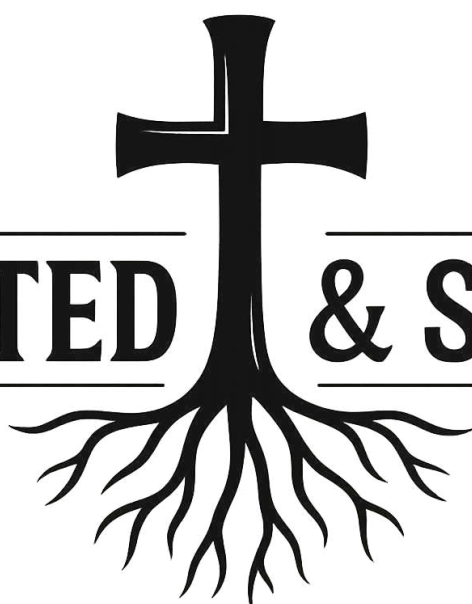


ROOTED & SENT



News, stories, and updates from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Lay Initiative

Salt and Light (page 3)

Learn about what Archbishop Grob shared in both his homily and his remarks on June 10.

Building a Framework (page 4)

In this article, you will learn more about the Office of the Lay Initiative, what we are working on, and the direction we are heading.

The Results are In (pages 5-6)

Preliminary results from the survey sent out on April 8, 2025.

Patron Saint of the Lay Initiative (page 7)

Learn more about the Patron Saint of the Lay Initiative and the artist who created the gorgeous renderings

Rooted & Sent

Happy Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, the patron saint of lay ministers! We're excited to share with you Volume 1 of our quarterly newsletter: Rooted & Sent. Through this publication, we aim to offer meaningful updates, stories, and insights that speak to your vocation and support the important work you do in the mission field. The work we are called to is not always easy. But when we remain rooted in Christ as we go forth on mission, truly beautiful things can unfold. We are grateful to walk this journey with you.

Meet the Team

Brenda Cline, Director of Priest Placement and the Lay Initiative and Meg Aspinwall, Associate Director of the Lay Initiative, bring over 40 years of combined experience to the new Lay Initiative. We strive to focus on relationships – with Christ, the Church, and the people of God – to support laity on their journey of faith and leadership. We pray these efforts will develop Catholic lay leaders to support our priests and parishes in our mission.



Brenda Cline | Meg Aspinwall

Lay Initiative Launched

On June 10, 2025, over 150 lay parish staff members came together at Mary Mother of the Church Pastoral Center to help launch the new Lay Initiative. We were honored to have Archbishop Jeffrey S. Grob as our main celebrant for mass, along with a choir and liturgical ministers comprised of lay parish staff from around the Archdiocese.

Following mass, we gathered for hospitality and fellowship, and then a presentation from the new Office of the Lay Initiative, with concluding remarks from Archbishop Grob. We were pleased to have parishes represented from every corner of our great Archdiocese, and from all aspects of parish ministry, including: administration, catechesis, evangelization, liturgy and music, outreach, pastoral care, and stewardship. Thank you to all who participated – your presence and leadership are a reflection of our mission!



NALM Leadership Summit

The National Association of Lay Ministers (NALM) held a Leadership Summit at Loyola University in Chicago from May 28-30, 2025. Several professional ministry organizations were represented, and participants included lay ministers, vowed religious, and bishops, priests and deacons. The summit focused on developing priorities and recommendations for the future based on: Ministerial Identity, Diversity, Co-responsibility and Synodality, Formation, and the Ministerial Setting.

Attending from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee were (from left to right): Brenda Cline, Dr. Kathie Amidei,, Dr. Sue Switalski, Bridget Klawitter, Gary Pokorny, Kristin Kebis, Gaby Cabrera (not pictured).



Salt and Light

Archbishop Grob began his homily on June 10 by wondering if, perhaps, God had indeed planned from the beginning of time that *this* Gospel from Matthew (5:13-16) would be proclaimed on *this*



day, for *this* gathering of the Lay Initiative in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee in the year 2025?

Jesus said to his disciples: *You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world.*

Archbishop inquired, “What if I told you I was salt...or a lighted lamp? What would you expect of me then? Wouldn’t you say that I bring flavor to the things with which I come into contact – that I preserve some things and purify others? Or that I cannot be hidden – and that I bring light to all in the room? But then, that is my nature as salt or light. My value is realized only when I mix with other things – my being added to something brings out the fullness of whatever with which I come into contact. And, what if I told you I was a Christian – what would you expect of me then?” He went on to help us understand our role as lay pastoral staff in the Church as being salt and light – and indeed, Christians – in everything we do and for all whom we encounter.

In his closing remarks for the Lay Initiative Inaugural Event later that morning, Archbishop Grob drew on his farming and agricultural background by sharing Jesus’ words: “No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:62) He encouraged us to keep our eyes focused forward, with Christ as our guide. If we only look backwards, our furrow will not be straight, and our work will go astray. Archbishop Grob thanked those present for their work in their parishes and in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, offering his prayers and support.

Building a Framework for the Lay Initiative

To quote Ecclesiastes, there is nothing new under the sun! The initial building blocks of our framework will be very familiar to you. Yet, we can hold each one up to the light of 2025 to help us re-examine and re-imagine Lay Ministry according to the Signs of the Times.

One Focus: Those who serve on the pastoral staff of a parish

First, we sharpened the focus of our office to be: *Those who serve on the pastoral staff of a parish.*

In other words, those laity who are entrusted with a key ministry area in the parish, including school principals. These positions can be paid or volunteer, and include some permanent deacons and religious. This initiative is focused on the imminent need for lay leaders to work with our parish priests to help build up our churches for the sake of our mission.

Two Essential Elements: Laity and Clergy

Our one focus then flows into our two essential elements of the Lay Initiative: *Laity and Clergy*. We celebrate the gifts that set us apart as Laity and Clergy, while also celebrating the oneness of Spirit into which we are all baptized.

Three Priorities: Call | Form | Support

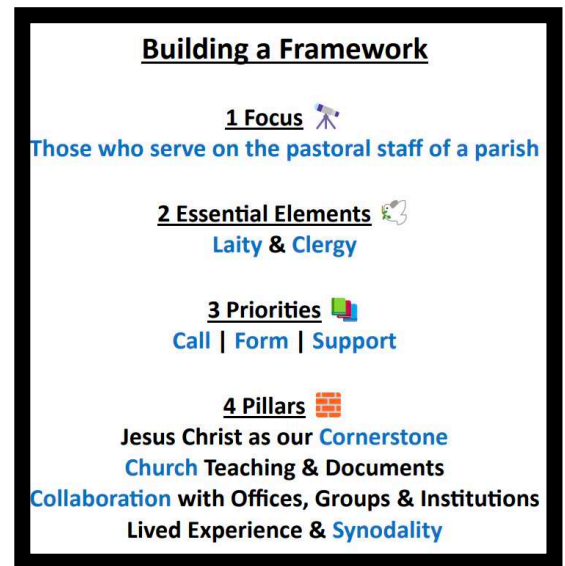
As we continue to build our framework, we are highlighting three initial priorities: *Call | Form | Support*. First, we will work on **calling** forth lay leaders to discern working in a parish. We will work with pastors and lay leaders on strategies of witness, discernment and call, which in time will help fill positions in our parishes with qualified lay leaders. Competence must follow the call, so secondly, we will work on **forming** lay leaders by providing lay parish staff with pathways to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the faith. Our third priority is to work on **supporting** lay leaders with ongoing spiritual and professional development.

Four Pillars:

Finally, I would like to share the four pillars that are informing our work with the Lay Initiative. Our **first** pillar is **Jesus Christ as our Cornerstone**. Of course, we place all that we do at the feet of Jesus. The **second** pillar is **Church Teaching and Documents**. The catechism, councils, recent popes, and US Bishops have written much on the topic of the laity, which provide a rich source of both tradition and innovation for us to draw from. The **third** pillar in our framework is **Collaboration with Offices, Groups and Institutions**. We are working on cultivating relationships with our Archdiocesan offices and groups, as well as Sacred Heart School of Theology and their Cor Unum program of theological studies, Marquette University, and the Priests of the Sacred Heart.

Our **fourth** pillar is that of **Lived Experience and Synodality**. A sense of synodality - listening, sharing our lived experiences and wisdom as lay pastoral staff, and discernment, is important. This last pillar in our developing framework for the Lay Initiative is therefore dedicated to all of US!

In this Jubilee Year, I am grateful for all the work that has been accomplished in lay ministry through the years in our Archdiocese. I know that so many of you are part of that history. I have much hope that we can all be a catalyst for the new Lay Initiative in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee!



The Results Are In

On April 8, 2025, we launched a survey to gain a deeper understanding of the lay ministry landscape in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. We invited lay pastoral staff, parish directors, deacons, and priests to participate—and we are pleased to share that we received 284 responses, surpassing our expectations.

As we developed the survey, we kept returning to one central question: *“What is at the heart of this?”*

Our goal was to craft thoughtful questions that would help us take the pulse of lay ministry today—identifying strengths, challenges, and emerging needs that we might begin to address together.

While it will take time to carefully review and reflect on all that was shared, we are profoundly grateful for your honesty, candor, and generosity in responding. The insights you’ve offered will play a vital role in guiding our discernment as we shape future programming and collaboration. Using the survey results below (page 6) will help shape our planning and future formation opportunities.

Brenda and I look forward to continued collaboration in building up lay pastoral staffs in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, which we entrust into the care of our Lord:

Loving God, we trust that this is only the beginning. Continue to guide us, inspire us, and open new paths before us. May the work we do bear fruit, and may we remain attentive to all that is yet to come. Amen.

N.B. If you didn’t have a chance to fill out the survey, we’d still love your feedback - click [HERE](#).

And the Winner Is....

Thank you to all who filled out our survey - especially those who did by Tuesday, April 29! Congratulations:

Lea Rosenberg!!!

Contact Meg (aspinwallm@archmil.org) to claim your prize!

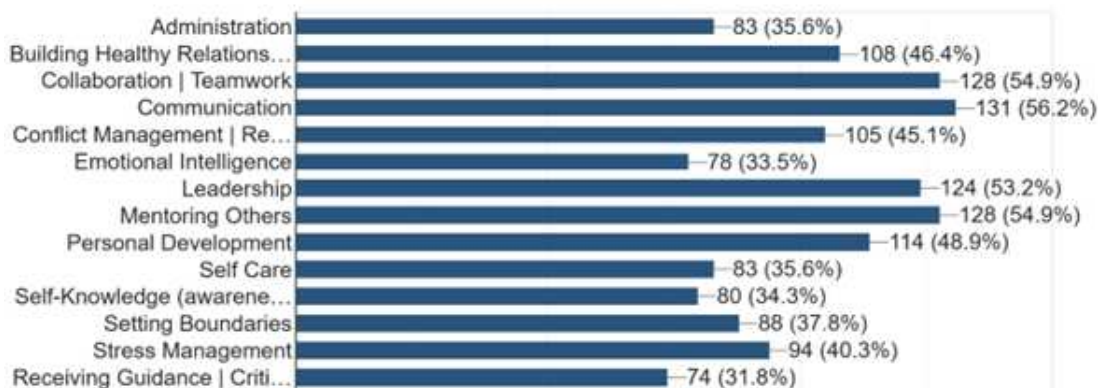
Importance of Laughter

Imagine a room so engaged—so attentive—you could hear a pin drop. That’s exactly what we experienced when Archbishop Grob addressed our guests at the Inaugural Event a few weeks ago. He didn’t shy away from the pain or challenges we often face while working for the Catholic Church. His honesty in naming what needs to change deeply resonated with the room.

And yet, with perfect timing and pastoral wit, he lightened the moment by remarking, “But that would never happen in the parishes, right?”—prompting a wave of laughter throughout the room. It was the levity that we all needed - a chance to let go and be joyful. In that moment, Archbishop Grob reminded us how vital it is to hold space for both truth and joy—and that laughter, even amid serious work, is a gift we should not lose.

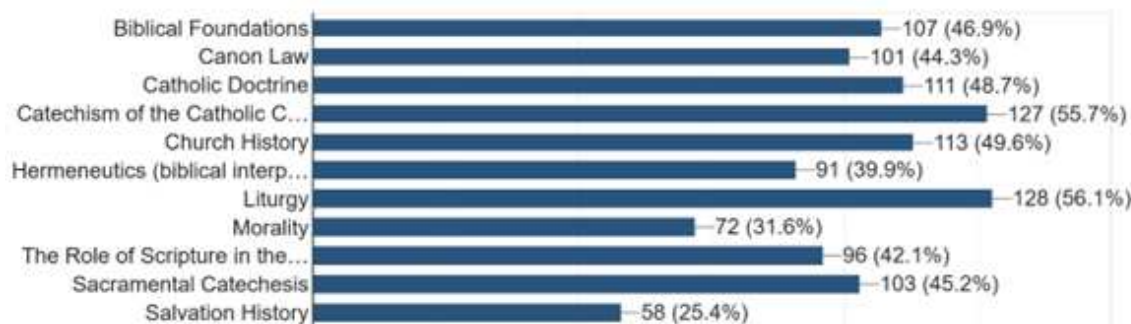
Areas of Human Formation (Human qualities critical to forming wholesome relationships and necessary to be apt instruments of God's love and compassion)

233 responses



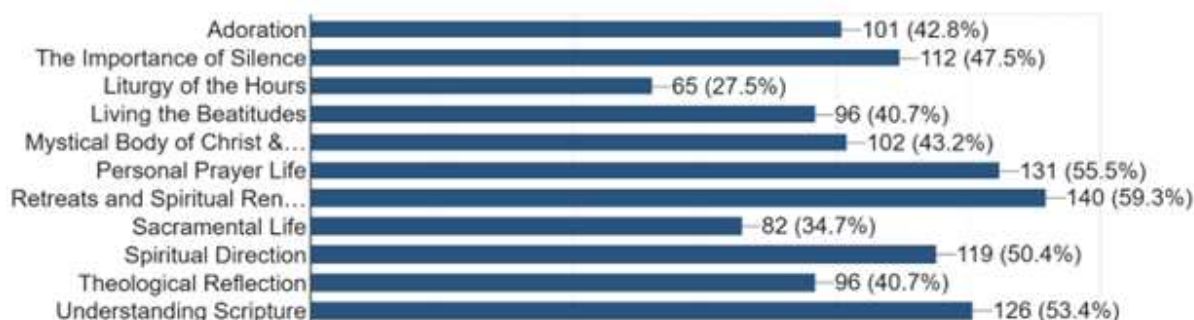
Areas of Intellectual Formation (Adequate knowledge in theological and pastoral studies, along with the intellectual skill to use it among the people and cultures of our country)

228 responses



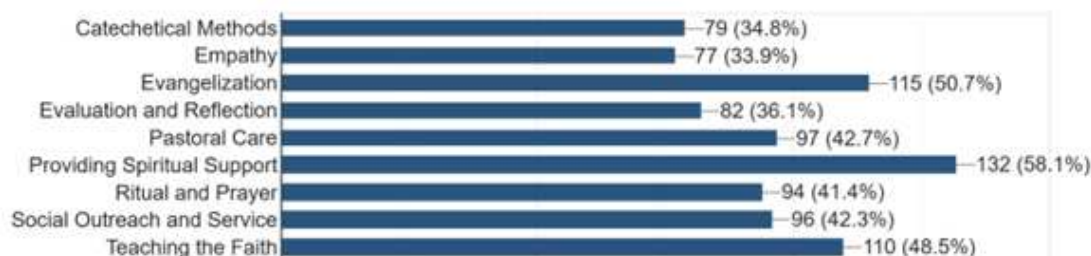
Areas of Spiritual Formation (A spirituality and practice of prayer that root one in God's Trinitarian life, grounding and animating all one does in ministry)

236 responses



Areas of Pastoral Formation (The practical pastoral abilities called for in one's particular ministry)

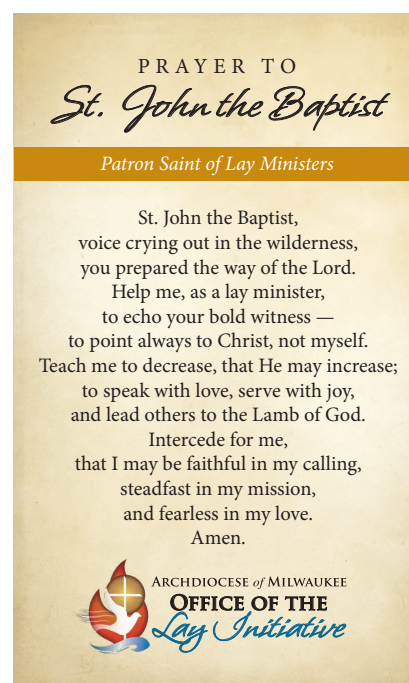
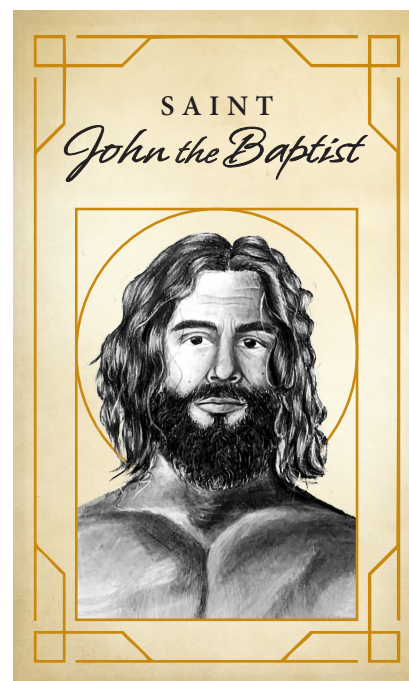
227 responses



Patron Saints of the Lay Initiative

Last October, as we were laying the groundwork for the Lay Initiative, we felt a strong conviction to entrust this endeavor to the intercession of the Saints—on behalf of both ourselves and those we serve. In our discernment, we discovered that St. John the Baptist is recognized as a patron saint of lay ministers, making him an obvious and fitting first choice.

We commissioned one-of-a-kind renderings of the Saints we selected—images that could not be found anywhere else, created uniquely and intentionally for the Office of the Lay Initiative. We pray that the intercession of these saints will be a source of strength and encouragement in your ministry. More to come soon!



Meet the Artist

Hey there! My name is Sarah Lindsley, I am 18 years old going into my second year at UW-Madison. I am majoring in Kinesiology with an Athletic Healthcare certificate, in hopes of pursuing Sports Medicine or Physical Therapy. In my free time I love to draw, listen to music, workout, play volleyball, golf, fish, and many other activities! I was super excited when I received the message asking to do these drawings and cannot wait to continue to do so! I feel incredibly blessed to be able to share my artwork. Can't wait to keep creating!



Brenda Cline
Director of Priest Placement
& the Lay Initiative
414-769-3458
clineb@archmil.org

Meg Aspinwall
Associate Director of
the Lay Initiative
414-758-2223
aspinwallm@archmil.org