



SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY - BERKELEY CAMPUS

JESUIT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

**Research Report on Lay Ecclesial Formation at the
Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University**

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Executive Summary

Background

This Research Report on Lay Ecclesial Formation describes a research project that has explored lay formation at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University. The research project arose in response to conversations within the School. Certain lay students, particularly those in the M.Div. class graduating in May 2017, voiced their desire for increased lay formation at the School and a possible lay formation program. In June 2016, a study of lay formation at the Jesuit School of Theology (JST) was initiated and led by Lecturer and Director of Ministerial Formation Deborah Ross, who authored this report. In August 2016, a draft research proposal was sent to Dean Kevin O'Brien, SJ and Associate Dean Alison Benders for their review. Incorporating their comments, research data collection started in the fall 2016 semester and was completed in November 2017. The principle aim of the research was: "To explore potential opportunities to enhance lay ecclesial formation at the Jesuit School of Theology, and to explore the character of lay ecclesial ministry."

Eighty-eight participants, including JST students, faculty, staff and alumni/ae took part in the research. There were five focus groups in the fall of 2016. A total of nineteen students participated. In the spring of 2017 forty-nine alumni/ae (who had graduated within the last fifteen years), six JST staff, six JST faculty, and two Jesuit students, responded to online surveys. Eleven second and third year JST lay students participated in an online survey in the fall of 2017.

Research Methodology

The research employed a form of action research incorporating Ignatian spirituality. Action research is a reflective process that seeks to improve practice within an organization. The integration of Ignatian spirituality in the action research design of this project, including the framing of focus group and survey questions, and the theological reflection process, invited prayerful exploration of the lay experience at the School. The research was part of the Ignatian Action Research Project led by the Office of Ministerial Formation at JST. The Ignatian Action Research Project was funded by a Santa Clara University (SCU) Ignatian Center Bannan Institute Working Group Grant.

Grounded theory method, a qualitative research technique that enables construction of theory that is grounded in data, was utilized to code and categorize focus group transcripts and survey responses. The coding resulted in a series of eight emerging categories that describe the experiences of lay students at JST, along with the experiences of alumni/ae while studying at JST and their subsequent ministerial experiences. The categories also reference input received from faculty, staff, and Jesuit students.

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Research Findings

A summary of findings from the eight categories that emerged from the research is provided below. The categories largely depict lay student experience, or alumni/ae experience, or both.

1. **What Attracts Lay Students to JST** – Students identified several reasons for attending JST, but a specific named desire for lay formation played a minimal role.
2. **Life-giving Aspects of Formation at JST** – Spiritual formation figured most prominently in formation for students and alumni/ae and the experience of living in a Lay Intentional Community was also highly formative.
3. **Challenges Experienced by JST Lay Students** – JST student focus group participants referenced several challenges including academic challenges and financial hardship. Students and alumni/ae both cited the perceived lay-Jesuit tension at the School (the occasional tension occurring given lay and ordination track students' varying needs).
4. **Lay Student “Identifying Moments”** – Lay students often experience a consciousness-raising about lay identity during their time at JST. This is often heightened when lay students study alongside Jesuit students prompting certain lay students to feel their formation is lacking. Some students noted that interaction with Jesuit classmates is life-giving and formative. JST lay students identified the ambiguous nature of what it means to be a “lay ecclesial minister”.
5. **Lay Ecclesial Ministry: Lived Praxis** – JST alumni/ae described claiming their authority as lay ministers through the lived praxis of their ministry. Certain alumni/ae do not depend on, or identify with, the title of “lay ecclesial minister”.
6. **The Ignatian Tradition** – Alumni/ae provided a range of responses to describe how the Ignatian tradition informed their formation at JST. Again, spiritual formation featured most prominently in alumni/ae responses.
7. **Emerging Theology of Lay Ministry** – An emerging theology of lay ecclesial ministry references themes including discipleship, encountering Christ, joys and sorrows of ministry, and formation through engagement with scripture, sacramental worship, and community.
8. **Looking to The Future** – The data findings did not suggest JST should introduce a lay formation program. Alumni/ae responses suggested that JST provide more skills-based courses. Certain students reacted positively to the possibility of JST offering an academic course on lay ecclesial ministry.

Theological Reflection

Eleven individuals including JST faculty, staff, the Jesuit Community Rector, a JST M.Div. alumnus, and students participated in two theological reflection meetings facilitated by Deborah Ross. The meetings occurred in late November and early December 2017, and addressed the emerging categories. Themes arising from the theological reflection on the data findings and the theological reflection group conversations were as follows:

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“A developing theology of lay ecclesial ministry”; “Community space: developing a theology of friendship and witness”; and “Ignatian discernment.”

Pastoral Planning and Recommendations

Ideas and recommendations from the theological reflection group conversations included the following:

1. **Structure for Ongoing Planning for Lay Formation** – Assessment of the role of the JST Student Life Cluster, which organizes co-curricular programming, to see if adjustments can be made to current student life and formation offerings.
2. **Future Academic Programming** – Consideration of the School offering an academic course on lay ecclesial ministry, emphasizing prayerful exploration of students’ vocational call to lay ecclesial ministry and possible opportunity for mentorship by JST lay alumni/ae.
3. **Resources for Lay Students and Co-Curricular Activities** – Development of a cohesive written narrative that describes formation at JST, outlining resources and activities, and the varied dimensions of current lay formation offerings.
4. **Potential Exploration of Increased Co-Curricular Activities** – Establishing mentorship opportunities between JST alumni/ae and current lay students, and peer mentoring between students.
5. **Ongoing Discernment** – Individual and communal discernment upon lay formation at JST. Discernment could potentially be incorporated into retreats and structured opportunities for School-wide conversation on various aspects of lay ecclesial ministry.

Concluding Remarks

The theological reflection themes in this report provide a series of signposts for the School to consider as it continues to reflect upon opportunities to enhance lay formation at the School. The research process for the report has incorporated Ignatian Spirituality. In the spirit of Ignatian discernment it is anticipated that this report will provide a platform for ongoing discernment concerning the enhancement of lay ecclesial formation at JST, and the exploration of the character of lay ecclesial ministry. In this sense the report identifies potential topics for future dialogue at the School.

Observations

This report begins with a series of brief observations by Deborah Ross. The observations highlight what is new and significant in this report and what insights the report provides for the JST community.

Observations

This report describes an exercise in action research incorporating Ignatian spirituality which explores lay formation at JST. As action research prompts change within an organization, it is anticipated that this report will be a consciousness-raising exercise, and that the research findings will assist the School with improving practice and encouraging ongoing dialogue on the topic of lay ecclesial ministry. The research speaks to the unique situation at JST and yields an operant or lived theology of lay ecclesial ministry. The operant theological themes provide a point of departure as JST continues to reflect upon formation at the School.

Lay ministerial identity has been an emergent theme in the research. Construction of lay identity occurs within the academic, spiritual, and community dimensions of School life. Beyond JST, alumni/ae share the challenges of lay ministry in their various places of ministry and the sometimes ambiguous nature of their role as lay ministers. This includes the lack of recognition or understanding that they may receive from co-workers or those to whom they minister. The theological reflection section of this report acknowledges the ecclesiological tensions surrounding lay ministry and situates these within the wider ecclesiological climate. Bearing the various tensions in mind, the recommendations of this report suggest ideas for further supporting JST lay students as they construct their ministerial identities.

The confluence of participant voices in this report has been revealing, and the voices of the alumni/ae are particularly significant. As noted in the report, JST alumni/ae survey responses provide a window onto that for which JST is preparing its lay graduate ministers after graduation. The alumni/ae speak to their experience of lay ministry from the standpoint of lived experience following their studies at JST, sharing a depth of wisdom and knowledge. As previously referenced, an anticipated outcome of the report will involve JST exploring possible opportunities for further contact between current lay JST students and alumni/ae including mentorship of current lay students by alumni/ae. It is hoped that the voices in the report, especially those of alumni/ae and students, may be brought into real-time conversation with each other to encourage dialogue and learning and to develop further support for lay students.

The report reveals much that is positive and celebratory about both the lay-oriented and School-wide experience of formation at JST. This positive acknowledgment is not to the detriment of the experiences of pain and frustration that some lay students and alumni/ae have described. Yet, despite the tensions, the report and its theological findings provide JST with encouraging themes to consider in its onward journey and “way of proceeding”. This includes living in the creative tension that the lay-Jesuit dynamic inspires and exercising a theology of collaborative friendship within the life of the School. The research process fostered community-building activity as, for example, students participated in focus groups and JST community members engaged in joint theological reflection upon the data findings. It is anticipated that the community-building aspect of the research will continue as this report is disseminated and potential recommendations for enhancing the lay experience at the School are explored.

1. Introduction

This Research Report on Lay Ecclesial Formation describes a research project that has explored lay formation at the Jesuit School of Theology. The research project arose in response to many conversations within the School. Certain lay students, particularly those in the M.Div. class graduating in May 2017, voiced their desire for increased lay formation opportunities at the School and a possible lay formation program.

In response to interest on the topic of lay formation, the Student Life Cluster (Paul Kircher, George Murphy, SJ and Deborah Ross) enhanced lay formation co-curricular planning, organizing a series of retreats and events for lay students and establishing a Lay Formation Committee to provide opportunities for continued conversation with JST lay students. A guiding reflective question at the retreats, and in conversations with students, has been “What does God want for the lay students at JST?”

After continued reflection upon the retreats and above-referenced conversations, the Student Life Cluster began to consider exploring the needs of the lay students through a structured process, such as a research project or exercise. In June 2016, a study of lay formation at JST was initiated by Deborah Ross. Deborah Ross and Paul Kircher met with two JST student research assistants to begin to draft a research proposal outlining a research project that would explore the topic of lay formation at the School. In August 2016, a draft research proposal was sent to Dean Kevin O’Brien, SJ and Associate Dean Alison Benders for their review. Incorporating their comments, data collection started in the fall 2016 semester. (The Student Life Committee of the JST Board of Directors also reviewed the proposal at their September 2016 meeting.) The principle aim of the research, according to the proposal, was:

“To explore potential opportunities to enhance lay ecclesial formation at the Jesuit School of Theology, and to explore the character of lay ecclesial ministry.”

The other research aims of the project were as follows:

- To investigate how students, faculty, staff, and alumni/ae envision lay ecclesial ministry
- To paint a portrait of what constitutes a lay ecclesial minister, based upon the experience of JST students, faculty, staff, and alumni/ae
- To explore lay students’ ministerial formation at JST
- To identify potential further opportunities to respond to lay students’ needs
- To develop recommendations for implementation

The report is divided into four primary sections. The project research methodology, which incorporates Ignatian Action Research, is defined. The research findings are presented and followed by theological reflection upon the research findings. Finally, research recommendations and pastoral planning outcomes are offered.

2. Research Methodology

The research has involved employing Ignatian Action Research, a new form of action research that incorporates Ignatian spirituality. The Ignatian Action Research Project has been funded by a Santa Clara University (SCU) Ignatian Center Bannan Institute Working Group Grant, under the 2014-2015 theme “Leadership and the Intellectual Life: Tradition, Innovation, and Transformation.” This section of the report describes the research methodology.

2.1. What is Action Research?

“Action research involves a partnership between participants in an organization who are interested in researching their practice or solving a problem and researchers who have an interest in what can be learned from practice.”¹ There are different types of action research and, for the sake of brevity, action research can be summarized as follows: “Action research is:

- Context based, addressing real life problems
- A collaborative process between participants and researchers in which everyone’s contribution is taken seriously
- An attitude to research that sees the diversity of experience and capacity coming from the contributors as an asset that enriches the process
- The expectation that meanings derived from the research process will lead to new actions
- The expectation that reflection upon actions will lead to new meanings

Action research derives its credibility from whether participants' problems are solved and whether they achieve greater control over their situation.”²

Action research is a participatory form of research that seeks to empower participants involved in the process. It involves developing a partnership and fostering collaboration and mutual learning. Action research also involves:

- “A partnership – involving doing research with people
- A practical process – in which the process “may be as important as the outcomes”
- A conversation – involving dialogue and creating opportunities for mutual learning
- A way of knowing – leading to new forms of knowledge.”³

¹ Deborah Bhatti, Helen Cameron et al., *Talking About God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2010), 36-37.

² Bhatti et al., *Talking About God in Practice*, 36. The authors derive these characteristics from D. J. Greenwood and M. Levin, *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change* (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage, 2007) and D. Burns, *Systemic Action Research: A Strategy for Whole System Change* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2007).

³ Adapted from Bhatti et al, *Talking About God in Practice*, 36 and David Coghlan, “Seeking God in All Things: Ignatian Spirituality as Action Research,” *The Way*, 43/1 (January 2004): 97- 108, 99-100.

Action research is utilized in many fields, for example, the social sciences, education, social work, community development, organization development, nursing, and management. “Action research has roots in the work of Kurt Lewin, one of the founding fathers of social psychology; in Paolo Freire’s work on consciousness-raising; and in various schools of liberation thought, notably Marxist and feminist.”⁴

Action research consists of iterative cycles of action and reflection: it starts with the exploration of a question or topic and involves planning, action, evaluation, and a new phase of action. For example, David Coghlan, SJ and Teresa Brannick outline a pre-step followed by four steps within an action research cycle. This method involves performing research in one’s own organization but may be applied within other action research contexts. The pre-step involves assessing the context and purpose of the research. This includes questions concerning the necessity or desirability for the research and desired future outcomes and the establishment of collaborative relationships. The main steps then involve constructing the research and exploring what the issues are in collaboration with research participants. The planning and action steps again involve collaboration. The outcomes of the action are assessed against the original purpose and construction of the research. Consideration is then given to the next cycle of research.⁵

David Coghlan, SJ, an Irish Jesuit, has written on the compatibility of Ignatian spirituality with action research methods. He has recognized that Ignatian spirituality, “a transformational spirituality in the Roman Catholic tradition in which action is a central motif,” may be explored in relation to action research.⁶ Coghlan observes, “Ignatian spirituality contributes a faith-based transformational methodology to the field of action research.”⁷ Coghlan’s work outlines parallels and similarities between action research and Ignatian spirituality, and the ways in which they might support each other.⁸ The Ignatian Action Research Project has purposefully sought to fuse action research and Ignatian spirituality, and found this is a promising form of research in a theological or pastoral setting. As Coghlan notes, “the processes of action research are quite appropriate to the knowledge born of grace and of religious faith.”⁹

2.2. Ignatian Action Research Methodology

What is unique about doing action research within an Ignatian framework? The Ignatian Action Research Project has assisted two parishes with theological reflection upon aspects of parish life. In doing so, it has included Ignatian spirituality within the research design by incorporating

⁴ David Coghlan, “Seeking God in All Things,” 99.

⁵ David Coghlan and Teresa Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2014), 9-11.

⁶ David Coghlan, “Ignatian Spirituality as Transformational Social Science,” *Action Research*, 3 no. 1 (2005): 89-107, 89, 90.

⁷ Coghlan, “Ignatian Spirituality as Transformational Social Science,” 89.

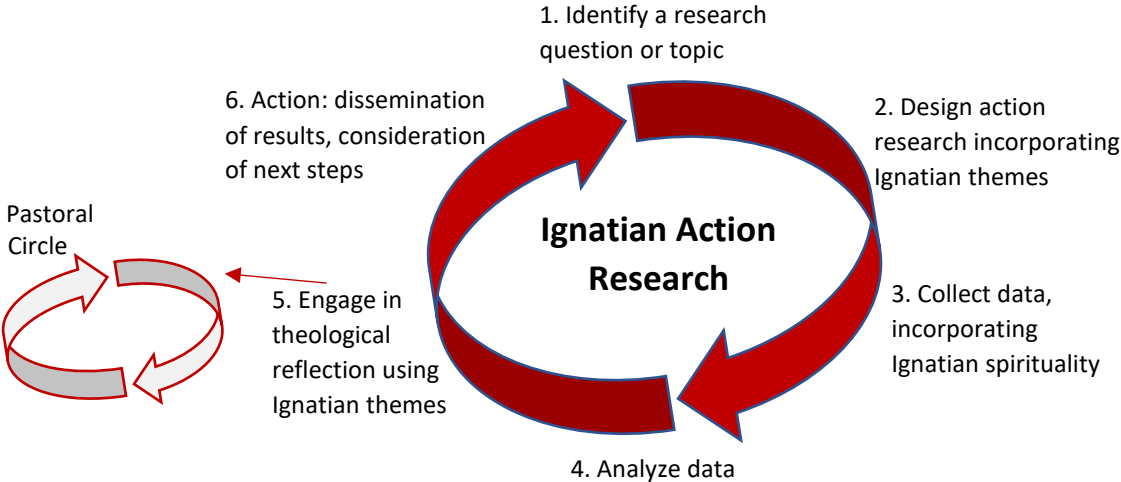
⁸ Coghlan, “Ignatian Spirituality as Transformational Social Science,” 98.

⁹ Coghlan, “Seeking God in All Things,” 98.

questions in focus groups and surveys that embrace Ignatian charisms. Focus groups have started with an Examen-type meditation that prayerfully sets the tone for the focus group conversation. Ignatian spirituality has been used in the theological reflection component of the exercise. As Coghlan notes: “In Ignatian spirituality there is an integral link between prayer and activity.” It enables us to be “contemplatives in action” during the various stages of the research process.¹⁰ The Ignatian Action Research process seeks to enhance personal reflection, involves individual and group prayer, and utilizes Ignatian spirituality concepts in theological reflection. The theological reflection component of the Ignatian Action Research cycle incorporates the Pastoral Circle model, with its emphasis upon social analysis and Ignatian spirituality,¹¹ and employs inductive theological themes arising from the data.

The research on lay formation at JST has followed the Ignatian Action Research methodology. Ignatian spirituality was incorporated within the research design. For example, interview and focus group questions have had an Ignatian orientation. Student focus groups began with an Examen-type prayer. The fall 2017 student survey invited participants to begin with a prayer which incorporated the “Principle and Foundation” from the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises*. Please see Diagram 1 below, which shows the six stages of Ignatian Action Research.

Diagram 1: Ignatian Action Research



The subsequent themes are also important factors within this research design.

¹⁰ Coghlan, “Ignatian Spirituality as Transformational Social Science,” 93.
¹¹ See Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, SJ, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2000).

2.2.1. Attention to Context

At JST we focus on the culturally contextualized study of theology alongside the commitment to “reverent and critical service of the faith that does justice.”¹² This includes paying attention to the context in which we do theology and how culture and theology may influence one another. The explicit incorporation of Ignatian spirituality into an action research paradigm has provided a dynamic reflective process that educates participants and researchers alike. Ignatian Action Research fits well with the JST’s commitment to contextual theology as the research process pays attention to the context of the research location, and deliberately reflects upon social, economic, religious and ecclesial factors when engaging in theological reflection.

2.2.2. Attention to Desire

The research design, as previously referenced, has incorporated Ignatian themes and concepts. The Ignatian theme of desire, that God calls us through our deepest desires, alongside themes of consolation and desolation have figured across the research with various groups, with specific focus group and survey questions shaped by these themes. Coghlan outlines four “territories of experience” in action research:

- Intentionality: This is the territory of purpose, goals, aims and vision.
- Planning: This is the territory of plans, strategy, tactics, ploys and schemes.
- Action: This is the territory of action, behavior, implementation, skills and performance.
- Outcomes: This is the territory of results, outcomes, consequences, and effects. The central process of action research is to develop our awareness, understanding and skills in each of these territories.¹³

Coghlan states that these four themes are explicit in Ignatian spirituality. “The four territories of experience (desires, planning, action and outcomes), as developed by Torbert (1998) are contained in the processes of the *Spiritual Exercises* and in the Ignatian tradition of spiritual direction which developed from them.”¹⁴ He continues: “In Ignatian spirituality, desiring is the way the individual cooperates with God. Desires indicate intentionality which then shapes action and outcomes. In the *Spiritual Exercises* the formal object for the phases round which the Exercises are structured is determined by what the person wants and desires.”¹⁵

2.2.3. Attention to the Magis

Action research processes develop action outcomes and consider next steps beyond the gathering of data and the analyzing of data as researchers and practitioners seek to improve

¹² JST-SCU website. Please see: <https://www.scu.edu/jst/about/about-jst/mission-and-vision/>.

¹³ Coghlan, “Ignatian Spirituality as Transformational Science,” 97. (Coghlan references Peter Reason and William R. Torbert, “The Action Turn: Toward a Transformational Social Science.” *Concepts and Transformation*, 6/1 (2001): 1-37.)

¹⁴ Coghlan, “Ignatian Spirituality as Transformational Social Science,” 95.

¹⁵ Coghlan, “Ignatian Spirituality as Transformational Social Science,” 98.

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practice. The final stage of the Ignatian Action Research process involves reflection and consideration of next steps that are guided by the theme of the Ignatian concept of the Magis, the encouragement to reach higher, and for more, while keeping focused on God.¹⁶

2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection for this report was as follows:

Lay Formation Research - Data Collection ¹⁷	
Type of data collection	Number of participants/respondents
Fall 2016 JST Lay Student Focus Groups	19 participants
Spring 2017 JST Alumni/ae Online Survey	49 respondents
Spring 2017 JST Jesuit Student Online Survey	2 respondents
Spring 2017 JST Staff Online Survey	6 respondents
Spring 2017 JST Faculty Online Survey	6 respondents
Fall 2017 Year 2 and 3 Lay Student Online Survey	11 respondents (5 participated in Fall 2016 Focus Groups)
Total participants	88 participants/respondents

Please see copies of focus group questions and online survey questions in Appendices A-F of this report. Please see Appendix I for a sample email inviting participation in the research and requesting participant consent. Focus group participants were also invited to complete consent forms before participating in the focus group conversations.

The focus group transcripts and surveys have been analyzed using a qualitative research method entitled “Grounded Theory.” Grounded theory enables analysis of empirical data in a detailed and systematic way. This results in the creation of a theory “grounded” in the data that incorporates the experience of the research participants.

Each sentence in the focus group transcripts, and survey responses, were coded individually. This is referred to as initial coding or line-by-line coding. Grounded theory author Kathy Charmaz stresses active coding, in which the researcher looks for action within the words, and that the researcher interacts with the data several times and can ask many questions of the data. This may lead the researcher into unforeseen areas and new research questions.¹⁸ During coding the researcher looks for “action”; “tacit assumptions”; explicates “implicit actions and meanings”; and summarises significant points.¹⁹ *In vivo* codes that spring

¹⁶ This stage will involve discernment on next steps. For example, “The discernment of spirits is a way of proceeding, to prepare for decisions so that they can be made ‘more’ (*magis*) in harmony with God, or – in Ignatius’ language – so that they can offer *greater glory to God*.” See Ludger Joos, SJ, “Magis – The Quest for ‘More’: Discernment of Spirits with Young Adults,” *The Way*, 52/2 (April 2013): 63-70, 66.

¹⁷ I am grateful to Mark Ravizza, SJ for providing guidance on the sequencing of focus group and survey data collection.

¹⁸ Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2006), 46.

¹⁹ Charmaz, 50.

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directly from the participant's speech may be used. Numerous line-by-line codes are then sorted into focused codes which gather the initial codes and subsume them into the next coding level. The frequency of line-by-line codes can help to define larger focused codes. From these focused codes, codes are then sorted into arising categories.

The researcher creates categories from their data. During the coding and categorizing process the researcher may begin to see an emerging theory, and gaps in the data may become apparent. The researcher can gather further data to check emerging theory through "theoretical sampling."²⁰ This includes selective research by re-interviewing or collecting new data to explore gaps in the data. Developing categories may be checked to confirm their "fit" or accuracy and that they are doing justice to the participants' experience.²¹ The fall 2017 lay student survey was an example of "theoretical sampling" as new data was collected to confirm the existing data categories and address gaps in the data.

Grounded theory method enables shared authorship as the voices of participants assist with developing a theory and excerpts from focus groups and transcripts are included in the report. For the purposes of this project grounded theory also enables implicit and explicit theological themes to arise from the data.

The research findings are described in eight categories that have arisen from the focus group and survey data.

²⁰ See Charmaz, 192-216.

²¹ Ibid.

3. Research Findings

The following eight categories emerged from the grounded theory method analysis of fall 2016 student focus groups, alumni/ae surveys, faculty, staff and Jesuit student surveys, and the fall 2017 student survey as follows:

- 3.1. What Attracts Lay Students to JST
- 3.2. Life-Giving Aspects of Formation at JST
- 3.3. Challenges Experienced by JST Lay Students
- 3.4. Lay Student “Identifying Moments”
- 3.5. Lay Ecclesial Ministry: Lived Praxis
- 3.6. The Ignatian Tradition
- 3.7. Emerging Theology of Lay Ministry
- 3.8. Looking to the Future

This section of the report describes the above categories. Numerous quotations from the focus groups and surveys are included to keep the voices of participants active within the research exercise.

3.1. What Attracts Lay Students to JST

The category “What Attracts Lay Students to JST” describes the ways in which lay students who participated in the fall 2016 focus groups were drawn to JST. As such, this first category provides a preamble for the categories that follow below as it assists with setting the context for the lay student experience at the School. It also outlines some of the hopes and expectations of lay students as they applied to the School.

The lay students identified several reasons for why they selected studying at JST. Students described their desire to study theology and that JST was a good fit for many reasons. Students were attracted by the academic programs that the School offers. Some students referenced their desire to obtain an academic and professional degree that would enable them to work for the church (the M.Div. degree). Others were attracted by the opportunity to study for a combined M.Div./M.A. degree, and at least one student was interested in the “unique programming” of the M.A.B.L. degree. In addition, certain students were impressed by the academic creativity of the School, together with students who were drawn by the School’s focus on contextual theology and the cultural educational nature of JST including its “location as a cultural center.” Students were also drawn by ecumenical and interreligious opportunities, the GTU, the numbers of international students at the School, cultural opportunities, and studying in the Bay Area. Certain students anticipated that the School would be an arena for dialogue and conversation and perceived JST to be an “open-minded” space.

The School’s focus on social justice was a motivation for several students. Participants described being drawn by JST’s commitment to theology rooted in social justice. The School’s expression of social justice values influenced some lay students who had experienced Jesuit

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Volunteer Corps (JVC) life. The students were inspired to continue their education at JST as they were attracted by the espoused theology of the School with its focus on social justice. (As will be mentioned later in this report several students referenced disappointment in a lack of service opportunities at the School, which some students perceived to be discordant with JST's focus on social justice.)

Certain students were drawn to JST to engage in formation. Participants described being drawn by the School's focus on Ignatian spirituality and the opportunity to combine academic study with Ignatian spirituality. Some specifically wanted to study alongside Jesuits and to receive similar formation. Others were drawn by the opportunity to work collaboratively with those in formation for both the priesthood and lay ministry. Others sought specific skills-based training including field education and related social justice opportunities and training in spiritual direction. One student identified that a major draw was the opportunity to train in spiritual direction at JST. While some students referenced engaging in formation as a reason for applying to JST, generally students did not articulate that a specific desire for lay formation led them to study at JST. As will be referenced below, in the category entitled "Lay Student 'Identifying Moments'," the experience of many lay students at JST includes an awakening of lay identity. A desire for lay formation is often experienced when students begin studying at JST, or during their studies, rather than anticipated when applying to the School. Questions concerning lay identity and lay formation often emerge later. Lastly, some focus group participants identified the hospitality and welcome extended by the School as a reason they chose to study at JST. This included the possibility of living in a Lay Intentional Community. One student was grateful that the School accepted her late application. A few participants described their comparing JST with other schools, with one student citing that he was impressed that JST paid attention to his married status during the admissions process.

3.2. Life-Giving Aspects of Formation at JST

The category "Life-giving Aspects of Formation at JST" describes the multifaceted ways in which formation at JST was life-giving for alumni/ae and is life-giving for JST students. JST alumni/ae were asked in their survey, "*What aided your formation while attending JST? What was life-giving?*" The following list represents a series of life-giving aspects of formation yielded from the coding process from forty-nine alumni/ae survey responses. These are listed in descending order of coding frequency, with the top theme presented first and the others descending accordingly.

- a. Spiritual direction/retreats/Spiritual Direction Practicum/faith sharing groups
- b. Lay Intentional Community life
- c. Academic classes and field education/ministry placements. (Academic classes and field education/ministry placements were in joint third place)

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- d. Liturgical life of the School (including lay sending)
- e. The support of professors
- f. International Immersion trips/pilgrimages
- g. School community life more generally, including Tuesday night suppers and presentations

Other factors were also mentioned, including friendship with classmates, collaboration with Jesuits, the GTU, serving on the liturgy committee, and the formative nature of the M.Div. Comprehensive exam process.

JST students were asked the following question in their focus groups: *“What is life-giving at JST for you and your lay peers?”* The coding of the focus group data (nineteen student participants) yielded similar responses to the JST alumni/ae survey data, except for community life figuring more prominently and the students referencing the formative aspect of lay-led liturgies. The following list represents a series of life-giving aspects of formation as described by JST students. (These are listed in descending order of coding frequency, with the top theme presented first and then others following.)

- a. Spiritual direction/retreats/Spiritual Direction Practicum/faith sharing groups
- b. Lay Intentional Community life
- c. Field education/ministry placements
- d. School community life
- e. Academic classes
- f. Lay Presiding
- g. The support of professors
- h. Student-led faith sharing groups
- i. The liturgical life of the School and soup suppers

Students also referenced joint formation through the M.Div. cohort, immersion experiences, and friendship with peers.

The fall 2017 lay survey asked students: *“From the following list, please select (as applicable) what has been formative during your time at JST so far, and please briefly explain why below. You may select more than one category.”* The options listed below were based upon the above responses from alumni/ae. This enabled the testing of the options derived from alumni/ae responses against current students’ formative experiences. There were eleven survey responses. Answer choices were as follows, in descending order:

- a. Spiritual formation, with the following responses grouped together (total of 15 responses):
 1. Spiritual direction (8 responses)
 2. Spiritual Direction Practicum (3 responses)
 3. Retreats (2 responses)
 4. Ignatian spirituality (2 responses)

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- b. Field education/ministry placements (10 responses)
- c. Academic classes. (8 responses)
- d. Lay Intentional Community life (6 responses)
- e. International Immersion trips/pilgrimages (3 responses)
- f. Liturgical life of the School (including lay sending) (2 responses)
- g. School community life more generally, including Tuesday night suppers and presentations (2 responses)
- h. Other (2 responses)
- i. Faith sharing groups (1 response)

Please see Appendix H for a graph representation of this survey response.

The following examples provide descriptions of spiritual formation, Lay Intentional Community life, field education and academic formation, as these figured prominently in alumni/ae and student responses.

3.2.1. Spiritual Formation

JST alumni/ae identified several aspects of formation at JST that they viewed as helpful. The most significant aspect of formation for alumni/ae concerned Spiritual Direction and retreats, small faith sharing groups (led by George Murphy, SJ), as well as the Spiritual Direction Practicum (led by George Murphy, SJ and Jane Ferdon, OP) and George Murphy's prayer class. These aspects of spiritual formation were often grouped together in participants' responses and, considered together as a group, yielded the largest number of responses. For example:

"Spiritual direction, for me, was the bedrock of my time at JST." (M.Div., 2015, female)

"Courses on prayer and spiritual direction were very life-giving, as well as retreats and meeting with a spiritual director" (M.Div., 2010, male)

"The spiritual direction workshops with Jane Ferdon and George Murphy were the best!" (M.T.S., 2008, male)

"Spiritual Director and Spiritual Direction Practicum – I learned how to notice the presence and feeling of God in ways that really, really, helped me to grow as a person and a minister." (M.Div., 2010, female)

"Prayer class with George Murphy. I remember not wanting to take this class, but Eddie Fernandez encouraged me to ;). After leaving JST, more than anything, I am grateful for the tools George taught me to enter into a deeper relationship with Christ. In the end, is this not what it is all about?" (M.Div., 2010, female)

"Spiritual direction with Jane and the 5-day silent retreat in the summer were super important to me..." (M.Div., 2012, female)

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“All ways. The spiritual direction practicing with George and Jane influences my everyday life. All ministers should have this included in their prep.” (M.Div., 2014, female)

“Spiritual direction has never been available to me and the opportunity to have someone guide me in prayer is such a wonderful privilege. This is where I bring my desires and where the epicenter of my epicenter lies. Ignatian spirituality is also new to me and in it I have found a commitment to Interior knowledge of Christ as well an unflinching stance of constantly adapting for the spiritual health of myself and the people I serve.” (Fall 2017 student survey response)

Please also see category six below, entitled “The Ignatian Tradition,” for further responses from JST alumni/ae concerning spiritual formation.

3.2.2. Lay Intentional Community Life

JST students and alumni/ae described the importance of living in a JST Lay Intentional Community. For example:

“My lay community. I lived in Shabbat. I had never lived in an intentional community before coming to JST. I appreciated living with others who are called to ministry, as I was the only person I ever knew who was called in this way. I appreciated having a group of people in my life who I could constantly reflect with, and where dinner conversations were focused on our faith and our theological understandings. My dearest friends were made in this house.” (M.Div., 2010, female)

“Something that came up for me through prayer [the Examen at the beginning of the focus group]...was living in Lay Intentional Community...and for me it adds so much to my education here...is really forged out of my experience with my community mates...just because it’s...I am able to have conversations with my community mates about things I am learning in class and also have conversations about my experiences in my field education...and just to have a space to continue the conversation...like what does it mean to be a lay minister in the Roman Catholic Church? And so, to work together on that kind of stuff. We pray together...we eat together...we’re being formed together...but also forming each other. That’s been a huge...to me that’s been huge to my experience here.” (Fall 2016 student focus group participant)

3.2.3. Field Education/Ministry Placements

Among the alumni/ae responses that described field education as formative there were several references to field education at St. Patrick parish, alongside some references to ministry at San Quentin State Prison (and George Williams SJ’s prison ministry course), Children’s Hospital (now UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital), and FCI Dublin women’s prison. St. Patrick parish and San Quentin prison have historically both been special ministries of JST. Healthcare ministry

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opportunities were mentioned alongside university resident ministry. References to ministry at St. Patrick parish included:

“Two aspects of my formation that come to mind immediately are my involvement at the parish in West Oakland and also living in a lay intentional community. While the parish was very challenging, it was very life-giving as well to be part of a bilingual community and be supported in my vocation by both the Spanish and English communities.” (M.Div., 2005, female)

“My ministry at St. Patrick’s parish in West Oakland. I loved working for three years at the parish. I loved the community, and the work.” (M.Div., 2011, female)

One focus group participant mentioned the participant’s ministry placement at FCI Dublin:

“I would say the most life-giving thing in my experience so far is the field placement which was at the prison which has been the source of, a lot of darkness and hardship but also the source of, all of, what I would consider, my formation here at JST, and so I feel very grateful for that space, and the women have just really deeply impacted me in a way that I see myself as a minister and a person in this world, so that, and the women there have been a huge source of life for me.” (Fall 2016 student focus group participant)

3.2.4. Academic Classes

Finally, although academic classes figured highly in student and alumni/ae responses, there was limited narrative description of this aspect of formation. The following examples again demonstrate how respondents listed several aspects of formation together in their responses:

“Academic classes on Scripture, Systematics, Church History, Spirituality, Ethics... I appreciated all the classes I took. A course on Inter-Religious Dialogue in India was a great gift to understanding the spiritualities and religions of Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism. Courses on prayer and spiritual direction were very life-giving, as well as retreats and meeting with a spiritual director.” (M.Div., 2010, male)

“Solid classes that helped shape who I am. Community with other students was great.” (M.A.B.L., 2003, male)

The following are responses from the JST fall 2017 student survey and provide examples of the multi-dimensional nature of formative experiences at JST:

“The field education has given me the opportunity to test and to begin to live out my calling. My cohort (other) has been an incredible support to me, both the lay and Jesuit students. Our different talents and graces inspire me and give me hope for the future of the Church.” (Fall 2017 student survey response)

“Spiritual direction has been absolutely necessary to my time here at JST. It has been an outlet of critical reflection and prayer that has helped me to ground my studies. Field

education, as well, has enriched my academic study and given me the opportunity to put what I am studying to work. Lay intentional community life has also been the most fundamental support I have had here ... I am indebted to the time, patience, and care of my community mates.” (Fall 2017 student survey response)

“-- field ed. affirmed my gifts as a minister--spiritual direction is integral for grounding me as I wrestle with my call --absolutely, living in community has been essential for me to feel supported and loved – [spiritual direction] practicum was so valuable!” (Fall 2017 student survey response)

3.3. Challenges Experienced by JST Lay Students

The category “Challenges Experienced by JST Lay Students” primarily describes challenges that lay students face at JST as identified by students participating in the fall 2016 focus groups. This includes academic challenges, especially experienced on arrival at JST, financial hardship and various practical challenges, and some students’ identification of a need for more support. The challenges also include those raised by the Jesuit-lay dynamic at the School, and challenges pertaining to the School community at large. Challenges as identified by JST alumni/ae are also referenced.

A small number of students participating in the fall 2016 focus groups identified academic challenges, especially if the students were new to the study of theology. One participant rendered being “blinded by academics” on arrival at JST and suggested the need for some advance preparation for academic courses including a workshop on philosophy, or a “moral theology for dummies” introductory course. Another commented that studying theology at the graduate level was overwhelming even as a student who had a theology undergraduate degree. Certain students voiced perceived differences in academic knowledge between the Jesuit scholastics and the lay students and that, for some lay students, it is sometimes intimidating to be studying alongside Jesuit students in class.

The students identified financial challenges and the financial burden of gaining a graduate degree. This included the pressure of having loans and balancing jobs with academic study. At least one participant mentioned that students appreciate financial resources provided by the School. Other practical challenges were that some students live far away from the campus and must commute long distances to school, which often presents challenges concerning attending evening events at JST. One student mentioned that children are currently not allowed in JST housing and this added to the challenges of her experience at JST.

One focus group conversation recommended that lay students pursue more structured support including the need for more communication with the School. Some identified a lack of a unified process for lay students and requested more transparency. For example, the need for communication with students when policies are updated, or advice on whom to contact for guidance over student working situations. One focus group conversation identified the need for a therapist on the JST campus. Another focus group conversation identified the need for more accountability for the Lay Intentional Communities, including one student referencing the need for more resources for the upkeep of the Jean Donovan Lay Intentional Community.

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The Jesuit-lay dynamic surfaced as a challenge for focus group participants. This refers to the tension that occasionally arises given lay and ordination track students' varying needs. At least one participant identified being aware of the Jesuit-lay dynamic at the School prior to arrival at the School but that it was different to experience this in reality. Another identified not having processed this dynamic before arriving at the School. An awareness of the “boundaries” between the two groups, Jesuit and lay, was referenced by one participant, and others identified perceptions of “difference” or feeling “different.” This was sometimes articulated as a general sense of feeling left out. One participant described historically feeling like an outsider, although this had mitigated over time. Another described feeling “a little bit like a fifth wheel,” and that this was “a dynamic I wasn’t able to perceive when I visited.” Another participant noted the challenge of being in a Jesuit space and another that the Jesuit-lay dynamic itself “takes up a lot of space.” Participants did not elaborate further on these feelings of difference in the focus groups. One participant noted that the School does a good job in bringing the lay and Jesuit students together. The clergy-laity dynamic was identified by one participant as an issue larger than the School and a question for the wider Church:

“But I think, inherently that’s always gonna...be a tension there because at the end of the day I think two things: I think that our formation, is going, always, at least at this point as the way things stand, is always going to be different. And it’s always gonna look different. And I think that there is an inherent injustice, you know, on an institutional level, when women can’t be ordained – that the School’s having to respond to, or is trying to respond to. But, you know, it, if that injustice is gonna remain, the School’s response will only do so much to kind of make up for that pain that a lot of our students are feeling. So, like, where do you go from there?” (Fall 2016 student focus group participant)

Certain focus group participants mentioned that there is a lack of space to discuss the tensions experienced by lay students and that lay formation is “patchy” across JST classes.

Another student referenced broader ecclesiological tensions that were affecting the student’s time at JST:

“I think this question of women’s ordination, for me. And that you know, I, I personally don’t feel called to the priesthood. And, not, not being able to see a woman on the you know, altar, for me at Mass is painful. And, and you know knowing who do feel that call and who are, you know still in the Church and stay, and who, suffer for that and experience a lot of pain around that. That, that’s incredibly challenging. So, I think that, like that colors everything, for me.” (Fall 2016 student focus group participant)

Students identified challenges in their experiences of community life at JST. In one focus group, students observed that “we all have our own communities” and there are a series of “communities within a community” at JST. These students identified feeling “on the outside of the community.” They described the Jesuit students as having their own distinct community or there being “a world within the JST world because there are so many of them.” In comparison, these lay students felt a lack of community experience for the lay students at JST. Other focus

group participants echoed similar sentiments regarding an awareness of the different iterations of community life at JST with one student qualifying this observation by saying, “which is great, it’s wonderful, I like I don’t feel like slighted by that at all it’s just we [Jesuits and lay students] are in different places.” While some noted that there is collaboration with lay and Jesuit students in class, for example, the Integration seminar in which it is “helpful to talk about formation together and “envisioning that together,” some participants noticed a separation between lay and Jesuit students outside of the classroom.

M.A. and M.T.S. students who participated in the focus groups referenced a sense of social isolation for these degree groups due to the absence of a cohort model. Students mentioned that those in the M.T.S. or M.A. program are a unique group that often lacks a sense of having a peer group. Some of the focus group participants who were married students noted feeling uncomfortable at times and had experienced social isolation at the School.

JST alumni/ae shared a range of responses to the question concerning what was challenging during their time at JST. This included references to experiences of lay-Jesuit tension at the School; the overall academic nature of their degree and the need to translate it into pastoral work; challenges surrounding lay identity (please see Category 5 below, “Lay Ecclesial Ministry: Lived Praxis”); and the stress associated with needing to work while studying to survive financially. One alumna described her experience at JST marking her exit from the Church. Another recent alumna described disappointment with her experience at the School, especially a lack of institutional modeling of the practice of discernment, and that she couldn’t recommend the School to others: “While I am grateful for the many things I learned and the many people I met at JST, I could not, in good conscience, recommend it at this point in time.”

3.4. Lay Student “Identifying Moments”²²

This category describes lay students’ experience of their emerging identity while studying at the School. The focus group findings are supplemented with the fall 2017 student survey data findings.

Student focus group participants were asked the following questions: “*Has your understanding of lay ecclesial ministry changed since you came to JST SCU? How might the term lay ecclesial ministry apply to you personally now or in the future?*” The focus group conversations with lay students revealed that students experience an awakening or consciousness-raising experience about lay identity during their time at JST. Participants shared a range of responses. Some participants only encountered the term “Lay Ecclesial Minister” for the first time at JST. The term lay ecclesial minister was new to at least one student (an M.T.S. student). One student commented that he/she was functioning as a lay ecclesial minister through his/her prior work in campus ministry and work on a reservation, yet “never had that identity or been told that identity was something I could have.” Another student described a “mixed bag” experience at JST in that they were learning about the term “lay ecclesial ministry” and the accompanying “baggage and power dynamics that come with it.” One M.A. student

²² The term “identifying moments” was coined by Kathy Charmaz in her own grounded theory research, see *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 144.

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stated that, for him/her, exploration of lay identity was not a major focus at JST “it isn’t something I came here necessarily like, looking for.” This student was inspired to see his/her lay peers engaging in this process. Another student acknowledged being distinctly formed as a lay ecclesial minister through pastoral ministry work before embarking upon studies at JST. This participant commented upon the agency that students engage in when they chose to study at JST. The freedom to choose to study at JST was “a powerful act of being a Catholic lay person” and this participant commented that this sense of agency shouldn’t be taken for granted. Students identified a vocational call to lay ecclesial ministry with one focus group participant describing how they felt called to hand on the tradition and were inspired by other lay people. One female student identified having a vocational call to the permanent Diaconate. In summary, students arrive at JST with varying notions of the term lay ecclesial ministry, including no understanding of, or prior exposure to, the term (this included at least one M.Div. focus group participant).

JST prompts opportunity for growth in, and self-definition of, lay ecclesial identity. One M.Div. student commented that their field education experience at FCI Dublin assisted with their growth in ministerial identity and through this ministry they became aware of their pastoral authority and grew in confidence. An M.A. student commented that they observe their M.Div. housemates defining their lay identity. One participant commented that their perception of lay identity leaned more toward intellection formation and political aspects of theology and that for them, lay identity involves being a person of faith in society.

As referenced previously, the consciousness-raising process regarding lay identity is often heightened when lay students study alongside Jesuits students and they consider their lay identity or lay vocation alongside that of their fellow Jesuit student peers. (The Jesuit scholastics have usually engaged in between eight and ten years of formation in the Society prior to embarking upon their theological studies at JST.) On the one hand, the Jesuit-lay academic environment throws differences between the two groups into sharp relief, prompting some lay students to compare their formation with that of the scholastics and conclude that their formation is lacking. On the other hand, lay students highlight that interaction with Jesuit classmates is life-giving and formative. Certain participants noted how this has shaped their identities:

“Before coming to JST I already had a pretty strong ministerial identity, but studying alongside those who explicitly are given that name in the Catholic Church has given me a new sense of what I am relation to them, and that is not that much different.” (Fall 2017 student survey respondent)

Certain focus group participants identified negative perceptions of the term lay ecclesial minister. One student commented that the involvement of lay ecclesial ministers results from a lack of ordained ministers, rather than a proactive desire for the involvement of lay ministers per se:

“Parish administrators exist only because of a lack of pastors. I feel that, so many lay roles are always prefaced with the phrase ‘in the absence of a priest’, and please keep in mind what I love about the church and the heritage and that’s actually why I think hurts even more is because I care so much about it and want to be so much a part of it... So, when I hear that term so just to recap what I said, it brings me to a place of tension because of how it looks with how the way things are looking out of a lack of necessity. OK, now we need you, so we will create these positions and being at JST gives me hope...” (Fall 2016 student focus group participant)

There was a sense that certain students were “figuring out” their place in the Church. These students identified the ambiguous nature of term lay ecclesial minister. For example, the following focus group quotation identifies a student’s awakening process at JST with respect to lay ecclesial ministry and its complex nature:

“Uh, it's definitely changed for me, I mean just knowing so little before coming in here like what does the term lay minister even mean and the coming here and discovering that there is this whole shift that is happening and what a lay ecclesial minister is as a professional lay person trained to work on behalf of the church ... and it's a blurry line and it's slippery, if you go work at school are you not a lay ecclesial minister, you know like there's just all this stuff because it's basically so super new and so I'm very excited about that and you know for me, it's brought me a lot of hope in terms of being at the beginning of such a massive shift in the church and being able to participate in that and help for the thinking (sic). I also find it actually as source of identity, like uh, a way to help me, because I do feel this vocational incompleteness and that's something I was hoping that JST was going to help me with and really hasn't. And so, but this knowing this, its, its, its giving me a path to go forward to really and try to form myself vocationally without becoming clerical.” (Fall 2016 student focus group participant)

In summary, students participating in focus groups and/or surveys identified both positive and negative “identifying moments” vis-à-vis lay ecclesial ministry.

3.5. Lay Ecclesial Ministry: Lived Praxis

JST alumni/ae provided descriptive accounts of the various ministries they have engaged in since leaving JST. These include retreat work, youth ministry, parish ministry, campus ministry and serving as a theology teacher. (Please see Appendix G for a graph depicting ministry positions held by alumni/ae respondents since graduating from JST.) This category “Lay Ecclesial Ministry: Lived Praxis” describes the lived praxis of lay ecclesial ministry from the perspective of alumnae/i’s lived experience, including the joys and sorrows of contemporary lay ministry.

3.5.1. Identification with the Term “Lay Ecclesial Minister”

Alumni/ae were asked “*What is lay ecclesial ministry from your perspective?*” Several alumni/ae survey respondents stated that they did not identify with the term “lay ecclesial minister.” For

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example, the following alumna, quoted at length, describes the ways in which her identity is formed by those she ministers to and accompanies:

“My experience as a lay ecclesial minister is that this title is not recognized in the larger community, and that if a lay person were to call themselves a ‘minister’ (rather than a Religion teacher, catechist, 'campus' minister, 'Eucharistic' minister, 'resident' minister, chaplain), they would be looked upon as Protestant or a renegade Catholic trying to claim authority outside the apostolic tradition. My experience is that the title ‘minister’ for a lay person must be connected to a very specific task/role, but is never understood to be part of the very identity of a person. To be honest, the last time I used this term ‘lay ecclesial minister’ in conversation was probably as a student at JST. Now...what is my actual experience of being a lay ecclesial minister (whether I use the title or not)? A lot of my experience has been very life-giving as I walk with students in their faith journey, helping to facilitate learning inside and outside of the classroom through study of the Scriptures and Tradition, encounters with marginalized, and opportunities to pray and reflect on God's call in their life.” (M.Div., 2010, female)

Other alumni described dispensing with official titles and the term “lay ecclesial”:

“My experience of lay ministry is through Catholic secondary education, both in the classroom teaching theology/religious studies as well as participating in campus ministry and adult spirituality. I think lay members witness to Catholic identity and mission without relying on official titles and symbols that go along with religious members of the community.” (M.A., 2006, male)

“As a hospital chaplain, I tend to think of the term ‘lay ecclesial’ to describe the pastoral character, skill, and vocation to be a bit too narrow. Perhaps I don't have a great understanding of what the term itself means. I don't consider myself primarily as one doing ministry on behalf of the Catholic Church... but rather as one living from a deep-seated sense of call to love, inspire, empower, and tend the movements of spirit of those who walk through our doors. I suppose that is ‘Catholic’ ministry at its best, but not the way it is conventionally understood. However, the term ‘lay’? This might sound strange, but that's not primarily how I identify in an interfaith group of interfaith pastors/priests; I think of myself in the latter category. And the term ‘ecclesial,’ it seems limiting.” (M.Div., 2009, male)

The following alumnus focuses more on vocational calling through baptism and being formed by God's grace and ministry:

“As a youth minister, master catechist for the Diocese of Oakland, and as a theology teacher, I exercise a kind of lay ‘ministry.’ All the baptized share in the universal call to holiness and the duty to evangelize. I may exercise these ministries for a living, but I feel they represent a kind of specific calling from God within the more general calling to holiness. My experience so far has been wonderful. I have seen the Holy Spirit and God's

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grace work in the lives of people through my efforts, and I have grown spiritually in the process.” (M.A., 2004, male)

These survey answers illustrate that JST alumni/ae are claiming their authority as lay ministers through the lived praxis of their ministry and a specific ministerial calling and role. Some alumni/ae depend less on the ecclesial title of “lay ecclesial minister”. The term “lay ecclesial minister” reflects an espoused ecclesiological identity, whereas there is a different lived ecclesiological identity in practice. By contrast, the title provides, for one alumna, a sense of authority for women working within the Church:

“In my opinion, it is a way of trying to include women in church hierarchy. Women are needed to do the work, but are blocked becoming ordained. Using the term lay ecclesial minister gives a lay person more authority and acceptance as being qualified to do the work of ministry for the people.” (M.Div., 2007, female)

Another alumna/alumnus respondent described a general ecclesial ambiguity around lay ecclesial ministry:

“The Church is in a time of deep need of lay ecclesial ministers but unaware of how to name this need. This creates a confusing place and time in which to do this work.” (M.Div., 2014, male)

Ultimately, lay ecclesial identity and authority for ministry, as described by one alumna, is found in Christ:

“In theory, I think it is a lay person who has been deeply formed in the Scripture, Traditions, and Life of the Catholic Church, and seeks to carry out the mission of Jesus as their primary vocational commitment. Their spiritual, educational formation and capacity for breaking open the mysteries of faith with others has been recognized as legitimate by an ecclesial school like JST. In practice, it is someone who has chosen as their full-time employment to carry out the mission of Jesus without institutional protections and benefits, without an appointed superior or community to help with discernment of call. Someone whose job, family, and livelihood are threatened by their own Church when being prophetic in a way that Religious sisters/priests are not. Someone who is not a legitimate ‘minister’ beyond their day-job tasks and will often be looked over for a ‘priest’ or ‘nun’ to legitimize some event or document as truly ‘Catholic.’ Someone who is therefore able to understand and empathize with other lay people who work in Catholic settings or are served in Catholic settings (hospital, school, social ministry, etc.) Able, therefore, to translate and build bridges. Able to find legitimacy and authority in the Spirit of Jesus, and the calling of those on the margins. Able to be creative and resourceful, brave, subversive, persistent.” (M.Div., 2010, female)

3.5.2. Lived Praxis of Ministry

The alumni/ae survey data revealed a different picture to that expressed by JST lay student focus group and survey participants. Alumni/ae were not so much grappling with what it means to be a lay minister in a cognitive and emotional sense, rather concretely describing the lived experience of what it means to be a lay minister.

The alumna quoted above referenced the mission-focused nature of her ministry which was inspired by her JST educational experience:

“I struggle as someone in a same-sex relationship to ever feel any sense of job security, since I have an ecclesial degree. In this way, I appreciated JST’s grounding me in a sense that ‘the mission has a church’ rather than the church having a mission. The Institutional Church does not have the structures in place to affirm my dignity, welcome my presence openly, or take seriously their own claim that ‘in me, God’s presence is revealed.’ I choose to work within Jesuit or RSCJ religious order schools, not just because of their charisms, but also b/c going closer to diocesan activities or events is threatening to my livelihood.” (M.Div., 2010, female)

Another alumna also contextualized her lay ministerial experience within the mission of the Church and a “broader ecclesiology”:

“I think the common understanding of serving within a parish has too narrow of a focus for lay ecclesial ministry, so I have a broader ecclesiology. I work at a university, first as a campus minister, and now as an administrator in the mission office. Although I’m not involved in sacramental preparation or liturgy directly, I offer spiritual direction and provide support for faculty, staff, students and community members to engage with the Catholic heritage of our institution. I lead prayer, contribute to spirituality programming and engage internal and external constituents in constructive dialogue about Catholic identity. One JST professor asked me ‘Does the Church have a mission, or does The Mission have a church?’ and I still find myself reflecting on that question. I see my work as directly contributing to the mission of the church, and understand my work as lay ecclesial ministry.” (M.Div., 2009, female)

Rather than dwelling upon the ambiguity around lay ecclesial ministry there was a sense from the alumni/ae responses that those participating in ministry were engaging in a lived theology of lay ministry. This was not based upon ecclesial recognition, but more upon the lived praxis of ministry. Their ministerial identities arise from ministry itself as they are formed by the communities that they serve.

3.5.3. Joys and Sorrows of Ministry

Alumni/ae acknowledged the tensions and the realities of lay ecclesial ministry, yet their responses demonstrated persistence and dedication. These responses provide a window onto that for which JST is preparing its lay graduate ministers after graduation. The sorrows of

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ministry sometimes include struggles with the institutional church and clergy-lay tensions or experienced power differentials. For example, alumni/ae described ministry as:

“Mostly fulfilling, but at times hindered by the institutional structure of the Church.” (M.A., 2004, male)

“Fulfilling and very challenging. Many priests (diocesan) really struggle with working with lay folks.” (M.Div., 2006, female)

“Being a member of a parish staff - sometimes seen as equal with the pastor, sometimes seen as subservient to him.” (M.Div., 2002, female)

“There were moments of intense joy and reward, but it was ultimately a dead end professionally, personally, and emotionally as a queer woman.” (M.Div., 2010, female)

“Challenging especially because of the clergy power dynamic.” (M.Div., 2013, male)

“A constant struggle between doing ministry and working for the good of humanity whilst being looked down upon and limited and treated with condescension by the ordained clergy.” (M.Div., 2005, female)

Certain alumni/ae also identified a disconnect between their experience of collaboration and Jesuit education at JST and the reality of lay ministerial experience, with one alumna describing an “ideological mismatch that has made me fearful of working too closely with parishes and dioceses.” Another alumnus described:

“The Catholic Church is not serious about lay partnerships. It took me years to discern that it was not a healthy faith community for me. I still use 90% of the theological framework, but joined a healthier community.” (M.T.S., 2007/2008, male)

At other times the challenges are more practical:

“My experience of lay ecclesial ministry is as a religion teacher and campus ministry. It's definitely different than I expected--I imagined myself spending much more time having more direct conversations about God, spirituality, and faith. Instead, I spend a lot of time on behind the scenes things (retreat journals, immersion budgets, overseeing personnel). I've had a very positive experience.” (M.Div., 2012, female)

“The challenges are in becoming recognized for my authority as a minister without church recognition (ordination) or financial support.”

The joys of ministry include serving others, responding to pastoral needs, and being rooted and grounded in scripture and kingdom values:

“It is being a spiritual resource for all people (Catholic, Christian, non-Christian, seekers, NONES, etc.) who need pastoral support in times of need and growth (through prayer, dialogue, presence), who need pastoral challenge to live out the gospel in their everyday

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lives (through justice, connecting faith to the real world, highlighting kinship and solidarity) and who need pastoral accompaniment and direction on how to make decisions that reflect their faith and values (through spiritual direction, faith-sharing models, etc.)” (M.A., 2005, female)

“In everyday life no matter the occupation is choosing to live ‘Love one another as I have loved you’ through the Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments with self, others, and all sentient beings.” (M.Div., 2010, male)

“Ministry is service. It is a call to work with and in the Spirit in building up the reign of God. I consider the work I've done as a religious studies teacher, coach, club moderator, campus minister all to be ministry.” (M.Div., 2010, male)

“Ministry performed by lay people for the explicit purpose of building up God's Kin(g)dom via care for the poor, pastoral accompaniment, etc.” (M.Div., 2012, male)

“Facilitating people's discernment of God's movement in their lives; ritualizing moments of life and death; being witness to the stories of the Body of Christ (all people); connecting people to the sources of strength in their lives.” (M.Div., 2015, female)

3.5.4. The Ignatian Tradition

The category “The Ignatian Tradition” primarily provides examples of answers to the following survey question asked of JST alumni/ae:

“In what ways did the Ignatian tradition inform your formation at JST and contribute to the distinctiveness of the JST experience? If possible, please identify examples from your experience.”

Alumni/ae provided a range of responses. Consistent with the earlier mentioned life-giving aspects of formation, spiritual formation (including spiritual direction, retreats and spiritual direction classes) again featured very strongly in alumni/ae responses. For example:

“I was actively in Spiritual Direction and that was so very helpful and practical. That is something I can point to that really informed me and I have the personal experiences to refer to. Other than that, I studied theology at a Jesuit school in undergrad so it is hard to tease out where I learned what. However, I LOVE the Ignatian tradition and believe it is so helpful for proceeding as a lay minister because it has an openness and a progressiveness to it.” (M.A., 2005, female)

“Highly influential. Spiritual direction was the most significant for me. Also, classes I took on prayer in the Ignatian tradition.” (M.Div./M.A., 2007, female)

“I always took advantage of the 4-day silent retreat at the beginning of the school year; that was deeply formative and very important for me personally.” (M.Div., 2009, male)

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“In Spiritual direction, particularly, Ignatian Spirituality was distinctly emphasized. Likewise, George Murphy was a great source of it, as were the selections of several authors we read in classes. Tuesday suppers often also featured lay people exercising Ignatian spirituality...” (M.Div., 2012, male)

“All ways. The spiritual direction practicing with George and Jane influences my everyday life. All ministers should have this included in their prep.” (M.Div., 2014, female)

Alumni/ae responses were subjective and dependent upon course selection and retreat/spiritual direction involvement. Respondents identified varying aspects of Ignatian spirituality formation. For example, the following responses were from two different students in the same cohort:

“This is tough because the particular Ignatian influence was deeply embedded in my education, but wasn't always at the surface level. That being said... 1. I find myself rooted more in questions of justice than philosophy (though I do often wish I had a stronger foundation in philosophy). 2. I was given a global perspective on the Church that, while it isn't unique to Jesuits, is essential to Ignatian identity. 3. I was taught to be at once both critical and faithful in the Church. This has been a real gift--it saves me from having to choose. I know these examples aren't terribly specific, but to be honest that is part of the gift and challenge of the Ignatian identity at JST (in my experience). It was more of a strong undercurrent that directed everything, but wasn't always visible in really specific ways.” (M.Div., 2007, female)

“I was introduced to Ignatian imaginative contemplation during those years. Also, the emphasis on bringing God into the world through work in justice ministries. I think it would have been good to experience more of the Exercises during formation. That is something I had to explore on my own after graduation. I would have also liked to learn more about the life of St. Ignatius. I found the retreats life-giving, but short and not particularly Ignatian.” (M.Div., 2007, female)

Occasionally, as referenced above, formation through the Ignatian tradition seemed implicit, or received via osmosis. For example, one alumna commented upon learning from Jesuit students:

“I learnt the most about the Ignatian tradition from my fellow Jesuit friends. Really, nothing in a classroom could teach me what it means to follow the Ignatian tradition than the people I met who have dedicated their lives to this way of life.” (M.Div., 2011, female)

A JST staff member echoed the ways in which JST espouses Ignatian spirituality in implicit and explicit ways:

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“I think it (Ignatian spirituality) informs retreats and probably most of the spiritual direction offered at JST. I think it permeates much of the way we do things here at JST even if it is not always explicit or prominent in its impact.”

The need for the opportunity for lay students to participate in the Spiritual Exercises was mentioned by other alumni/ae, for example:

“Spiritual direction. Ignatian identity drew me to the school and I was informed by it through much of my coursework. Again, an opportunity to make a retreat with the Exercises would have been key in this area.” (M.Div., 2015, female)

“This is shocking, but, I graduated without ever completing the Ignatian Exercises. I'm sure it was my fault, but, it should be required!” (M.T.S. 2016, female)

Alumni/ae, in certain cases, highlighted a lack of formation based upon the Ignatian tradition and one alumnus (M.Div., 2013, male) stated that he had to seek this out. For example, one respondent identified Ignatian spirituality as being “a surprising weak spot in the curriculum” (M.A., 2008, female) and that a specific course in the history of Ignatian spirituality was only offered during her final year. Another alumnus (M.A., 2009, male) commented that his program did not have much of an Ignatian influence. Some alumni/ae referenced receiving their Ignatian formation at other Jesuit institutions, rather than at JST. One alumna/alumnus noted the ways in which the school was responsive to requests for more Ignatian programming.

In general, alumni/ae provided positive responses to the Ignatian component of formation which featured in the curriculum and co-curricular activities. For example:

“I was very grateful to have opportunities for silent retreats as a part of my experience at JST. Also, the Jesuit tradition informed the process by which we did theological reflection on our ministerial experiences.” (M.Div., 2005, female)

“I wanted to be in the Ignatian family for my formation, and I found that to be a tremendously supportive environment. Opportunities for retreats, spiritual direction and ‘Ignatian speak’ helped me develop as a minister, a leader, and disciple. I appreciated using discernment models in administrative meetings and seeing how the school embraced the Ignatian tradition.” (M.Div., 2009, female)

“the Examen and discernment principles have been helpful in my professional and personal life; my understanding of contextual theology has made me a more effective teacher.” (M.Div., 2015, female)

“The class Camino Ignaciano and the ensuing pilgrimage was excellent source of Ignatian spirituality.” (M.T.S., 2016, male)

Student focus group responses, to the same question posed to JST alumni/ae regarding Ignatian Spirituality, included the following:

“I’d say certain on foundational level, that fact that there is a field placement with theological reflection as a foundational structure, I think it reflects Ignatian spirituality and action and reflection combined with theological and intellectual inquiry, certain specifics and elements of how that has produced and payed (sic) out, I think produced, growth and improvement, but as a foundational element, I think that is a good thing and fits well...” (Fall 2016 student focus group participant)

“Deborah Ross incorporates Ignatian spirituality in all those and in the way that we reflect and the way we are invited to imagine and contemplate um, I would say that the only way I can answer that is just Deborah Ross. I know that she is intentional about that in what she does. But I agree that we never actually been taught what is it, how do we incorporate it, how do we take it to a community, and sometimes I do sense that it could be a little, not to speak for others, but a little bit awkward because if there is an attempt to do that, well it’s like the majority of the people here are trained in that so there’s a little bit of an unbalance...” (Fall 2016 student focus group participant)

3.6. Emerging Theology of Lay Ecclesial Ministry

The above research finding categories reveal an implicit theology within the gathered focus group and survey data. Students and alumni/ae describe their experiences of community life, the importance of personal spirituality and spiritual direction and Ignatian spirituality, engaging in service and mission within field education opportunities, and their growth in ministerial identity. These aspects, including the struggles of the lay ecclesial life, narrate a lived theology and assist with defining an emerging theology of lay ecclesial ministry, as it is experienced at the School. This category highlights explicit theological themes arising from the focus group and survey data. These themes should be read in conjunction the “Ignatian Tradition,” which is a theological theme in and of itself, and the “Lay Ecclesial Ministry: Lived Praxis” category. The fall 2017 student survey asked further questions to explore an emerging theology of lay ecclesial ministry. The first survey question was:

“God is the primary and ultimate formator and the source of the lay ministerial vocation. Prayer, scripture and sacraments are essential elements in lay formation. What words from scripture, or spiritual themes or theological concepts, come to mind when you consider your ministry and vocation as a lay person? (For example, baptismal calling, the theme of discipleship.)”

The following are emerging theological themes that continue to assist with framing the experience of JST lay students, especially as they help contextualize and define the origins and purpose of the lay ministerial vocation.

3.6.1. Calling and Discipleship and Service

The following answers were made to the above listed survey question and reference the students’ response to God’s personal call to them:

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“That call to follow what God had inscribed on our hearts has been very real within my journey here at JST. I feel that as I keep following this call to be a lay ecclesial minister in the church, my eyes are being opened and I am being invited more and more into life here at JST. God is speaking through my classes, my friends, my field placement here at JST to teach me how to follow my call to being a lay person in the church.” (Fall 2017 student survey participant)

“Pilgrimage. I am a pilgrim along the way. The pilgrim does not know what lays around the bend or what vista will greet him upon the mountain top or if hospitality will be offered to her. Nevertheless, the pilgrim walks, never ceasing in raising words of praise to God.” (Fall 2017 student survey participant)

Another student listed the theme of discipleship and the call to “love one another as I have loved you.” The survey responses also listed “servant leadership.” The theme of call and giftedness also emerged:

“I just think that the way my, uh, lay ministerial conception of myself in relation to what I bring to the church and what the church in return gives to me has flourished and grown. Continues to grow. Hopefully.” (Fall 2016 student focus group participant)

The theme of discipleship and baptismal call “to witness to and announce the Good News” was also referenced by a JST staff survey respondent.

3.6.2. Encounter with Christ

Some of the fall 2016 focus group participants identified being called by Christ and that Christ is their focus for continuing to serve as lay ministers in the future:

“Well I think to me it’s just that Jesus is in it. Jesus in the future, the eschatological crest that we’re always, you know, looking forward to. But I also think that, we have a promise that He’s always with us, even until the end of the age, so there’s a, a sense for me that, well obviously there’s work to be done in the future. And, I’ll find Him there, you know, I’ll find Him wherever I’m going and, and He will also lead me to the people and the places where He wants me to serve.” (Fall 2016 student focus group participant)

One student mentioned Jesus being a “part of the future” despite this student’s perception of the ambiguity of lay ministry:

“That there’s this really, um, a lot of unknowns which is also, I think, Jesus being a part of the future is such a strong sense of hope for me. Is because, what it is to be a lay Catholic is something that is, fairly unclear, and so maybe coming back to the question of lay formation, that’s sort of this gaping hole in my formation as far as well, what does that actually mean?” (Fall 2016 student focus group participant)

A JST faculty member described lay ecclesial ministry as follows:

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“Lay ecclesial ministers are those who work out and for the Church and represent the Church as the Body of Christ in their ministry. They are not lone rangers nor do they only serve as add-ons allowed by the clergy. They are integral to the ministry itself and are a part of its incarnate expression.”

The call of Christ to ministry is for one student the main reason why she continues in ministry despite experiencing pain and struggle. This student’s response to the first survey question listed above was as follows:

“I am a lay person but have a call to ordained ministry so this question is painful for me and I cannot answer it.” (Fall 2017 student survey participant)

The student went on to comment in response to the survey question, “*What makes the sacrifices and humiliations of being a lay ecclesial minister worthwhile?*”:

“The only thing that makes it worthwhile is that for some reason Jesus keeps asking me to be a minister in the Catholic Church.” (Fall 2017 student survey participant)

3.6.3. Sacramental Worship

In response to the survey question enquiring “*What words from scripture, or spiritual themes or theological concepts, come to mind when you consider your ministry and vocation as a lay person?*”, one student mentioned the liturgical and eucharistic sacramental life of the school and the ways in which it animates baptismal identity:

“Our chapel has been described to me as the ‘heart of the community’ because it is the physical place where all – faculty, staff, students, alumni/ae, visitors – come to meet and worship together. Regardless of status, our baptismal identity becomes incarnate in our equality before the Lord and in our all becoming one body in the shared meal of the Eucharist. Being a Eucharistic people and sharing in that with all in the context of liturgical worship is moving and communicative in ever deepening ways.” (Fall 2017 student survey participant)

Another student focus group participant identified the liturgy as “our source and our summit” and that, for him/her, the liturgy frames lay and ordained ministerial experience as “connected in sharing in the life of the assembly together.” The liturgy provides inspiration for dialogue about lay and priestly formation and collaboration:

“One of the things we are talking about in sacramental theology a lot right now is this idea of dialogue in liturgy and dialogue in our sacramental life together. If we don’t have priests and lay people, there’s no dialogue and so I guess when I say forming priests right...it means opening, opening, ways for our priests to experience collaboration with lay people but also with a deep and inviting invitation of the presence of Christ in the worshipping assembly and the voice of the worshipping assembly” (Fall 2016 student focus group participant)

3.6.4. The Joys and Sorrows of Ministry

The categories above describing the life-giving aspects of lay ministry, and the challenges, point to the joys and sorrows of JST student experiences. The previously mentioned survey question *“What makes the sacrifices and humiliations of being a lay ecclesial minister worthwhile?”* revealed positive descriptions of mission-oriented experiences of lay ecclesial ministry in which Jesus and the Holy Spirit are present:

“I share in the experiences of the people I serve not because I am present in my ministry to them, but because I, too, face the secular world. I need to work, house myself, manage my personal life and my ministry as I hope to be married and have a family of my own. These experiences ground my ministry and are a gift that I can bring to the people I work with and serve. The Church is the body of Christ and despite all, the spirit is still at work.” (Fall 2017 student survey participant)

“Seeing the joy in people's face and eyes, after reaching out to them, even by the mere presence and offering of your ears - listening.” (Fall 2017 student survey participant)

“The beauty of God smiling on my ministry in plentiful moments and feeling the consolation that is present.” (Fall 2017 student survey participant)

“Loving the Lord through the needy with whom he is very close.” (Fall 2017 student survey participant)

“Doing the ministry and feeling that sense of affirmation that this is what I'm supposed to be doing from the Holy Spirit.” (Fall 2017 student survey participant)

3.6.5. Community and the Word

The category “Life-giving aspects of formation” listed community life at JST as an important formative experience. The following quotation references the theological importance of one student’s experience of a student-led faith sharing group and the community experience that this provides:

“Lay faith sharing groups have been, in so many ways, the holy ground upon which I have encountered the animating movements of the Holy Spirit, especially in relation to lay identity in the Church. Gathered as disciples around the Word, we reflect, pray, and break open the experiences of God in our lives. This communal, intimate context has revealed powerful understandings of God and God's call for me and has generated the very best conversations around lay identity that I have had at JST.” (Fall 2017 student survey participant)

Faculty and staff responses to the question asking, *“What is lay ecclesial ministry from your personal perspective?”* gave rise to responses that reference the importance of collaborative ministry and ministers who are called to service in the Church community and to “professional service to the Church as the People of God.”

3.6.6. Theological Nature of Academic Study and Formation

Finally, academic classes feature highly in student and alumni/ae responses as both life-giving and important formative experiences. One student commented that:

“The academic life is the core of what goes on at our school. *Fides quaerens intellectum*. Cut from the cloth of our Catholic faith, which sees study as a way of prayer, a way to wrap ourselves closer into the mystery of Christ, the knowledge we learn in the classroom aids us in our fidelity to tradition and transition, that constant dynamism which propels our Church forward from age to age.” (Fall 2017 MDiv student survey participant.)

3.7. Looking to the Future

The Ignatian Action Research process places emphasis upon the theme of Magis, or of working towards a higher aim and prayerfully developing practice. This is to be undertaken with a spirit of humility and discerning what action God may want. This research exercise has incorporated this sense of the Magis in focus group and survey questions and, as mentioned above, in the overall research design. Focus group questions and survey questions incorporated the theme that lay formation at the School could be enhanced. One student referenced that JST might become a “trailblazer” in the area of lay ecclesial formation and open “new frontiers of discussion” through reflecting upon lay ecclesial ministry. This category highlights research findings that affirm and encourage the strengthening of existing formation activities and outline possible future ideas. The following are a list of observations arising from the data.

3.7.1. Cohesive Narrative Regarding Lay Formation Opportunities at the School and Increased Communication

As the research findings attest, there are a range of lay formation activities currently in place. The research draws attention to this and the life-giving nature of such opportunities. One staff member observed that:

“I think we offer a lot of resources in lay formation but I don't think students experience this as cohesive, coherent, part of an integrated whole. I think they simply see a number of seemingly disparate resources. While these may be each of value, students do not see how they fit into a whole.” (JST staff survey respondent)

The same staff member, when answering the question on how formation for lay ecclesial ministers at the School may be enhanced, stated:

“It may be enhanced if there were a more cohesive presentation of the various resources available to students, and some guidance in choosing from different opportunities and resources so as to compose and engage in one's own formation, with the guidance and accompaniment of the Holy Spirit.” (JST staff survey respondent)

These observations suggest that more attention could be given to explaining the various formation opportunities available to lay students and presenting a cohesive narrative to lay

students. The development of such a narrative, and increased communication, would seem to be a first step. As regards increased communication, one faculty member observed:

“I think we offer solid programming, such as in supervised ministry, but we should continue to publicize and enhance the offerings and opportunities.” (JST faculty survey respondent)

A lay student focus group participant highlighted the need for greater attention to be given to personalized emails being sent to lay students when lay formation activities are advertised. This student felt that if he/she receives an email addressed to them personally, this is much more welcoming than receiving a group email. The student emphasized that personal email invitation will encourage greater participation.

3.7.2. Lay-Jesuit Collaboration

Two lay students, one in a fall 2016 focus group and another in the fall 2017 student survey, described the Jesuit and lay students as being on different tracks. This was qualified by one student: “it's not, we're not pitted against each other, but I think there's a reality that needs to be acknowledged instead of making pretend that we're all on the same track; we're not.” The fall 2017 student survey respondent described a need for a change of culture at the School that acknowledges distinctions between lay and Jesuit students, stating: “Equitable -- not equal -- formation. We are not Jesuits, nor do we want to be. The school keeps trying to view lay people as equals to the Jesuits. We are not. We are different.” The two Jesuit student survey respondents suggested separate lay formation for M.Div. students rather than the joint formation in the M.Div. Integration Seminar. By contrast, another student calls for further collaboration:

“In my experience, I feel God moving through the laity in new ways at JST. There is a desire to make lay-Jesuit collaboration even more pronounced. I think we are at a time and place where the laity can and need to directly affect priestly formation. The division that exists between the two ‘tracks’ needs to be broken down.” (Fall 2017 student survey respondent)

This observation, taken together with the previously-referenced life-giving nature of the joint formation between lay and Jesuits students currently operant at JST and evident in the experience of alumni/ae, would seem to suggest that lay-Jesuit collaboration is an area for growth. The JST faculty survey responses also highlight the School's emphasis on collaboration and joint formation. For example, when asked “*What aids lay ecclesial ministerial formation at JST?*” some faculty members responded as follows:

“The shared classroom environment is key, as well as the similarity of curriculum expectations...”

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“The pluralistic context of JST is a good milieu for lay ministerial formation. Lay students train side by side with students preparing for orders. The international student body also includes multiple visions of ministry that may coexist in some dialectic tension.”

“Basically, a good program of studies, collaborating with students preparing for ordination and religious, good attitude towards it, opportunity for lay students to work and study and pray and grow together.”

Some alumni/ae referenced the importance of the same formation for laity and clergy and the need for lay/clerical distinctions to be removed:

“Treatment of lay ecclesial ministers in a manner which affirms their dignity and right to serve alongside ordained clergy.” (M.T.S., 2010, male)

“The same formation that priests get. Really, why should it be different if the needs of community remain the same” (M.T.S., 2016, female)

“Honestly I look forward to the day it is not a separate distinction from Ecclesial Ministry in general. The same roles are filled by lay and religious alike, but receives a separate distinction when filled by a lay person with the same education, training, devotion etc.” (M.Div., 2016, female)

3.7.3. Importance of Lay Intentional Community and Lay Faith Sharing Groups

The importance of the Lay Intentional Communities and lay faith sharing groups has been previously mentioned. The following quotations from a previously quoted student fall 2017 survey participant capture their importance and the need for lay faith sharing groups to be encouraged and sustained:

“...lay intentional communities are a HUGE place of lay formation. Like the lay faith sharing groups, so often it is in the spontaneous moments of everyday life in which transformative conversations on lay identity emerge. I found this so much in my two years of lay community...In intentional community we live into lay identity and its ever evolving, incarnate meanings. Again, if JST is serious about inculcating a culture of lay ecclesial identity, the lay intentional community will be the ground par excellence for such development to occur.” (Fall 2017 student survey participant)

“I am resolved to the conviction that if the conversation of lay identity is to further develop at JST, it will be done within the context of these groups (Lay faith sharing groups). At present, unfortunately, there is only one group going, which I find disheartening and sad. I believe, like other institutions, such as the University of Notre Dame, that these lay faith sharing groups should be a component (perhaps programmatic) of lay life at our school. Through the coming together, sharing of food, and prayer a new culture emerges. If we wish to have this culture take root at JST, then naturally we must plant the seed of these groups and nurture them. However, though

compulsory, these groups MUST be self-guided. Without an autonomous leadership structure these groups will lose their energy.” (Fall 2017 student survey participant)

3.7.4. Academic Programming, Skills-Based Training, Mentoring

The student focus group participants generally expressed gratitude for their formative experiences at the School. Still, some expressed a desire for more lay formation. This was more pressing for some students, and less so for others. One set of focus group participants that expressed a desire for more formation, did not articulate specific academic objectives or suggestions for academic programming. Another focus group referenced the need for more lay formation to be built into academic programming. One participant, who was appreciative of co-curricular programming that accommodated short-term needs, stated a preference for formation that meets long term goals that would be “integrated into the program to balance with the course load, having that formation as part of our degree and not like addendums to attach onto the program.” (Fall 2016 student focus group participant) Another queried “If there was a way that that formation could be a required part in our programs.”

The fall 2017 survey sent to second and third year lay students contained questions about potential future lay formation programming “*What would assist JST lay students to deepen their awareness of their lay ecclesial identity and lay vocation.*” Eleven students selected responses as follows:

- An academic class on lay ecclesial ministry (that incorporates, for example, the history and theology of lay ecclesial ministry including church documents, and an experiential reflective dimension) – 5 responses
- A credit-bearing structured lay ecclesial formation program (including different components such as Ignatian spirituality, personal and group theological reflection, academic content, and skills-based training) – 7 responses
- Workshops – 5 responses
- Unsure – 1 response

Please see Appendix H for graphs displaying responses to the above question and the following question: “Do you think that the School currently offers adequate opportunities for lay students to explore their role as lay ecclesial ministers?”

Students were asked: “*If, in the future, JST offered a credit-bearing lay ecclesial formation program how would you see this as being helpful for future lay students? Please state your reasons why.*” (Questions about future programming were phrased in the subjunctive and referenced possibilities for future JST students, so as not to raise the hopes of current students.) Seven students responded “yes” and four students responded “unsure.” Some of the associated comments were as follows:

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“I think it would allow the title of lay ecclesial formation to be better defined and allow us to grow in our vocation. I would not recommend a separation from the Jesuits though because they add so much to our formation.”

“would prefer to see a real course on organizational/church leadership and governance and real exploration of collaborative ministry.”

“I think it would provide direction and a focused degree program just for Lay people.”

“There is a lot of confusion about this subject, so laying a theoretical foundation would be helpful.”

The students were also asked: *“In the future, do you think there should be an optional or mandatory course on lay ecclesial formation for some, or all, future lay students? Please state your reasons for why or why not.”* Responses were mixed and included the following:

“Yes, it should be mandatory. But it should be subsumed within a much larger framework and culture of the laity at JST. I have touched on what growing this culture could look like at JST in some of my answers above. It cannot be just one class to check off the academic box -- this will ring hollow. It is a good step, but it must be one among many steps taken together programmatically. In this way a holistic formation arises, one that is substantive and leaves the lay person feeling respected and empowered to continue developing what this lay identity means in this 21st century Church of ours.”

“Yes - but, I would be hesitant for it to be strictly an academic study. I would prefer to have workshops that take, for example, some of the documents on lay ecclesial ministry and dissect them on a very pastoral level.”

“Yes. I think in seminar we touch on some things that lay ministers deal with, but it would be helpful to have a mandatory course dedicated to just that.”

“I think if it exists, it should be available to all who wish. I hesitate on making it mandatory because some are lay ministers by default, even if they wish they could be something else.”

“Yes, because it would help lay students form community and grow as ministers.”

Fall 2017 student survey responses included reference to there being a lay formation director appointed, and the need for a specific lay formation department:

“Until the school takes seriously the need for the development of a lay culture at the school, adequate formation cannot seriously be expected to be actualized. I firmly believe that we need a new department entirely -- the Department for Lay Formation. Without the funding and resources for this new department, I am, so sadly and unfortunately, aware that substantive, sustainable movement around lay identity in the Church will not occur at JST.”

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Interestingly, alumni/ae responses did not reference the need for an academic lay formation program. Alumni/ae responses instead referenced the need for more skills-based training in the following areas: teaching skills, “more mentorship opportunities”; “adding some business classes”; the need to “acquire marketable skills”; “more cultural competency”; “power dynamics between the laity and ordained”; “managing a budget, managing personnel, how to collaborate effectively with colleagues, school/parish/non-profit structures”; “Deeper engagement and discussion of issues facing the modern catholic church -- racism, LGBTQ inclusion, women in leadership, poverty, clericalism”; “Better background on liturgy and sacraments of initiation (RCIA) and spiritual formation”; “more preparation for fiscal responsibility”; “group discernment communities”; “targeted and focused practicum experiences with articulated desired outcomes”; and one 2008 graduate mentioned that “A mentoring program would be really nice.”

Some JST faculty members identified the need for specific classes that would appeal to lay students. For example, a class on the “spirituality of lay ministry.” Another faculty member stated:

“Assuming that most lay ecclesial ministers will work in organizations and will be in some leadership position, some training in management would be useful, especially when it comes to spearheading organizational changes.”

Staff members also identified the need for skills-based training with one staff member referencing the need for lay students to be trained to deal with the “power differentials” they will experience in ministry. When considering how formation for lay students might be enhanced another staff member stated: “Classes – define what it is, create learning outcomes, assess, include alums.”

Finally, a note about possible mentoring of JST lay students by local alumni/ae. In response to the “Any other comments?” question on the alumni/ae survey, many respondents expressed their gratitude for their experiences and time at JST and how this has played a crucial role in their formation as ministers. Some participants offered help and assistance to the School. One alumni/ae expressed the need for current students to relate to alumni/ae:

“When I was a student, I loved hearing from alumni/ae because it helped me to form ideas about what I might do after graduation--and it gave me a network. I graduated from JST 5 years ago and live about an hour away, but I've never been invited back to the school (either for an alumni/ae event or to talk with students). I work with 3 other JST alums and am still friends with other students from my class who live in the area, and none of us have ever been connected with current students. I think the school could do a much better job of connecting current students with alumni/ae (especially alumni/ae in the area). If I were more connected to the school, I'd be able to offer students the ability to shadow a religion teacher/campus minister for a day, invite students to go on retreats/immersion trips, or help them to find a community when they graduate. I'm guessing that some of this lack of connection/communication is the

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result of what seems like a large amount of turnover at JST in the last few years.”
(M.Div., 2012, female)

One faculty member also referenced the need for mentoring and suggested a regular check in for lay students “with someone in authority to look at progress and areas of concern. Depending upon future ministry this could be a faculty or staff person or an outside supervisor.”

3.7.5. Ignatian Spirituality

Several respondents, including current students and alumni/ae, and a staff member, referenced the need for the school to continue to provide the opportunity for lay students to experience spiritual direction and Ignatian spirituality. Some respondents highlighted the need for lay students to be able to experience the Spiritual Exercises or its Nineteenth Annotation form. This was an anticipated research finding that was relayed to Dean Kevin O’Brien in fall of 2016. This academic year the opportunity to participate in the Nineteenth Annotation has been made available to second and third year lay students.

An Ignatian theme mentioned by one faculty and survey respondent concerned that of interior freedom as lay students to reflect upon as they come to a deeper understating of lay ecclesial identity and ministry. For example:

“Prayer and modes of discernment in making apostolic choices seem key for me. The whole attitude of spiritual freedom is at the heart of this.” (JST staff survey respondent)

Another staff member mentioned:

“Might there be an (unidentified) need JST could serve which both serves a greater depth of Ignatian/Christian formation of the laity AND increases enrollment? online? hybrid?”

3.7.6. Increased Service Opportunities

Student focus group participants identified the need for more service opportunities at the School. They perceived a disconnect between the espoused theology of the School and a lack of concrete service opportunities outside of field education. Students felt that increased service opportunities would bring students from different programs together and provide increased opportunities for service beyond field education ministerial opportunities. For example:

“That as a community, as a really strong community, really kind of tied and based in this foundation of Ignatian Spirituality, I feel like we’re kind of ignoring this other...I mean, coming in, with fresh eyes, I don’t mean to... I feel bad judging. But I feel like we’re ignoring this whole kind of, practice side of the faith. And we talk about it so much, but what are we really doing? Especially here in Berkeley, when you know, there are people who are experiencing homelessness, who walk down this block.” (Fall 2016 student focus group participant)

4. Theological Reflection

Two two-hour theological reflection meetings were held at JST, the first on November 30, 2017, and the second on December 4, 2017. The meetings were facilitated by Deborah Ross. There were eleven participants including JST second and third year students from the M.Div. and M.A. programs, a JST M.Div. alumnus, staff, faculty, and the Jesuit Community Rector. An international M.Div. student who was unable to be present at either meeting provided comments on the report via email. The purpose of the meetings was to reflect theologically upon the research findings and to identify suggested implementation recommendations for lay formation at JST. A copy of the draft report findings and suggested reflection questions were sent to participants ahead of the theological reflection meetings. Several participants at the meetings commented upon the accuracy of the research findings and that they captured the essence of various expressed sentiments concerning the lay experience at the School.

The theological reflection meetings began with prayer, and participants were invited to again reflect upon the reflection questions circulated before the meetings, which were as follows:

- As you read the draft report findings did anything move you?
- After reading the draft report findings what insights do you have?
- Where is God in the lived experience of the research participants (primarily JST students and alumni/ae)? Where do you notice moments of grace?
- What theological themes, or insights from Ignatian spirituality, can guide our theological reflection?
- As you pray over this report what do you sense God wants for the lay students at JST?

The theological reflection process utilized the four steps of the Pastoral Circle. For the purposes of the theological reflection meetings the above reflection questions were mapped onto the four “moments” of the Pastoral Circle, and the questions structured the theological reflection meetings. Please see Appendix J for a description of the Pastoral Circle.

While various theological themes²³ are evident in the report, this section details three emergent theological themes arising from the research data, the two theological reflection meeting conversations,²⁴ and Deborah Ross’ theological reflection upon the data findings. These inductive themes reveal an operant or lived theology of ministerial and ecclesial experience at

²³ The report contains many theological themes both implicit and explicit. For example, the seventh research category entitled, “Emerging Theology of Lay Ecclesial Ministry,” detailed various explicit theological themes that had arisen in the focus groups and surveys. This category outlined JST students’ sense of ministerial and vocational call prompted by encounter with Christ and reflects themes of discipleship and service. Students also referenced the importance of the School community liturgical life in their ministerial formation. The joys and sorrows of ministry were also shared.

²⁴ Minutes from the two theological reflection meetings were coded using grounded theory method to schematize theological themes arising from the meetings.

the Jesuit School of Theology. The themes, while capturing some key theological observations, are not definitive and provide a platform for further dialogue and continued discernment.

4.1. A Developing Theology of Lay Ecclesial Ministry

This theological theme draws attention to the developing theology of lay ecclesial ministry in the Church generally, as well as developing aspects of JST's own theology of lay ecclesial ministry as it arises in this report.

The theological reflection group participants observed that the conversation regarding lay formation at JST exists within the broader context of the Church being at a new ministerial frontier. The Second Vatican Council initiated the opening of the role of the laity and this has prompted both a period of creativity concerning lay ministerial activity in the Church and uncertainty about lay ecclesial ministerial identity, as reflected in the data findings of this report. Theological reflection group participants observed that there is a developing theology of lay ecclesial ministry within the contemporary Church, and that the universal call to holiness inspired by baptism, needs further integration.²⁵ The advent of lay ecclesial ministry in the Church demands a theological imagination that can envision the full and active participation of laity who are called to be lay ecclesial ministers. It was noted in one theological reflection group that lay ecclesial ministerial identity has not yet permeated the larger Catholic imagination. For example, JST students often arrive at the School unfamiliar with Vatican II documents referencing the laity even though these were written over fifty years ago. It was also noted in the theological reflection meetings that ministry, both priestly and lay, is generally in a period of flux, and that a more robust theology of ministry building upon the wisdom of the Second Vatican Council is required.²⁶ As a Church we are collectively still learning how to be Church and working through what it means to be Church in a post-Vatican II era. Despite this, it was also observed by theological reflection group participants that JST students and alumni/ae are visionary and living out a forward-thinking ministerial vision as they strive to collaborate with one another, and the communities they serve.²⁷

The Second Vatican Council encouraged the Church to engage in ministry to the world. Ministry exists both within and outside the Church and, like the work of evangelization, has both *ad intra* and *ad extra* dimensions. The lay ministerial vocation, as exercised within various ecclesial settings, demands the capacity for internal community-building and an outward missionary focus. These two foci create an ecclesial tension within ministerial contexts as communities strive to balance efforts for community maintenance, on the one hand, and outward-focused mission, on the other hand. This dynamic speaks to lay ecclesial formation at

²⁵ The work of the theologian Edward Hahnenberg was referenced in one theological reflection group meeting.

²⁶ A faculty member contributing to the theological reflection discussion commented that Francis' papacy provides fertile ground for the vision of Vatican II to truly take hold within the Church.

²⁷ Pope Francis' theology, and as noted in the theological reflection conversations Bishop McElroy's May 2017 JST graduation address on pastoral theology, will provide useful signposts in this regard.

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JST. The current lay students contributing to focus groups and surveys raised questions surrounding their identity and various internal community tensions at JST, for example the lay-Jesuit dynamic. By contrast, the survey contributions from JST alumni/ae spoke of a ministerial wisdom born of pastoral praxis. The alumni/ae experience demonstrates that questions of uncertainty surrounding lay ministerial identity are of lesser importance when one is engaged in the practice of ministry beyond JST, as ministry involves being formed by the people one serves. JST alumni/ae embrace a missiological imagination as they exercise their vocational ministry to the Church and the world.

One of the aims of this research project was to explore the character of lay ecclesial ministry as experienced by research participants. JST's developing theology of lay ecclesial ministry, based upon the findings of this report, reveals an important praxis-based dimension. This is evident particularly in alumni/ae descriptions of ministerial practice, and in the importance of field education and spiritual formation for current JST students. JST lay students' search for a deeper understanding of lay ecclesial identity and their role in the Church, and the associated questions that this search raises, illustrate "faith seeking understanding", to quote St. Anselm. Theologian Stephen Bevans notes that "faith seeking understanding" reflects a "praxis model" or way of doing contextual theology. The praxis model is informed by social reality and includes ongoing cycles of theological reflection and pastoral action.²⁸ The lay students' inquiry into lay ministerial identity begins a reflective praxis cycle that they will continue to engage in after their studies at JST. As noted in the final stage of this report, the lived praxis element and the ministerial wisdom of the JST alumni/ae experience could be harnessed to provide valuable learning opportunities and to develop current JST students' understanding of ministerial identity and vocational call. This observation is developed in the next section of this report.

JST's developing theology of lay ecclesial ministry, may include the exploration of the graced nature of ministerial identity. The research category entitled "Identifying Moments" revealed ways in which JST lay students face questions regarding lay identity both as they begin and engage in theological studies at JST. The theme of "Identifying Moments" may be transposed into a theological context. For example, lay student identity may be considered through coming to an awareness of one's graced identity. Moments of recognition about lay ecclesial ministerial identity, both the joys and the sorrows, may be interpreted as graced moments of ministerial recognition. Philip Endean, SJ, in describing aspects of Karl Rahner's theology of grace, notes there are occasions when human beings experience not only graced moments of recognition, such as a deeper awareness of God's presence or love, but also occasions of heightened awareness of their graced identity.²⁹ Studying in the JST community may activate a deeper awareness of the lay ministerial vocational call. As Endean notes, certain

²⁸ See chapter six of Stephen Bevans' *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004).

²⁹ Philip Endean, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), 131-132.

“situations trigger moments of self-awareness in us – moments when we recognize our identity as temples of grace.”³⁰ Such graced moments of recognition, as Rahner identifies them, reveal more of who one is as a person created in God’s own image and prompt one to consider what God might be calling one to do. The research findings outline numerous life-giving and graced experiences of formation at the School. These opportunities have the capacity to reveal moments of awareness of graced identity. Certain alumni/ae also identify that their graced ministerial identity, and their authority for ministry, flows from their relationship with Christ. JST student focus group participants also identified being called by Christ and their ministerial engagement as a response to Christ. The theme of graced ministerial identity and Christ centered vocational call could provide focus for ongoing discussion and discernment at the School.

4.2. Community Space: Developing a Theology of Friendship and Witness

The theological reflection conversations also focused upon the theme of community space. It was acknowledged that the shared community space at JST, as it draws lay students and Jesuit students together into a shared space, at times creates tension. Reflecting some of the tensions described earlier in the report, theological reflection participants described the JST community space as an intense environment, comparing it to like being in “a bubble,” a “hothouse environment,” or a “fishbowl” situation. While not perhaps complimentary, these images capture the intensity of community life at JST. Existing in a “bubble,” or in proximity to others, may magnify internal tensions. Students present at the theological reflection groups described the intensity of living, studying, and working in the same place, and the need for privacy in a place where everybody knows everybody.

The report findings and theological reflection conversations referenced life-giving aspects of the community experience at JST. The Lay Intentional Communities have provided essential and valuable community space for lay students. These life-giving spaces have enabled peer-led theological reflection upon lay identity. Other formative spaces were identified such as spiritual formation opportunities at the School and speaking with a spiritual director outside of the JST “bubble.” Field education also offers creative spaces for ministerial growth and development, and the occasion for collaboration between lay and Jesuit students.

While there are difficulties and challenges arising from inhabiting a shared space with different groups of students with varying needs, the shared community space allows for creativity. The JST community may be described as a liminal space, or in-between space, as students engage in graduate degrees and Jesuits scholastics prepare for ordination to the transitional diaconate and priesthood. This liminal space encompasses possibility and potential alongside its challenging aspects. The theological reflection conversation highlighted that the tensions in community life may be viewed as a gift: there is an authenticity and honesty to be

³⁰ Endean, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality*, 134.

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derived and learned from living within the tension. The community tension also reflects where we are collectively as a Church, including larger ecclesial tensions surrounding the role of women in the Church, or the power-differential dynamic between clergy and laity (as referenced by the alumni/ae in this report). The above insights concerning the giftedness of community life at JST are not intended to lessen the effects of the tension experienced at the School, rather they are named so that the School might explore and consider how God is calling the School community to work through the tensions. As one student participant noted in one of the theological reflection meetings, Timothy Radcliffe, OP, describes that to be holy is to live in tension. The following two theological themes may assist with considering ways in which the JST community can continue to flourish despite the inevitable tensions arising from the shared community space.

Firstly, a theology of friendship. The theological reflection conversations acknowledged the life-giving aspects of friendship between the lay and Jesuit students at JST, and the friendship model fostered through the Lay Intentional Community experience. The theme of a theology of friendship is also operant in other areas of School life, for example, within the M.Div. cohort model, and across degree programs as students forge friendships with one another. Theologian Bernard Cooke describes human friendship as the basic sacrament.³¹ Friendship, with its sacramental and hence revelatory dimension, that is expressive of God's love, is a paradigm that JST students can be encouraged to continue to live into as students, both lay and Jesuit, minister to one another and support each other's vocational call.³² The previous theological reflection section of this report identified sacramental worship and the presence of Christ within the liturgical assembly as emergent theological themes. It was observed that the call to collaboration and dialogue between lay and those who will be ordained stems from shared liturgical life at the School and the shared life of the assembly. A theology of collaboration between lay and religious at the School, rooted in the celebration of the liturgy, may be expressed through a lived theology of friendship.

A second theological theme for reflection is that JST may be called to be a "contrast community." Contextual theologian, Stephen Bevans, SVD, when describing his counter-cultural model of theological reflection describes a "contrast community" as one that demonstrates alternative possibilities to the world and is a community with a missionary focus.³³ This motif may be invoked to help the School reflect upon community life at JST. The theological reflection conversations noted that the School has deliberately decided to train Jesuits and lay students together. This includes the M.Div. students engaging in shared Field Education Integration Seminars and participating in a cohort model. While this provokes tensions (for example, one

³¹ See Bernard Cooke, *Sacraments and Sacramentality* (Mystic, CT: Twenty Third Publications, 1994).

³² See JST M.Div. degree program Goals/Objectives, Goal five, Objective B.

³³ See chapter nine of Stephen Bevans', *Models of Contextual Theology*. The countercultural model requires taking contexts seriously and confronting them with the truth of the Gospel. A "contrast community" is a parallel community that challenges dominant societal materialism, consumerism, and individualism, see page 122.

student theological reflection participant requested that the School reconsider the cohort model as lay students and Jesuits students are on two different tracks), the theological reflection discussion observed that a strength of the School is that students preparing for the priesthood and lay ecclesial ministry are not separated. It was observed in one theological reflection group conversation that this model of collaboration, which exists amid the reality that women cannot be ordained, forces clarification of students' different roles within the contemporary Church. As the School continues to train Jesuits and lay students together, it might consider that it is called to be a "contrast community" of witnesses given the need for a more robust theology of lay ecclesial ministry. This is not to minimize the pain experienced by some lay students, including women who feel called to the priesthood; rather this pain must be acknowledged and heard. The School could continue to embrace ecclesial challenges and work through them, while recognizing differences and commonalities. In so doing, the School could strive to be a contrast community and witness to society around it as it seeks to live and model collaborative ministry.

4.3. Ignatian Discernment

Aspects of Ignatian spirituality were incorporated into the project research design. For example, focus group and survey questions incorporated the theme of consolation, what is life-giving and draws one closer to God, and desolation, what causes unease or turmoil and is not drawing one closer to God. These themes of consolation and desolation were included in the data collection to emphasize a prayerful discernment dimension of the research. Students who participated in the student focus groups occasionally commented that the Examen prayer exercise at the beginning of the focus group meeting, which incorporated themes of consolation and desolation, had surfaced thoughts and responses that they shared in their focus group. Theological reflection group participants recognized themes of consolation and desolation evident within both the research findings and their own reactions as they reflected upon what moved them within the report.

The theme of discernment, and the Ignatian concept of discernment of spirits, were discussed during the theological reflection groups. Discernment of spirits, in the Ignatian sense, comprises discerning between the different movements or the work of good and bad or evil spirits. The work of the good spirit will cause feelings of consolation. The work of the evil spirit will cause desolation and ensuing turmoil and unease. As a theological school engaged in the work of training future Jesuits for the priesthood, and future lay ecclesial ministers, the discernment of spirits is important as the evil spirit may be at work in trying to cause division and conflict, and in disrupting aspects of collaborative ministerial formation at the School. The perceived lay-Jesuit tension, and associated challenges that arise from shared community space, are fertile areas for the evil spirit to cause further tension and turmoil. It is important for the School to be continually aware of this dynamic and to constantly discern spirits and spiritual movements.

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The lay ecclesial vocation is not without its challenges. As discussed at one of the theological reflection meetings, suffering and sacrifice are a feature of the lay ecclesial ministerial vocation. The challenges of lay ecclesial ministry, as voiced by students and alumni/ae in this report, give rise to a theology of suffering and lament. As with lay-Jesuit tension, this theology of suffering needs to be recognized and discerned. This may require paying attention to the movements of consolation and desolation regarding the lay vocation and its inherent theology of suffering. Such movements need to be considered from a redemptive framework that pays attention to the life-giving aspects of the lay vocation and the call of Christ to participate in lay ministry.

One of the theological reflection groups discussed the need for ongoing individual and communal discernment at the School. Part of the ongoing individual discernment process for JST lay students may involve encouraging students to pay attention to their interior freedom. As Kevin O'Brien observes, "Only when we are really free can we hear God's call."³⁴ Discernment of interior freedom will assist lay students in clarifying aspects of their vocational call. Spiritual direction will also continue to assist students with noticing the graces in their JST experience and exploring the source of any experienced desolation.

A question that helped frame the research project and recent retreat work and discussion with JST lay students has been "what does God want for the lay students at JST?" This is an important question for communal discernment and reflects the conversion dynamic of the first week of the Spiritual Exercises and the need for discernment on lay formation to be God focused, rather than a disproportionate self-focus on individual needs.³⁵ The theological reflection group discussion emphasized the need for the School to stay attuned to what God wants for the School and to pray through experienced tensions. For example, one theological reflection group discussed the need for the School community to pay attention to the struggles posed by the lay-Jesuit dynamic at the School but not to allow this dynamic to pull the School away from what God wants for individuals and the School collectively. The other theological reflection group referenced the need for the School's discernment to include wider ecclesial structural issues and discerning the needs of the Church more generally, especially given that the Church needs the gifts of lay ecclesial ministers. It was also referenced that the gifts of lay women are not always recognized.

Ongoing prayer and discernment will be needed when assessing future planning for lay students, and formation at the School, and will form an integral part of continuing dialogue. Reflection upon moments of grace, and movements of consolation and desolation, will provide valuable opportunities for ongoing learning. Continued individual and communal discernment

³⁴ Kevin O'Brien, SJ, *An Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius in Daily Life* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2011), 71.

³⁵ See David Fleming, "Ignatian Exercises and Conversion," *Ignatian Exercises: Contemporary Annotations*, 72-85, 77.

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efforts will provide JST with a spiritual “way of proceeding” that “offers a vision of life, an understanding of God, a reflective approach to living, a reverential attitude to our world, and an expectation of finding God in all things.”³⁶

³⁶ David Fleming, SJ, <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/26003/spiritual-way-of-proceeding>.

5. Pastoral Planning and Recommendations

The final section of this report details suggestions for pastoral planning as the School reflects upon the findings of the report and considers next steps. Action research processes seek to improve practice based upon research findings. As referenced earlier, the Ignatian Action Research process also seeks to improve practice and is guided by the Ignatian theme of Magis. The research design incorporates the intention to improve practice prayerfully and to consider what God wants for the lay students at JST and for the JST community. This section of the report summarizes four themes that arose from the theological reflection group discussions: “Structure for ongoing planning for lay formation,” “Future academic programming suggestions,” “Resources for lay students and co-curricular activities,” and “Ongoing discernment about lay formation at JST.”

5.1. Structure for Ongoing Planning for Lay Formation

The theological reflection group conversations acknowledged that financial resources at JST are such that the hiring of a lay formation director, the creation of a lay formation department, or the establishing of a lay formation program, may not be viable options at the present time. It was suggested that the Student Life Cluster (consisting of Paul Kircher, Assistant Dean of Student Life, George Murphy, SJ, Director of Spiritual Formation, Deborah Ross, Director of Ministerial Formation, and Mary Beth Lamb, Senior Administrative Assistant for Student Life and Formation) be assessed to see if adjustments can be made to student life and formation activities currently offered. The Cluster could also consider options for effective ways to disseminate this report to JST students, including meeting with the student Lay Formation Committee, a group which has met during the previous two academic years.

5.2. Future Academic Programming Suggestions

The theological reflection groups discussed the possibility of the School offering an academic course on lay ecclesial ministry. Such a course, if offered, could include prayerful exploration of students’ vocational call to lay ecclesial ministry, study of Church documents on lay ecclesial ministry, and study of the work of various theologians. A strong emphasis on time for prayer in class would echo the format of classes on prayer and spiritual direction at JST, a suggestion appreciated by student participants in the theological reflection group conversations. The course could potentially also follow the structure of the Spiritual Exercises and reflect upon the lay ecclesial ministerial call through themes based upon four weeks of the Exercises. For example, it could explore the graced nature of lay identity through the themes of God’s merciful love, the call to discipleship, and life lived in light of the paschal mystery and the resurrection. The proposed course could therefore be structured by the four conversion movements of the Exercises, as David Fleming states: the “movement from self-focus to God-focus,” the “movement from self-determination to discipleship,” the “movement from

sympathy to compassion,” and the “movement from living in faith to living in realized hope.”³⁷ A significant biographical or narrative component might be integrated into the course as students could reflect upon their vocational stories and lay ministerial call.

A prospective course on lay ecclesial ministry could provide space for students to process the various aspects of student experience described in the “Identifying Moments” category of this report. It could assist with developing lay students’ understanding of their graced ministerial identity and build ministerial self-definition, self-esteem, and confidence. Theologians Loughlin Sofield, ST, and Carroll Juliano, SHCJ, describe how low levels of self-esteem, among other obstacles, are barriers to effective collaborative ministry.³⁸ Addressing themes such as these, and topics including the clerical-lay dynamic, could provide students with further practical skills required for the lay ecclesial ministerial journey and equip students to face future experiences of suffering and sacrifice which will no doubt occur as they engage in lay ecclesial ministry.³⁹

The course could also emphasize ministerial praxis, an emerging theological theme from this research exercise, and JST alumni/ae could be invited to participate as guest speakers. Opportunities for JST students to be mentored by JST alumni/ae and shadow alumni/ae at their ministerial work situations could be built into the course and this would expose students to various ministerial environments and foster further skills-based learning. The main voices in this report – JST students and JST alumni/ae – could be brought together in real-time so that JST students could learn directly from the wisdom of the alumni/ae. The alumni/ae viewpoint could also assist current students with keeping in perspective some of the challenging aspects of the JST experience, such as the lay-Jesuit dynamic and the previously-mentioned intense “hothouse” experience. It was noted during theological reflection conversations that including alumni/ae as guest speakers could place fewer demands on JST’s resources. It was also proposed that aspects of the current JST course on lay presiding might be subsumed into the proposed course on lay ecclesial ministry.

This potential course on lay ecclesial ministry could be made available to all lay students, and possibly interested Jesuit students. JST student focus group and survey responses indicated that lay students requested that more formation opportunities be integrated into their academic programs rather than offered as optional add-ons, given lay students' busy schedules. A course on lay ecclesial ministry could create a structured space and an opportunity for students to reflect upon their lay identity, and dialogue and interact with local JST

³⁷ See David Fleming, “Ignatian Exercises and Conversion,” in *Ignatian Exercises: Contemporary Annotations, The Best of the Review 4*. Ed. David L. Fleming. (St. Louis, MO: Review for Religious, 1996), 72-85.

³⁸ Loughlin Sofield and Carroll Juliano, *Collaboration: Uniting our Gifts in Ministry* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 2000), 53. The authors list ten other major obstacles to collaborative ministry including hostility, burnout, and failure to deal with loss and conflict. The authors also recognize that the higher a person’s level of self-esteem, the more effective the person will be as a leader, see Loughlin Sofield and Carroll Juliano, *Principled Ministry: A Guidebook for Catholic Church Leaders* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 2011), 9.

³⁹ The School this academic year has begun to offer a series of “Bridge Courses.” These courses address the need raised by alumni/ae for practical courses that enhance ministerial skills, especially teaching skills.

alumni/ae. It was recommended during theological reflection conversations that the course could be offered in parallel to the JST priesthood course. It was also suggested that the JST faculty consider this proposal for a lay ecclesial ministry course. (Certain theological reflection group participants noted that the creation of such a course had previously been recommended by members of the Student Life Committee of the JST Board of Directors and had subsequently been discussed at the JST Statutes and Curricula Committee.)

An alternative to the above was discussed by one theological reflection group which raised the possibility of the School offering a course on the theology of ministry. This type of course has been offered by Boston College, providing both lay and Jesuit students the opportunity to study the theology of ministry together. It was felt that this potential course could enable a broader picture of ministerial theology to emerge, for both lay and Jesuit JST students.

5.3. Resources for Lay Students and Co-Curricular Activities

As referenced earlier in this report, there is a need for a coherent narrative that describes formation at JST. A narrative document could name and clarify the various aspects of lay formation currently available at the School. This would provide a comprehensive listing of resources and activities and help students to realize the varied dimensions of lay formation in place. For example, formation at JST integrates the four aspects of formation – spiritual, pastoral, human, and intellectual – as listed in *Co-Workers in the Vineyard*, the document on lay ecclesial ministry authored by the United States Catholic Bishops.⁴⁰ A faculty member present at one of the theological reflection group meetings mentioned that the Society makes significant financial contributions for lay students at JST. The narrative could reference this point as well as potential plans to seek funding from SCU for lay formation social activities (please see below).

Students present at the theological reflection meetings raised the possibility of increased co-curricular activities. One student referenced the need for the School to build the lay culture outside of academic programming. Students described hopes for more informal spaces for lay students to interact including spaces for meals, prayer, and socializing. The possibility of a lay community night (offered in parallel to the Jesuit community night) was suggested. This could involve liturgy and an informal way for students to connect with others. Alternatively, a monthly lay dinner and liturgy could provide a regular touchstone opportunity for lay students, especially those not living with other students or in the Lay Intentional Community. There was also discussion about exploring SCU monetary sponsorship for these activities.

The topic of mentorship as a co-curricular activity was discussed in the theological reflection groups. Students suggested that mentorship between JST alumni/ae and current

⁴⁰ See United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry* (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006).

students could be made available as a co-curricular activity, especially for those who would not be seeking mentorship through a potential praxis-based course on lay ecclesial ministry. One student mentioned that the opportunity for a student to meet once or twice with an alumnus during his or her time at JST, or to attend an event where a panel of alumni/ae speak to current students, may seem attractive. It was suggested that a panel alumni/ae presentation, providing the opportunity for networking, could be offered in conjunction with JST career services. Another student recommended exploring the possibility of mentorship opportunities between current JST students (for example, a third-year student could mentor a first-year student).

Finally, students requested ongoing support from the School for lay student-led initiatives such as “Theology Thursdei’s,” the student-led theological discussion group, and the student-led faith sharing groups. Students would like to ensure ongoing programming of these activities. A need for balance between School-led lay formation activities and student-led activities that arise organically also needs to be maintained. Students recommended that various cultural and international perspectives be included in both proposed academic programming for lay formation and co-curricular activities.

5.4. Ongoing Discernment About Lay Formation at JST

The theological reflection section of this report identified the need for ongoing discernment, both individual and communal, regarding lay formation at JST. The theological reflection groups suggested that the School could engage in communal discernment exercises, including a suggestion for the School to focus upon “what is, rather than what isn’t.” Discernment regarding the M.Div. cohort model could form part of the discernment exercise, especially vis-a-vis the theological reflection findings of this report and the theme of the theology of friendship. It was suggested in one theological reflection group that the cohort model could be fine-tuned regarding the theme of friendship.

JST lay students have had the opportunity to participate in JST day or weekend retreat opportunities over the past two academic years, with further retreat opportunities planned. Retreats could also provide possible forums for continued discernment concerning the lay ecclesial vocation and aspects of lay formation at the School.

A faculty participant in one theological reflection group discussed the success of the School conversation on the female diaconate, which was organized by JST M.Div. student in the 2017 spring semester. This series, consisting of three conversations with invited speakers, fostered dialogue at the School. It was observed that the series contributed to School community-building and welcomed members of other Christian denominations. The School could explore similarly structured opportunities for dialogue on various aspects of ecclesial ministry as part of its ongoing continued discernment. The above-referenced proposed academic course options are also topics for discernment by the School.

6. Concluding Remarks

The theological reflection section of this report outlined several emerging theological themes. These include contextualizing the report within a developing theology of lay ecclesial ministry within the broader Church. The contours of the lived expression of lay ministry arising from the lived community experience at JST including the praxis-oriented ministerial experience of JST alumni/ae were also outlined. The theological reflection themes provide a series of signposts for the School to consider as it continues to reflect upon opportunities to enhance lay formation at the School. One aspect of this ongoing dialogue could include creating spaces for the exploration of the graced nature of the lay students' ministerial calls and lay students' internal freedom (in the Ignatian sense). It could also include creative dialogue between current JST students and JST alumni/ae. Other observations include reflection upon community-based themes such as developing a theology of collaborative friendship at the School, and the School bearing witness as a contrast community through such collaboration. Ignatian spirituality forms an integral component of the life at the School and the School's mission, and provides tools for guiding future discernment of lay formation at the School.

The action research literature acknowledges four kinds of knowing central to action research processes: "experience, expression, understanding, and practice."⁴¹ The lay formation research has identified examples of these types of knowledge and brought them into confluence with one another. For example, the experience of lay students as they enter and study at JST and become explicitly conscious of their identities as lay ecclesial ministers was described. Various expressions of lay formation at the School were identified including spiritual formation and peer and community formation experiences. The survey responses from JST alumni/ae revealed the knowing and wisdom born of lived pastoral experience. Understanding and interpreting the types of knowledge present in the research data was pursued within theological reflection. As David Coghlan notes:

"In terms of Ignatian spirituality, these forms of knowing involve attending to experience of a personal God, who sent Jesus Christ to redeem the world and who invites people to love the way God loves and to serve God in the world. It means attending to how that love shapes experience, to how that love is expressed and understood and to how it guides living and acting in the world."

A discernment process will be an important next step for the School as the various types of "knowing" featured in this report are reflected and acted upon. In the spirit of the Magis, it is hoped that the School will reflect upon its practice and engage in "new frontiers of discussion," as suggested by one of the student focus group participants, by reflecting upon the lived experience of lay ecclesial formation at the School and the findings of this report.

⁴¹ See Coghlan, "Ignatian Spirituality as Transformational Social Science," 97.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Fall 2016 JST Lay Student Focus Group Questions

Examen Prayer

The following prayer is based upon the Ignatian Examen. St. Ignatius created this prayer as a way of reflecting back upon the experience of the day. We have adapted this prayer so that you may briefly review your time here at JST as a lay student. All students are welcome in the focus group and it doesn't matter if you have only started at JST this semester.

God is closer to each of us than our next breath. You are invited to take a few moments to pause and become aware of the blessings God has given you. Know that you are in God's loving presence.

As we engage in a brief examen prayer or prayerful reflection upon your experience here at JST, you are invited to ask God to help you see the ways in which God has been working in you.

Looking back over your time as a lay student here at JST what has been most life-giving? (You might like to consider what memories surface, or to think about a particular experience, or see what images or words come to mind.)

During your time at JST what has been most challenging for you as a lay student?

What brings you hope for the future in your role as a lay person? What are the challenges?

In light of this review, how might God be speaking to you? What is your response to God?

As we enter into our conversation this evening, we ask for God's spirit to guide us.

We pray together the Glory be: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Focus Group Questions

A. Lay experience at JST and beyond

Facilitator: I'm going to ask some questions about your experiences here at JST. You are invited to think back to some of the themes that surfaced in the opening reflection time.

1. In what ways were you drawn to JST-SCU?
2. What is life-giving at JST-SCU for you and your lay peers?
3. What are some of the struggles you and your peers face at JST-SCU as lay people?
4. In what ways does the Ignatian tradition, or Ignatian spirituality, inform lay formation at JST? Can you identify examples from your experience?
5. Ask the students to reflect briefly on what work they might feel called to in the future, insofar as they know. Allow a minute or so for the students to reflect.
 - a. As you imagine the work you might do in the future, in whatever setting, what seems life-giving, or hopeful? What seems challenging?

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- b. As you imagine your future relationship with the institutional Catholic Church, what seems life-giving, or hopeful? What seems challenging?

B. Lay Ecclesial Identity

Facilitator: The following questions are designed to explore the ways in which you self-identify as a lay person. *(Facilitator explains that some of the following questions might be experienced or answered differently depending upon a student's degree programs.)*

1. How would you describe yourself as a layperson, or as a minister? *(Facilitator to invite students to use helpful words, or images and to encourage students to elaborate on their responses.)*
2. Are you familiar with the term "lay ecclesial ministry"? If so, how would you describe lay ecclesial ministry?
3. Has your understanding of "lay ecclesial ministry" changed since you came to JST-SCU? How might the term "lay ecclesial ministry" apply to you personally both now or in the future? *(Please see definition of lay ecclesial ministry on the provided handout.)*

C. Enhancing the lay experience at JST-SCU

Facilitator: Next, we would like to talk about potential ways JST-SCU could enhance lay formation. It is our desire to address this issue according to the Jesuit charism of "Magis" that calls us not only to give more in terms of quantity but also to give in a better way in terms of quality.

Let's first begin by looking at a list of formation resources that JST-SCU currently offers lay students. *(Facilitator presents list of resources to participants. Please see below.)*

Were you aware of all these resources? What resources are more helpful, what are less helpful? Which resources should the School continue to offer? What additional resources do you think might be helpful for lay students at JST-SCU?

1. As a lay person, what needs may you have become aware of since studying at JST-SCU? What prompted that awareness? In what ways may JST-SCU be helping to address these needs?
2. What is your deepest desire or your hope for the lay students at JST?
3. In previous discussions with lay students, a key theme that arose was the need to define lay identity and the formation of lay identity. Do you feel this is a need among lay students? How do you think JST-SCU can help lay students in regard to identity formation?

D. Closing questions

1. What else would enhance the lay experience at JST-SCU? Is there anything else that you would like to share on this or related topics?

List of Formation Resources at JST-SCU (and GTU)

The U.S. Catholic bishops 2005 document *Co-workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry* describes five areas of formation: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation. The following is a list of formation opportunities available to lay students at JST.

- Spiritual Formation:
 - Spiritual direction
 - Retreat days/experiences
 - Small faith sharing communities
 - M.Div. retreat days
 - Lay formation retreat days
 - Days of prayer, for example Advent retreat days
 - Pilgrimage experiences (for example, the Camino)
 - Individually guided retreats
 - SCU campus ministry retreat opportunities
 - Liturgical formation:
 - Daily Mass
 - JST community weekly liturgy
 - Lay presider liturgies
 - Seasonal services such as Las Posadas, Advent and Lent reconciliation services
- Pastoral Formation:
 - M.Div. Field Education
 - Placements at schools, prisons, hospitals, parishes
 - Skills-based academic classes
 - for example, spiritual direction classes, lay presiding, pastoral counseling
 - Skills-based workshops
 - For example: Enneagram, Myers Briggs, Conflict resolution, Suicidal ideation
 - Immersions; service opportunities
- Human formation:
 - Community formation:

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- Lay intentional communities
- Tuesday night suppers
- Various GTU events
- Cultural formation
 - Cultural immersions
 - Various school events
- Intellectual formation:
 - Academic Degree program classes
 - Visiting guest speakers, for example Religion and Culture series
 - “Theology Thursdei’s”
 - Various GTU events

Definition of Lay Ecclesial Ministry

The U.S. Catholic bishops in the 2005 document *Co-workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*, use the phrase “lay ecclesial ministry” as “an adjective to identify a developing and growing reality, to describe it more fully, and to seek a deeper understanding of it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.” (*Co-Workers*, p. 11) They describe “lay ecclesial ministers” the following way:

those [lay] men and women whose ecclesial service is characterized by

- *Authorization* of the hierarchy to serve publicly in the local church
- *Leadership* in a particular area of ministry
- *Close mutual collaboration* with the pastoral ministry of the bishops, priests, and deacons
- *Preparation and formation* appropriate to the level of responsibilities that are assigned to them (*Co-Workers*, p. 10).

Appendix B: Spring 2017 JST Alumni/ae Lay Formation Survey

The Jesuit School of Theology is conducting research on lay ecclesial formation at the School. It is anticipated that the research will identify potential opportunities to enhance lay ecclesial formation at JST, and explore the character of lay ecclesial ministry. Thank you for taking the time to respond to this survey.

1. Please respond below:

- Male
- Female
- Other (please specify)

2. Please select the year you graduated from JST.

- 2002
- 2003
- 2004
- 2005
- 2006
- 2007
- 2008
- 2009
- 2010
- 2011
- 2012
- 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016

3. Please select the degree you were awarded at JST/GTU.

- M.Div.
- M.A.
- M.Div./M.A.
- M.A.B.L.
- M.T.S.
- Th.M.
- Ph.D.
- S.T.L.
- S.T.D.

4. Please identify any of the following positions you have held since graduating from JST.

- Religion/Theology Teacher (elementary)
- Religion/Theology Teacher (high school)
- Religion/Theology Teacher (post-secondary)
- Lecturer/Professor
- Catechist
- Director of Religious Education
- Liturgist
- Parish Director of Music
- Parish Council Member
- Hospital Chaplain
- Prison Chaplain
- Campus Minister (elementary)
- Campus Minister (high school)
- Campus Minister (post-secondary)
- Non-governmental organization staff

5. If you have held ministerial or other positions that were not listed above since graduating from JST, please list them below.

6. What is your current profession?

7. Were you Roman Catholic upon enrolling at JST?

Yes

No

8. What is your experience of lay ecclesial ministry?

9. What is lay ecclesial ministry from your personal perspective?

10. What constitutes appropriate formation for lay ecclesial ministers?

11. What aided your formation while attending JST? What was life-giving?

12. What was challenging in your formation while attending JST?

13. What might improve formation for lay ecclesial ministers at JST?

14. In what ways did the Ignatian tradition inform your formation at JST and contribute to the distinctiveness of the JST experience? If possible, please identify examples from your experience.

15. How would you rate your familiarity with and knowledge of Ignatian spirituality following your graduation from JST?

- Poor
- Fair
- Average
- Good
- Excellent

Any further comments....

16. How would you rate your familiarity with and knowledge of Jesuit education following your graduation from JST?

- Poor
- Fair
- Average
- Good
- Excellent

Any further comments....

17. How might the Ignatian tradition deepen the understanding of lay ministry in the Church?

18. Any other comments?

19. Please select your current religious affiliation.

- Roman Catholic
- None

Other (please specify)

Appendix C: Spring 2017 JST Faculty Lay Formation Survey

The Jesuit School of Theology is conducting research on lay ecclesial formation at the School. It is anticipated that the research will identify potential opportunities to enhance lay ecclesial formation at JST, and explore the character of lay ecclesial ministry. Thank you for taking the time to respond to this survey.

1. What is your experience of lay ecclesial ministry?

2. What is lay ecclesial ministry from your personal perspective?

3. What constitutes appropriate formation for lay ecclesial ministers?

4. What aids lay ecclesial ministerial formation at JST?

5. How might formation for lay ecclesial ministers at JST be enhanced?

6. In what ways do you think the Ignatian tradition informs lay formation at JST and contributes to the distinctiveness of the JST experience?

7. How might the Ignatian tradition deepen the understanding of lay ministry in the Church?

8. Any other comments?

Appendix D: Spring 2017 JST Staff Lay Formation Survey

The Jesuit School of Theology is conducting research on lay ecclesial formation at the School. It is anticipated that the research will identify potential opportunities to enhance lay ecclesial formation at JST, and explore the character of lay ecclesial ministry. Thank you for taking the time to respond to this survey.

1. What is your experience of lay ecclesial ministry?

2. What is lay ecclesial ministry from your personal perspective?

3. What constitutes appropriate formation for lay ecclesial ministers?

4. What aids lay ecclesial ministerial formation at JST?

5. How might formation for lay ecclesial ministers at JST be enhanced?

6. In what ways do you think the Ignatian tradition informs lay formation at JST and contributes to the distinctiveness of the JST experience?

7. How might the Ignatian tradition deepen the understanding of lay ministry in the Church?

8. Any other comments?

Appendix E: Spring 2017 JST Jesuit Student Lay Formation Survey

The Jesuit School of Theology is conducting research on lay ecclesial formation at the School. It is anticipated that the research will identify potential opportunities to enhance lay ecclesial formation at JST, and explore the character of lay ecclesial ministry. Thank you for taking the time to respond to this survey.

1. Please select the degree program you are enrolled in at JST-SCU/GTU.

- M.Div.
- M.A.
- M.Div./M.A.
- M.A.B.L
- M.T.S.
- Th.M.
- Ph.D.
- S.T.L.
- S.T.D.
- Other

2. What is your experience of lay ecclesial ministry? (For example, please consider sharing your own personal experience, including your experience of working with lay ecclesial ministers.)

3. What is lay ecclesial ministry from your personal perspective?

4. What constitutes appropriate formation for lay ecclesial ministers?

5. What aids lay ecclesial ministerial formation at JST?

6. How might formation for lay ecclesial ministers at JST be enhanced?

7. In what ways do you think the Ignatian tradition informs lay formation at JST and contributes to the distinctiveness of the JST experience?

8. How might the Ignatian tradition deepen the understanding of lay ministry in the Church?

9. Any other comments?

Appendix F: Fall 2017 JST Lay Student Formation Survey

Introduction

The Jesuit School of Theology is conducting research on lay ecclesial formation at the School. It is anticipated that the research will identify potential opportunities to enhance lay ecclesial formation at JST, and explore the character of lay ecclesial ministry.

Last academic year JST lay students were invited to participate in focus groups on the topic of lay formation. Nineteen JST students participated in various focus groups. JST lay alumni, going back a period of fifteen years, were also invited to complete a survey based upon their experience at JST. Forty-nine alumni responded.

The following survey is designed to gather further data from second and third year lay students and to explore some of the themes and responses that came up in the focus groups and surveys.

You are invited first to spend a few minutes in prayer, and then to complete the questions below. Please complete as many of the questions as you feel able to.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this survey.

Opening Prayer

Before you complete this survey, you are invited to first spend a few minutes in prayer. Please read the "First Principle and Foundation" from the beginning of the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises* (please see below).
Do any words or phrases stand out for you? If so, please consider praying with them for a few moments.

The First Principle and Foundation, as translated and interpreted by David Fleming, S.J.

The goal of our life is to live with God forever.

God who loves us, gave us life.

Our own response of love allows God's life to flow into us
without limit.

All the things in this world are gifts of God,
presented to us so that we can know God more easily
and make a return of love more readily.

As a result, we appreciate and use all these gifts of God
insofar as they help us develop as loving persons.

But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives,
they displace God and so hinder our growth toward our goal.

In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance
before all of these created gifts insofar as we have a choice
and are not bound by some obligation.

We should not fix our desires on health or sickness,
wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or short one.

For everything has the potential of calling forth in us
a deeper response to our life in God.

Our only desire and our one choice should be this:

I want and I choose what better leads to the
deepening of God's life in me.

- You are invited to ask God, our loving creator, to shine light on your experience of being a lay student called to study at JST. What in your experience has been life-giving?
- You are invited to ask God to help you become aware of the shadows and the challenges of your experience here at JST. What might God be saying to you?
- What do you think God is desiring for the lay students at JST? You are invited to spend a few moments now in your prayer reflecting upon this question.

Survey Questions

1. Please respond below:

- Male
- Female
- Other

2. Please select the year you will graduate from JST.

- 2018
- 2019
- Or beyond

* 3. Please select the degree program you are enrolled in at JST-SCU/GTU

- M.Div.
- M.A.
- M.Div./M.A.
- M.A.B.L.
- M.T.S.
- Th.M.
- Ph.D.
- S.T.L.
- S.T.D.

* 4. Did you participate in one of the fall 2016 focus groups?

Yes

No

The next question is designed to assist with developing an emerging theology of lay ministry that has arisen from the prior focus groups and surveys

5. God is the primary and ultimate formator and the source of the lay ministerial vocation. Prayer, scripture and sacraments are essential elements in lay formation.

What words from scripture, or spiritual themes or theological concepts, come to mind when you consider your ministry and vocation as a lay person? (For example, baptismal calling, the theme of discipleship.)

6. From the following list, please select (as applicable) what has been formative during your time at JST so far and please briefly explain why below. You may select more than one category.

- Academic classes
- Field education/ministry placements
- International Immersion trips/pilgrimage
- Lay Intentional community life
- Liturgical life of the school
- School community life more generally, including Tuesday night suppers and presentations
- Ignatian spirituality
- Spiritual direction
- Retreats
- Faith sharing groups
- Spiritual Direction Practicum/course
- Other. Please explain below

Please briefly explain how these opportunities have been formative for you as a lay student:

7. Based upon your prayer, and your lived experience as a lay student at the School, what do you think God wants for the lay students at JST?

8. A key theme in the lay formation research has been “lay identity” and what it means to be a lay ecclesial minister in today’s Church and world. Do you identify as a lay ecclesial minister (or lay minister)?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- Not applicable

Please state your reasons for why or why not:

9. What has prompted you to become more aware of your lay ecclesial identity while studying at JST? Please select as applicable and state your reasons why.

- Studying alongside other lay students
- Studying alongside Jesuits
- Field Education
- Academic courses
- Spiritual Direction
- Other. Please explain below
- Unsure
- I do not identify as a lay ecclesial minister

Please state your reasons why:

10. What promotes your identity as a lay ecclesial minister?

11. What detracts from, or undermines, your identity as a lay ecclesial minister?

12. What makes the sacrifices and humiliations of being a lay ecclesial minister worthwhile?

13. Do you think that the School currently offers adequate opportunities for lay students to explore their role as lay ecclesial ministers? Please state your reasons why.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- Not applicable

Please state your reasons why:

14. What would assist JST lay students to deepen their awareness of their lay ecclesial ministerial identity and lay vocation?

- An academic class on lay ecclesial ministry (that incorporates, for example, the history and theology of lay ecclesial ministry including church documents, and an experiential reflective dimension)
- A credit-bearing structured lay ecclesial formation program (including different components such as Ignatian spirituality, personal and group theological reflection, academic content, and skills-based training)
- Workshops
- Other. Please state below.
- Unsure

Please comment or state your reasons why:

15. If, in the future, JST offered a credit-bearing lay ecclesial formation program how would you see this as being helpful for future lay students? Please state your reasons why.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- Not applicable

Please state your reasons why:

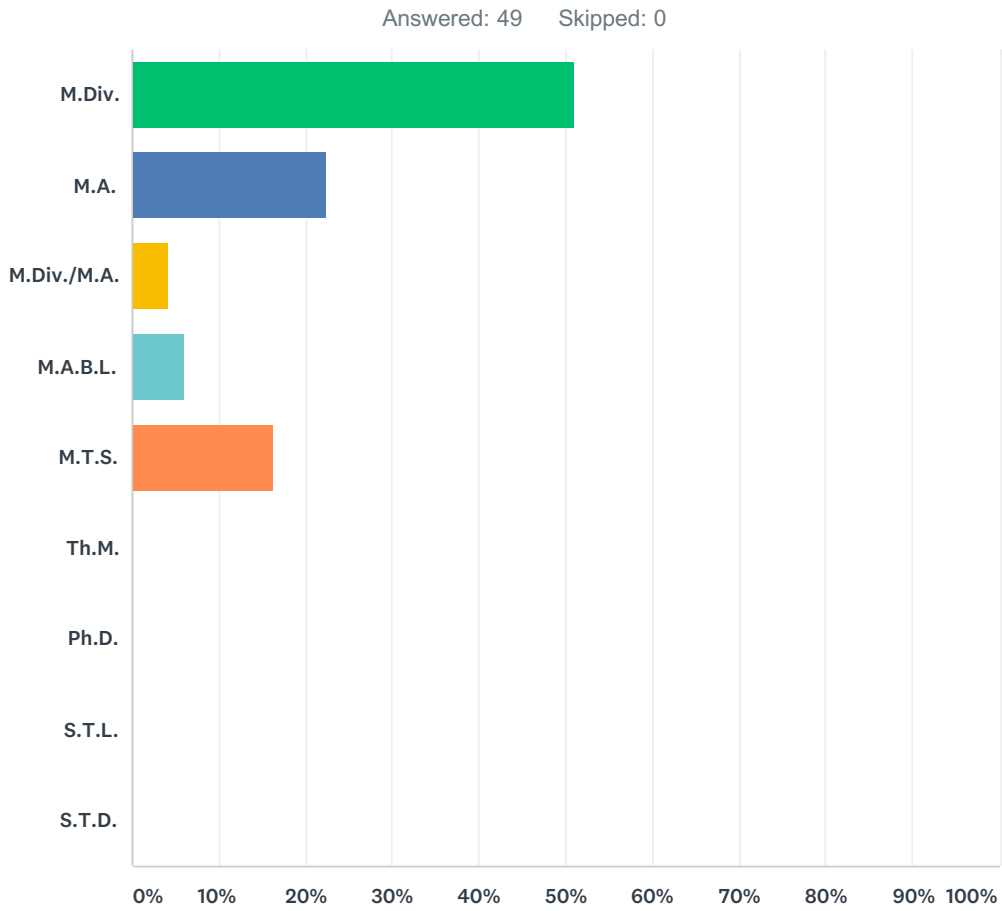
16. In the future, do you think there should be an optional or mandatory course on lay ecclesial formation for some, or all, future lay students? Please state your reasons for why or why not.

17. Do you have any other comments, suggestions, or feedback concerning lay formation at the School?

Thank you very much for your time and thoughtful participation. It is very much appreciated.

Appendix G: Spring 2017 JST Alumni/ae Lay Formation Survey - Select Responses

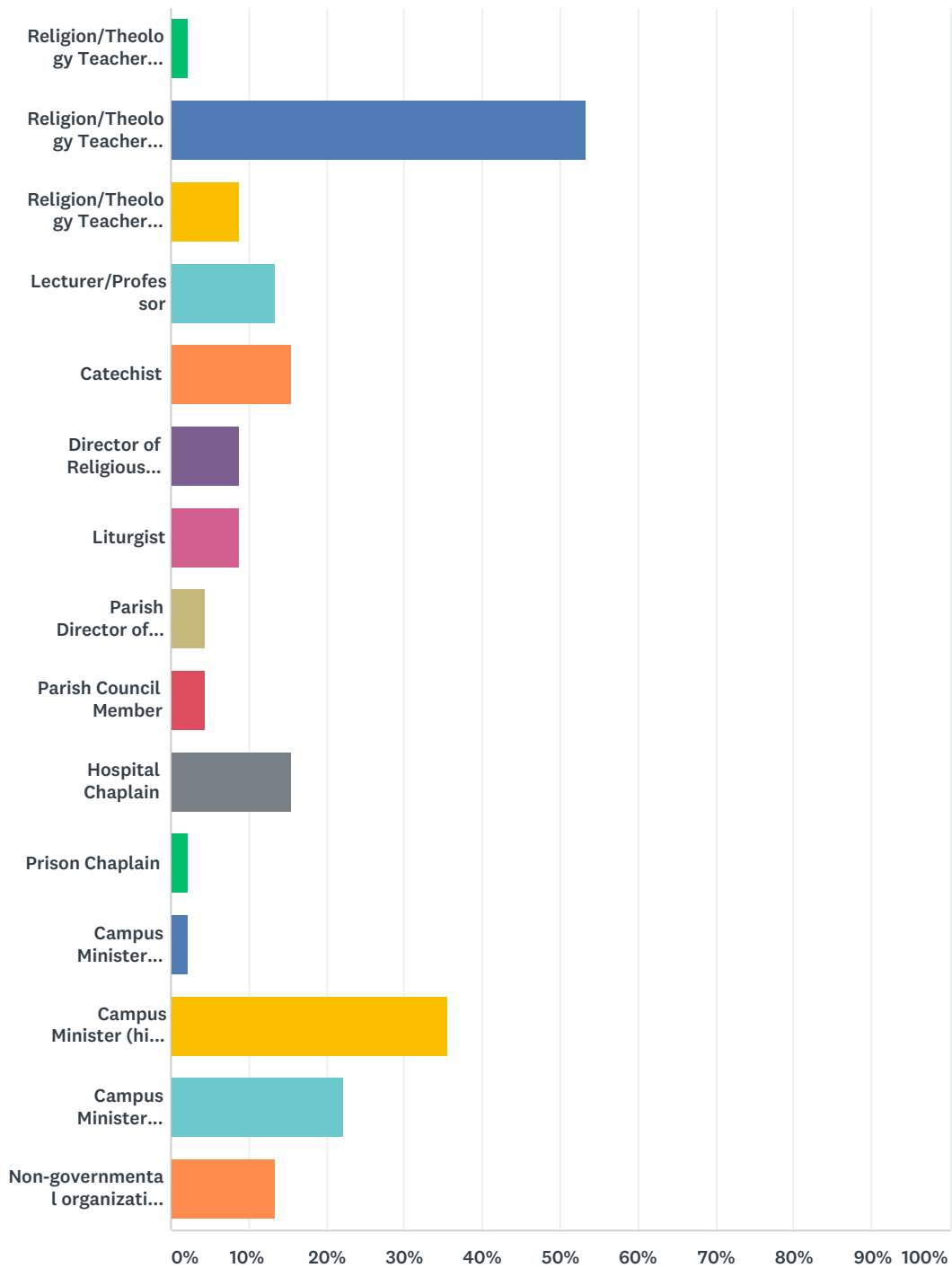
Q3 Please select the degree you were awarded at JST/GTU.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
M.Div.	51.02%	25
M.A.	22.45%	11
M.Div./M.A.	4.08%	2
M.A.B.L.	6.12%	3
M.T.S.	16.33%	8
Th.M.	0.00%	0
Ph.D.	0.00%	0
S.T.L.	0.00%	0
S.T.D.	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 49		

Q4 Please identify any of the following positions you have held since graduating from JST.

Answered: 45 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Religion/Theology Teacher (elementary)	2.22%	1
Religion/Theology Teacher (high school)	53.33%	24

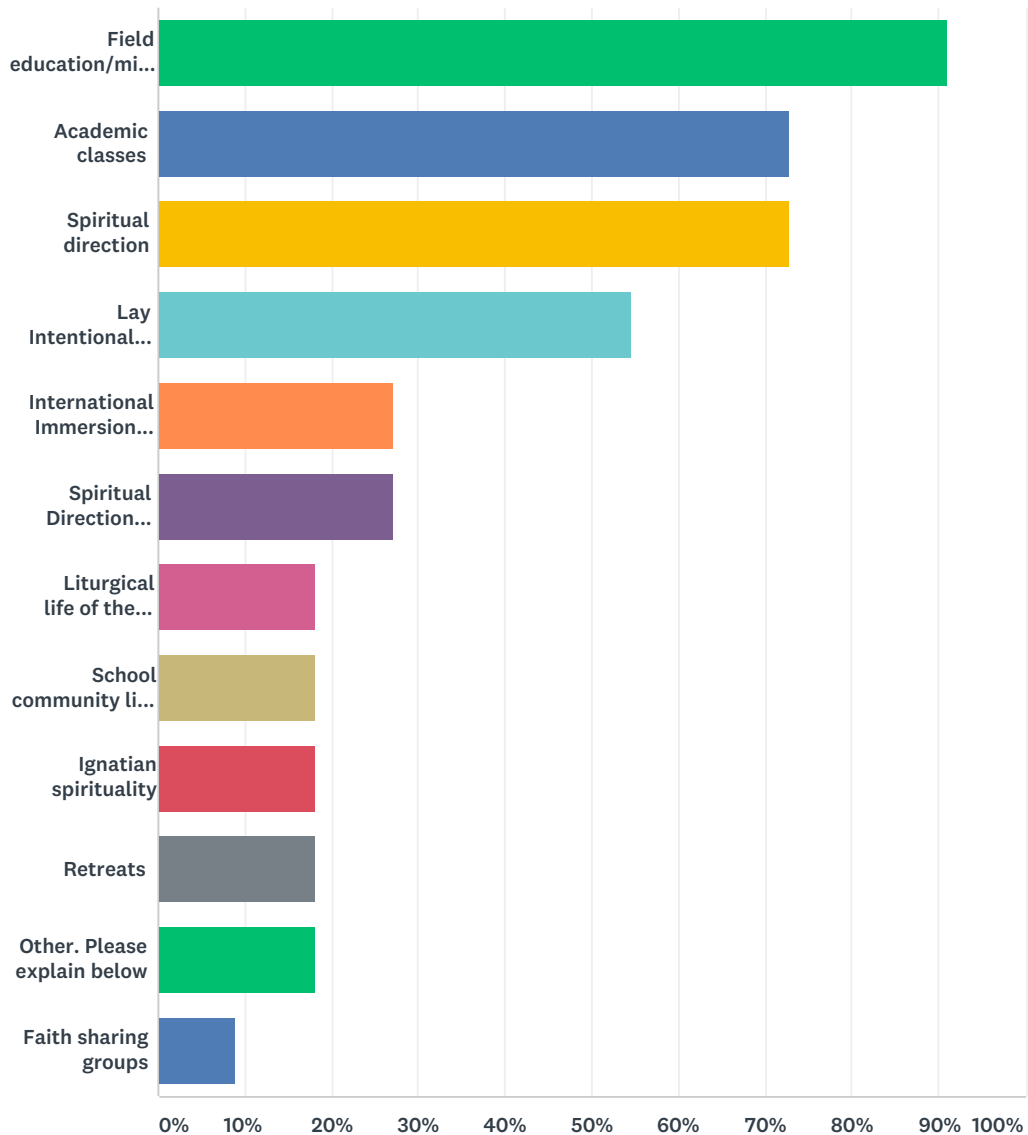
Appendix G: Spring 2017 JST Alumni Lay Formation Survey - Select Responses

Religion/Theology Teacher (post-secondary)	8.89%	4
Lecturer/Professor	13.33%	6
Catechist	15.56%	7
Director of Religious Education	8.89%	4
Liturgist	8.89%	4
Parish Director of Music	4.44%	2
Parish Council Member	4.44%	2
Hospital Chaplain	15.56%	7
Prison Chaplain	2.22%	1
Campus Minister (elementary)	2.22%	1
Campus Minister (high school)	35.56%	16
Campus Minister (post-secondary)	22.22%	10
Non-governmental organization staff	13.33%	6
Total Respondents: 45		

Appendix H: Fall 2017 JST Lay Student Formation Survey - Select Responses

Q6 From the following list, please select (as applicable) what has been formative during your time at JST so far, and please briefly explain why below. You may select more than one category.

Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



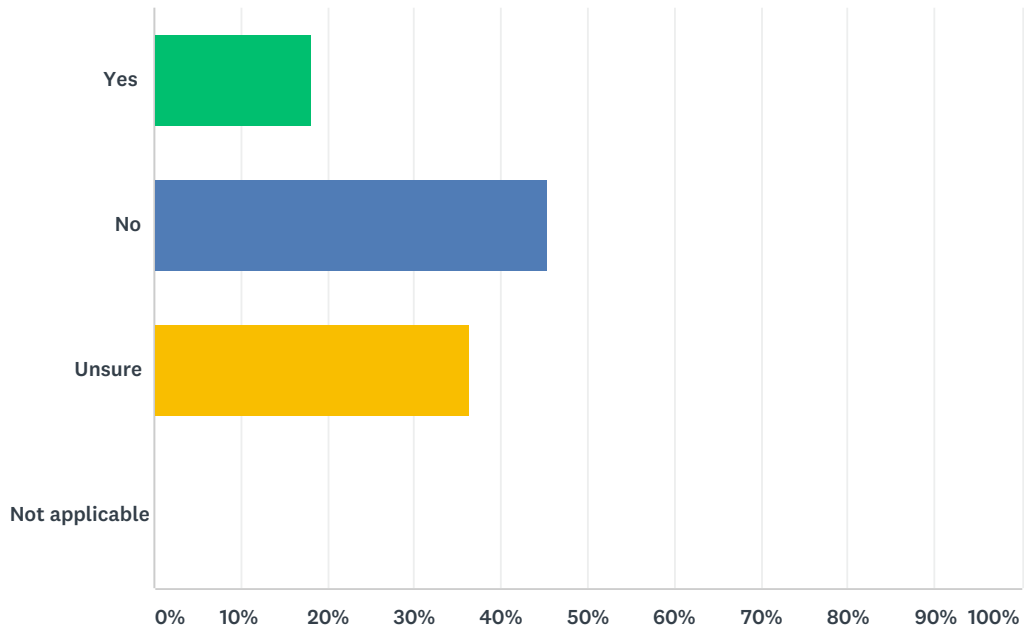
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Field education/ministry placements	90.91%	10
Academic classes	72.73%	8
Spiritual direction	72.73%	8
Lay Intentional community life	54.55%	6
International Immersion trips/pilgrimage	27.27%	3
Spiritual Direction Practicum/course	27.27%	3

Appendix H: Fall 2017 JST Lay Student Formation Survey - Select Responses

Liturgical life of the school	18.18%	2
School community life more generally, including Tuesday night suppers and presentations	18.18%	2
Ignatian spirituality	18.18%	2
Retreats	18.18%	2
Other. Please explain below	18.18%	2
Faith sharing groups	9.09%	1
Total Respondents: 11		

Q13 Do you think that the School currently offers adequate opportunities for lay students to explore their role as lay ecclesial ministers? Please state your reasons why.

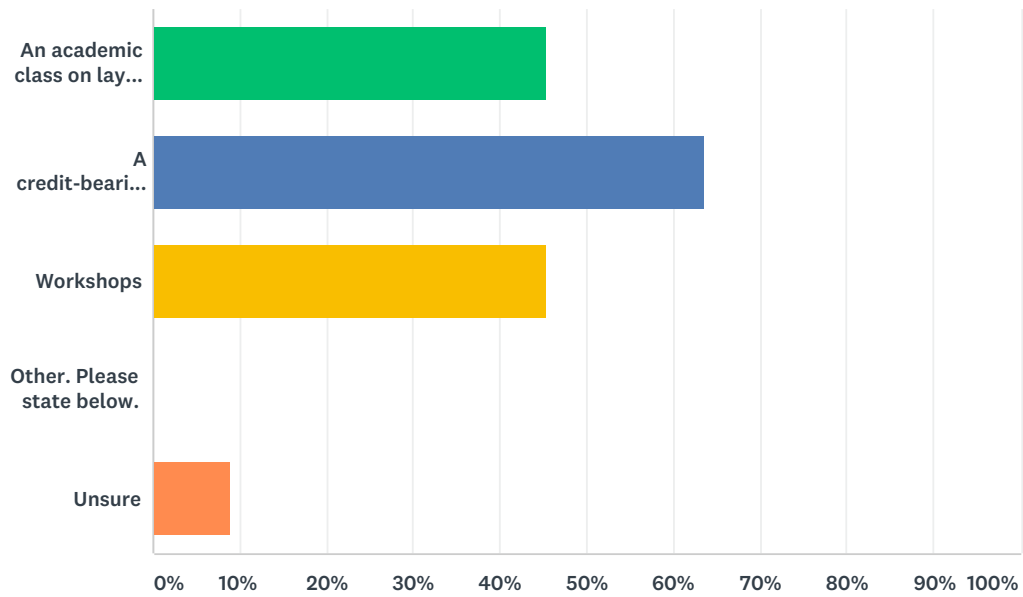
Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	18.18%	2
No	45.45%	5
Unsure	36.36%	4
Not applicable	0.00%	0
TOTAL		11

Q14 What would assist JST lay students to deepen their awareness of their lay ecclesial ministerial identity and lay vocation?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
An academic class on lay ecclesial ministry (that incorporates, for example, the history and theology of lay ecclesial ministry including church documents, and an experiential reflective dimension)	45.45%	5
A credit-bearing structured lay ecclesial formation program (including different components such as Ignatian spirituality, personal and group theological reflection, academic content, and skills-based training)	63.64%	7
Workshops	45.45%	5
Other. Please state below.	0.00%	0
Unsure	9.09%	1
Total Respondents: 11		

Appendix I: Sample Email Requesting Research Participant Consent

The following is the email text for the fall 2017 student survey which was emailed to second and third year JST-SCU lay students. (Similar email texts were sent to other survey participants. Students who participated in focus groups completed consent forms.)

Dear JST Lay Student:

I am conducting research on lay formation at JST. It is anticipated that the research will identify potential opportunities to enhance lay ecclesial formation at JST, and explore the character of lay ecclesial ministry.

Last academic year JST lay students were invited to participate in focus groups on the topic of lay formation. Nineteen JST students participated in various focus groups. JST lay alumni/ae, going back a period of fifteen years, were also invited to complete a survey based upon their experience at JST. Forty-nine alumni/ae responded.

Second and third year lay students are invited to participate in a survey reflecting upon experiences of lay formation at JST and lay ecclesial ministry. The survey is designed to explore some of the themes and responses that came up in the focus groups and surveys.

I am requesting your participation, which will involve your completing the online survey by Monday, November 6, 2017. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. It will not affect your grades or course credit received. The survey is anonymous. The results of the research may be published but your name will not be known. Your participation in this research is voluntary. Return of the survey will be considered your consent to participate.

If you choose to participate, please click the link below which will take you to the survey: [["SurveyMonkey" link](#)]. If you have any questions concerning the research, please call me at (510) 549-5025 or email me at dross@scu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, through Office of Research Compliance and Integrity at (408) 554-5591.

Thank you. Your time is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

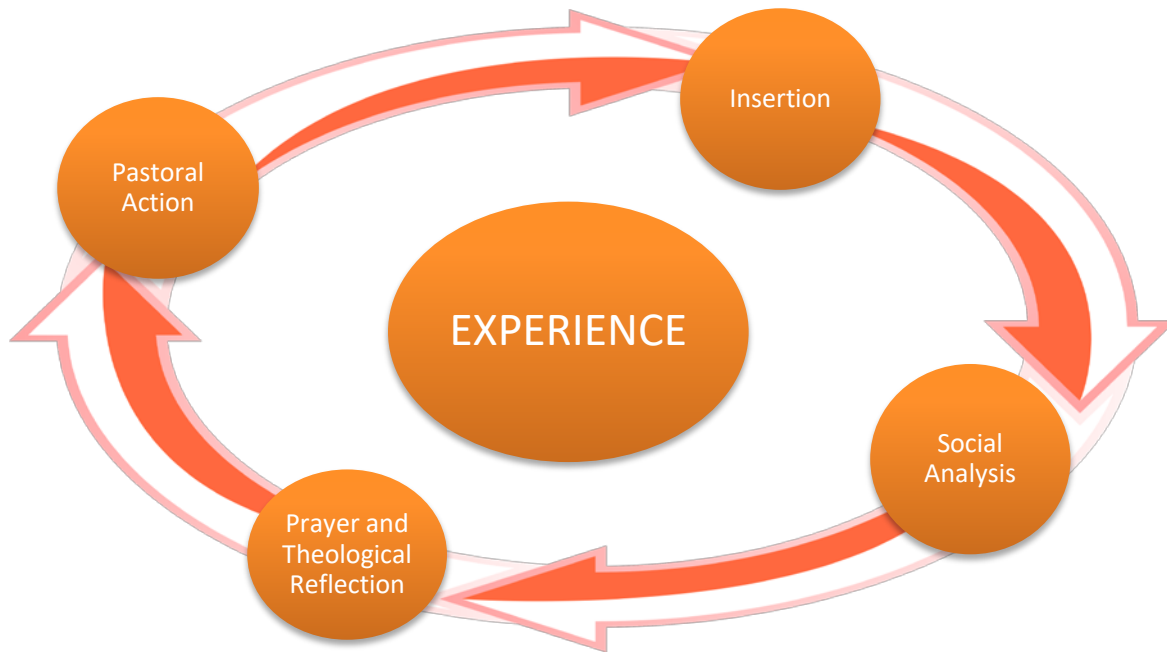
Deborah Ross, PhD
Lecturer and Director of Ministerial Formation
Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University

Appendix J: Pastoral Circle Theological Reflection Materials

Lay Formation Research Theological Reflection Meeting

The Pastoral Circle

Adapted from *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, SJ



Steps in the Pastoral Circle

Adapted from *The Pastoral Circle Revisited* ed. by Frans Wijsen et al. pp. 229-230

The pastoral circle is a process of answering four very basic questions about some experience that we have, either as individuals or in a community setting. These questions help us to respond more effectively to our experience through deeper understanding and wider evaluation.

1. *What is happening here?* Gather the data, stories, descriptions of what is going on in a chosen situation. What are people undergoing, what are they feeling, what stories are they telling, and how are they responding?
2. *Why is it happening?* Probe the causes, connections, and consequences of what is taking place. Who are the key actors and what roles do they play, what has been the history of the experience, what are influences both obvious and hidden?
3. *How do we evaluate it?* Understand the meaning of the situation in the light of our values, our belief systems, our community norms, and so on. What does a faith perspective bring to bear on the experience, what new questions and insights are suggested in the light of traditional resources of scripture or teachings?
4. *How do we respond?* Move through steps of planning, acting, and evaluating in order to effect a desired change in the situation. What strategies are called for, what short-term steps and what long-term steps are needed to bring change?

These four questions occur during four “*moments*” of what we call the pastoral circle. These moments mediate, or relate us to, the *experience* of the situation.

Lay Formation Research Theological Reflection Meeting

Societal Structures

from *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*
ed. by Frans Wijssen et al. pp. 231

All social situations are affected by the organization, operation, and orientation of structures (institutions, organizations, policies, patterns, and so on) that determine the direction of events. For descriptive and analytical purposes, we can list the following seven societal structures:

1. *Economic* structures that determine the organization of *resources* (e.g. corporations, banks, tax measures, trade patterns, unions);
2. *Political* Structures that determine the organization of *power* (e.g. parliaments, police, parties, local councils, constitutional guarantees of human rights);
3. *Social* structures that determine the organization of *relationships* (e.g. families, racial patterns, tribes, villages, recreation clubs, schools);
4. *Gender* structures that determine the organization of *male-female patterns* (e.g. families, racial patterns tribes, villages, recreation clubs, schools);
5. *Ecological* structures that determine the organization of *natural environments* (e.g. sustainable agriculture, weather patterns, population distributions, demographic patterns);
6. *Cultural* structures that determine the organization of *meaning* (e.g. traditions, language, art, drama, song, initiation rites, communications media); and
7. *Religious* structures that determine the organization of *transcendence* (e.g. churches, books of revelation, sacraments and rituals, moral commandments).

Obviously, these structures are not sharply discrete or isolated. In any given situation the structures are interrelated and connected. It is one of the tasks of social analysis to identify which structures are the most influential.