

POLICY 6.2 Selecting Lay Ministers

The past few generations in our society have given rise to disturbing practices and deep questions concerning the very nature of marriage. Yet the Church's position remains consistent. We must do all in our power to promote the Sacrament of Marriage among our people who are engaged in quasi-marital relations. Whenever Catholics have been living common-law or married outside the Church, we must make every effort to encourage them to sacramentalize their commitment. If they have been previously married, our concern must be to find a just and compassionate solution, which may entail recourse to the marriage tribunal.

In the meantime, we must avoid encouraging our people in such irregular marriage situations to exercise leadership in a ministry that would highlight the discrepancy between their lifestyle and the Church's teaching. This is especially true of some liturgical ministries (such as reader or Eucharistic minister) and catechetical ministries (RCIA and sacramental preparation of children). The list below may be helpful to you in trying to apply these norms.

Ministries and services open to those in irregular situations:

Usher
Greeter
Music (singer or accompanist)
Visits to hospitals and shut-ins (but not Communion)
Aid to the needy
Occasional Reader (as at weddings or funerals)

Ministries and services not open to those in irregular situations:

Regular Reader at Mass
Extraordinary minister of Communion (at Mass, or to the sick)
Committee or council member
Catechist (in RCIA or sacramental preparation of children)