Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

—1 Corinthians 12:4-7

Who are the ministers of the church?” asks the catechism in The Book of Common Prayer.

Between May and August, seven bishops have been or will be ordained and consecrated in the Episcopal Church, two more bishops will have been elected, and the consent process for two other bishops-elect will be underway. Thus, in the next few months, the church no doubt will publicly affirm changes in the ministries of 11 people.

The process of call, discernment and affirmation is experienced by the laos, the people of God, as we continually listen for God’s invitation to move toward using our gifts in new ways for God’s reconciling work in the world.

The orders of ministry (lay, diaconal, presbyteral and episcopal) make concrete and incarnate the call from God that is the basis of ministry. The catechism tells us that the “ministers of the church are the laity, bishops, priests and deacons.” It goes on to outline the specific ministries of each order. As is the case with these 11 people who have been or presumably will be ordained and consecrated into a new ministry, most of us also have experienced changes in our ministry during our lifetime. We discover formerly unrecognized gifts of the spirit (charism) within us and within each other. The knowledge and use of our unique charisms may call us into a new incarnation of our ministry. Some of these new incarnations may call us into another order of ministry, and some of these new understandings of God’s actions in our life may reconfirm and expand our call to our current ministry as a lay person, priest, deacon or bishop.
The holy people of God are followers of a vulnerable, servant God

As we are reminded by St. Paul, in a practice of equal exchange and honor, we draw upon the unique charism of each individual, whether God calls us as lay, diaconal, presbyteral or episcopal.

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