# Lay Dominicans Synod Discussion: 1. Ministry

**Background**

The Synod Assembly (October 2023) raised many questions about ministry and about the co-responsibility of everyone in the church. In particular, the Assembly document refers to the distinctive mission of the laity in the secular world, while acknowledging ‘the reality of pastoral practice which increasingly entrusts lay people with tasks and ministries within the church itself’.

The Assembly discussions included:

* The Church is mission, and laymen and women, those in consecrated life and ordained ministers have co-responsibility for that mission.
* The lay faithful make the church present in everyday life and in parish life.
* The reality is that the laity have an increasing ministry within the church but there is a danger of 'clericalising' the laity.
* Do we need a new understanding of what ministries the church needs?
  + Do we need to establish new ministries?
  + Do we need to expand the responsibilities of existing ministries (e.g. 'ministry of lector .... could become a fuller ministry of the Word of God, which, in appropriate contexts, could also include preaching').
* How do we make sure we include women in existing roles and ministries and in discerning new ministries?
* Do we need a new understanding of the permanent diaconate? The diaconate is about ‘service to those living in poverty and who are needy in the community' but there is concern that the ministry 'finds expression in the liturgy’ instead, particularly where there is a shortage of priests.

**Lay Dominican discussion**

Lay Dominicans work closely with our brothers and sisters, clergy and religious, in the Dominican family, as we have a shared call to preach. And we have frequent conversations about our apostolate - how, as laity, we preach. Our experience as Lay Dominicans in our fraternities and in our parishes, is very relevant to the Synod discussion on the ministries the Church needs.

***From our experience, what do we think are the ministries the Church needs? What should the priorities be for developing new and existing ministries?***