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Title: Leading Lay People to live out Mission in the World

Abstract: This presentation looks at how lay people can be led to live out mission in the world through exploring the Church's understanding of the mission of lay people and by arguing that this topic is still largely unexplored which in turn, gives rise to opportunity for imagination and exploration in the context of contemporary society. The Second Vatican Council marked a development in the Church's understanding of the mission of lay people. The Second Vatican Council's document, *Lumen Gentium* at [31] states that lay people, in their role in the Church's mission are called by God to "live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven" to "work for the sanctification of the world from within." Recently in October 2024, the Final Document of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops was approved, containing the discernment and guidance for the Catholic Church culminating from the multi-year global synodal process. The Final Document calls for greater participation of lay people in the Church's life, decision making processes and formation opportunities. At [66] it recognises that "Mission involves all the Baptised. The first task of lay women and men is to permeate and transform earthly realities with the spirit of the Gospel." However, the document lacks consideration of how lay people can be led and empowered to "transform earthly realities" by living out mission, as understood from *Lumen Gentium*, in their daily lives. Instead, the document focusses on giving greater opportunities for laypeople to be formed in order to participate, serve and lead within the Church and its institutions by "exploring new forms of service and ministry in response to the pastoral needs of our time" [77]. Although important in and of itself, this focus does not take into account the reality that the majority of the baptised members of the Church are lay people of whom the majority will not be employed by or leading in ministries within the Church and its institutions. The calling for the majority of the laity is to live out mission and contribute to the transformation of the world in their daily activities in family, work and society, however, the document lacks consideration of and guidance for this large cohort of people who play an important role in the Church's understanding of mission. This presentation argues that the ways of leading lay people to live out mission in their lives in the world is largely unexplored. It will explore ways to lead lay people to live out mission in the world by looking at resources in the tradition to understand how the Church recognises the mission of lay people, the current gaps that exist and by imagining ways of encouraging and equipping lay people to live out mission in their daily lives.