

By Frances Vogel - Montano

You've heard the call to "Come follow me." You've responded as generously as you are able. You are in love with the Lord. You are committed to the Church. You plunged into ministry with excitement and great expectations. What more do you need?

In the church today lay ministers-people like you and I know that it takes a lot more than deep faith and enthusiasm to minister with confidence and competence. Though both of these are essential qualities in the minister, they are really like the *path* leading to the doorway of church ministry. Commitment is the *doorway*. What about a firm foundation and strong solid walls? And a weather-worthy roof?

A solid background in theology, gained through persevering study, provides the firm *foundation*, and that often takes years to build. Then training in the practical skills for doing that ministry well are the strong solid *walls*. These walls are built by weaving together many hours of training by professionals and many other hours of hands-on experience.

An open mind provides *windows* to shed light on all this learning and keep it applicable to the lives of ordinary people. Attending to family, to those we love and for whom we are responsible, in the midst of ministerial duties, contributes a flow of fresh sweet air throughout this house. And a constant connection to the church community is the *roof* that protects and shields and holds everything together. Without this attachment to the community of the People of God we are an empty shell in danger of falling apart.

Most of us need some help with the foundation and walls of our house. Here's a list of some of what's available from the diocese to assist with the building process:

**Start** with the **Basic Level Theology** courses in Scripture, Jesus, Church, and Church History which have are offered all around the diocese and can be offered in **any** parish, just for the asking.

**Participate** in one of the **Schools of Ministry**, where you meet one Saturday a month for three years with other ministers to explore together these areas of our faith: Spirituality and Prayer, Faith Foundations, Scripture, Church History, Ecclesiology, Sacraments and Worship, Personal and Social Morality, Leadership, Human Development, and Skills for Ministry. These Intensive Level programs of formation for ministers are held in the Northwest Deanery (*Education for Ministry, call Joanne Dupont at 689-2404*), the Santa Fe Deanery (*Jornada de Fe, call Juanita Montoya at 471-6489*), and the Albuquerque Deaneries (*Emmaus Journey, call Frances V. Montano at 831-8151*). **This is the time to sign up before the September sessions.**

**Venture** into some **Advanced Level** courses in Scripture, Theology, Church History, Morality, Prayer and Liturgy, Discipleship, Spirituality, Communication Skills, etc. These courses are offered occasionally by the diocese, by parishes, and by other Catholic groups like the Catholic Charismatic Center, the Cursillo Movement, retreat houses, prayer centers, and monasteries, the **Center for Action and Contemplation**, the Santa Fe Institute for Spirituality, the Dominican Ecclesial Institute, national organizations, etc.

**Experience** the excitement of taking part in the **Youth Ministry Certificate** program (call 831-8145), the process of **Certification for Catechetical Leaders** (call 831-8129), the **Public Discipleship Project** (an exciting learning experience coming in spring 2000, call 831-8167), the training process for **Evangelization Teams** (call 831-8164), **training for catechesis with persons with disabilities** (call 831-8129), the **Sponsor Couple training** (cal 831-8117) and many more.