

Glossary Grid: Distinctions - Endorsement, Appointment, Commissioning and Authorization

This grid was developed by the USCCB Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service to clarify activities which are delineations of the role of the bishop or local Ordinary with respect to recognizing competency and leadership activity of ecclesial ministers with respect to certain leadership roles in the life of the church. It is not exhaustive but descriptive of a number of ways in which Ordinaries have exercised this function in various dioceses. Language referring to the bishop / diocese in the information below can also include provincial leadership in religious communities and institutes for consecrated life. The terms presented are merely descriptive and do not reflect “levels” of achievement in recognition. They are simply delineated ways in which such recognition by bishops have developed in pastoral practice, or as indicated in ecclesial documents. For additional information, please see Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, pp. 54-60 or visit <https://usccb.org/certification>.

endorsement	appointment	commissioning	authorization
<p>The formal recognition by the bishop or by the bishop’s delegate in the diocese of the ecclesial minister’s good standing in the Church, residence and/or place of ministry, and of the certifying body’s authorization to certify that minister.</p> <p>An endorsement conveys two messages. First of all, it implicitly is an affirmation of the process that informs the bishop or his delegate that a minister’s call and preparation align with the ministerial competencies and expectations set by the certifying body.</p>	<p>The formal designation by the bishop or the bishop’s delegate in the diocese assigning an ecclesial minister to a specific position that includes its rights, obligations, responsibilities and authority, usually for a particular period of time.</p> <p>The appointment of a person to a specific position should be done in writing (required for ecclesiastical offices [cf. Code of Canon Law § 156]) and should include the rights and obligations attached to the position or office, any limits on the exercise of authority (e.g., budget reviews, prior</p>	<p>A liturgical rite or prayer service that highlights the new relationship of the ecclesial minister in the life of his/her community as a result of the minister’s role.</p> <p>Public prayer and ritual can be significant for the lay ecclesial minister and for the community, highlighting the new role being undertaken and the relationship the lay ecclesial minister has with the bishop and/or his delegate.</p> <p>Commissioning can be said to be a public liturgical</p>	<p>An ecclesial action which formally and publicly affirms a lay ecclesial minister’s activity and leadership in the name of the Church and of the local bishop and his delegate. Such authorization frequently includes all the aspects of endorsement, appointment and commissioning.</p> <p>It is this set of action in its entirety which <i>Co-Workers</i> recommended for lay ecclesial ministers and others in a ministry</p>

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<p>Secondly, while endorsement is neither an authorization nor an appointment, its most common understanding is that it affirms that the person is “in good standing” and has the disposition or character to serve. When considering endorsement of an ecclesial minister, a bishop may rely on the recommendation of the person’s pastor, program director, or ministry organization leader. Endorsement encourages the hope that the bishop himself and the minister will establish a professional rapport and an affirming ministerial relationship, possibly including appointment, commissioning or authorization.</p> <p>Though not envisioned in the <i>Co-Workers</i> document, this dimension of a bishop’s role has developed based on pastoral need.</p>	<p>permission for certain actions), relevant employment and personnel policies, any limitations on the term of the appointment, and—perhaps most importantly—any special delegation to perform functions proper to the ordained (e.g., baptizing outside of emergencies [canon 861 §2] and witnessing the exchange of matrimonial consent [canon 1112§1]104). Canonical and/or legal counsel should be consulted with respect to the drafting of written contracts and/or any proposed term of appointment.</p> <p>Appointment is discussed in <i>Co-Workers</i>, pp. 57-58.</p>	<p>celebration of acknowledgement, endorsement and/or appointment.</p> <p>See also <i>Co-Workers</i>, p. 54.</p>	<p>leadership role that has a professional relationship to the ministry of the bishop and/or his delegate.</p> <p>See also <i>Co-Workers</i>, pp. 54-56.</p>