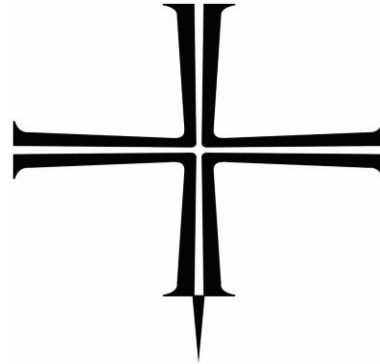




Wisdom and Service Award



With the **Wisdom and Service Award**, Saint John's Abbey and Saint John's School of Theology and Seminary, Collegeville, MN honors individuals who have made significant contributions to the wisdom of the Church in its formation and development of lay ecclesial ministers. Recipients demonstrate by their personal and professional lives a profound commitment to the pastoral mission of the Church. Their commitment through leadership in parishes, organizations, or seminaries/schools of theology advances the practice of ministry and the vocational call to lay ecclesial ministry.

Wisdom and Service Award recipients inspire and empower people. They are servants of the Creator and disciples of Christ Jesus. They respond with generous hearts and ready hands to be co-workers in the vineyard of the Lord where collaboration, commitment, and a shared vision of where the Gospel leads produce an abundant harvest in the vineyard of the Lord.

H. Richard McCord, Ed. D.

Rick McCord, we are delighted to present you with the **Wisdom and Service Award**. As former Executive Director of the Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops you were the principal staff person responsible for lay ecclesial ministry and shepherded the preparation of the bishops' pastoral statement *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*. You worked tirelessly to bring partners together at the Conference and here at Saint John's School of Theology and Seminary to strengthen the national will towards a deeper understanding of lay ecclesial ministry as an emerging expression of pastoral leadership worthy of the Church's attention and authorization. You were steadfast in advancing the pursuit of excellence in lay ecclesial ministry and in unearthing the challenges that exist in the landscape surrounding it.

As a leader in church ministry for more than forty years, you have always paid attention to the pastoral needs of the church and the empowerment of the laity for the evangelizing

mission of the Gospel. First in parish ministry, then in diocesan ministry, and finally on the staff of the Bishop's Conference where you provided leadership for several conference documents including *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*; *Always Our Children: A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children and Suggestions for Pastoral Ministers*; *Follow the Way of Love: A Pastoral Message to Families*; *Blessings of Age: A Pastoral Message on Growing Older*; and *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium*.

You capably helped pastoral leaders---bishops, priests, deacons, lay ecclesial ministers and the lay faithful lean into the unknown. You have done this first as a bridge-builder, connecting people, generations and ecclesial understandings. You have contributed to seven books and four national research projects—all of which deal with topics in marriage and family life, lay ministry and church renewal. You have advanced the national understanding of ministerial practice when our own understanding was inadequate. And whenever we felt the ground awkwardly shift below our feet leaving many feeling like strangers in a collective “dark night,” you called us back to the urgent mission with a courage often unimaginable. You helped us live into the space of new questions - a space that is still as wide as a Midwest prairie. You have helped us hold the space as sacred even when the question did not yield an answer.

You have been honored by the National Association for Lay Ministry and the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers. Your wisdom has been sought in every region of the United States and abroad in Louvain, London and Rome... and even here in Collegeville.

With the **Wisdom and Service Award** we bestow on you today, we thank you for your work as theologian, pastoral leader, teacher, advisor and visionary. The *Four Elements* illumination from *The Saint John's Bible* tells of the story of God bringing the world out of chaos and making a covenant; of focusing on the abundance provided to the people of the Promised Land. This illumination is a fitting icon for one who, with constancy, steadfastness, and hope, continues to encourage the entire church to frame the events of this journey of advancing the role of lay ecclesial minister not as discrete events, but interconnected. You have helped us frame these moments in gold and illuminate the abundance that God has given us. With quietness and humility you have made visible the reward of our labors and the steadfastness of God, even in the margins, so that we too may hear again the voice of God say, “Here am I.”

For guiding our spirits toward a future in which the Church will draw on the ministerial gifts of the Holy Spirit of all of its members, Saint John's School of Theology and Seminary with Saint John's Abbey recognizes you and confers upon you—

H. Richard McCord

The Wisdom and Service Award

On this twenty first day of May

Two thousand and fifteen