

Msgr. Doug Doussan – Friend of the Loyola Institute for Ministry

By Barbara J. Fleischer, Ph.D., Professor Emerita

As many of you know, Msgr. Douglas Doussan passed on to new life on July 9, 2025. Those of us who knew Fr. Doug (as he preferred to be called) continue to feel the loss of his joyful greetings, his charm and wit, his wisdom, and his empowering leadership. As his obituary (<https://www.schoenhfh.com/obituaries/Msgr-Douglas-A-Doussan?obId=43556859>) points out, Fr. Doug was a champion of the vision of church renewal that Vatican II set forth. For Fr. Doug, the church was the People of God, and he guided his communities to express this reality in the liturgies they celebrated, the ministries they developed, and the theological wisdom that he sought to foster.

The Loyola Institute for Ministry (LIM) owes a special debt of gratitude to Fr. Doug for his support, participation, and leadership in using our LIM Extension (LIMEX) program for parish-based development of pastoral leaders. When the parish council at St. Gabriel's Parish New Orleans proposed that he as pastor hire an additional pastoral associate, he made a counter proposal—let's use the money we would allocate for a new salary to provide scholarships for 12 lay parishioners. The Council agreed, and the call for graduate-level ministry education was opened to all adult parishioners. The parish staff interviewed potential candidates and, pending Loyola's acceptance, the parish would pay 50% of the students' tuition for either a CEU or master's degree in pastoral studies or religious education. Most chose the graduate degree option. In exchange for scholarship assistance, students agreed to develop and lead ministries in the parish for 8 hours a week for five years, following the completion of their studies.

Students met at the parish using the LIMEX model for the first six core courses of the curriculum. They also offered constructive feedback to LIM about increasing the diversity of speakers on course videos. We took their feedback to heart and reworked many of our videos in response. Midway through the program, Fr. Doug led a discernment process with the students, presenting the needs of the parish that had been identified through a parish town hall process, and he invited students to choose focus areas addressing those needs (asking students to work in pairs, if possible). To complete their educational program, the students joined with other students from around the country and world to engage in their chosen focus area courses. (At the time, a similar parish model using the LIMEX program was operating at John XIII parish in Geneva, Switzerland. The two LIMEX parish groups made connections and exchanged ideas.)

Fr. Doug was also a featured speaker in our first Parish Life and Ministry course video, along with many of his parishioners who spoke of their experiences in enhancing parish ministries. The number of active ministries a few years after the educational program concluded numbered 55, with over 50% of the parishioners involved in parish ministries.

We thank you, Fr. Doug, and ask you to intercede for all parish ministries and for all who participate in our LIM graduate and continuing education studies to serve the People of God.