

## **NOTRE DAME STUDY OF CATHOLIC PARISH LIFE**

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### **Report No. 9**

## **PARISH LIFE AMONG THE LEADERS**

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### ***Leadership: The Shaping of a Parish***

Report 8, a companion to the current report, described the kinds of needs people bring to their parishes and portrayed the programs that respond to these needs. All parishes offer sacramental services and liturgies, most try to provide for religious education especially of the young and often of the adults, fewer have organized programs for marital and family life. The gap between needs and programs is more acute when it comes to social problems: severe marital strain and divorce, alcohol and drug abuse, and economic crises. While generally the larger parishes are able to offer more staff or volunteer services, somewhat to our surprise we found that the social characteristics of a parish do not predict very well the range of programs it will develop. Instead, we concluded that many parishes have unique histories; what they are today is a composite of their peoples' needs and the kind of leadership some people asserted in the past. Parishes make their own histories. There is wide latitude for leaders to take hold of parish situations.

Because leaders *can* make a difference, it is important to study their backgrounds and training, their outlooks and priorities for the parish, their perceptions of what parishioners want, their dealings with each other, their ways of seeking information and making decisions, their areas of conflict and cooperation, and their feelings about the diocesan leadership under whose authority they conduct their affairs. For all of our imagery about the divine nature of the Church and the pastoral responsibilities of its local leadership, the parish remains a very human institution. Its saints and sinners often reverse roles, sometimes acting with vision and sometimes with myopia, always in need of the healing grace of God.

What is characteristic of the modern American parish is that "leadership" is a plural noun. While the pastor is still central to the understanding of parish leadership, there are many other influential and effective people who share responsibility for the direction of the parish. In the post-Vatican II American church that is both a matter of necessity and of design. For, at about the time that social and psychological forces made the priesthood a less attractive vocation for young Catholic men, the Catholic church itself was urging the non-ordained to share more widely the ministries and responsibilities of the parish.

What is also characteristic of the modern American parish is that leadership is not simply a status but a way of doing things. Authority may reside in a position, but unless the person who occupies that position can act legitimately and effectively in the eyes of those around him, he is not viewed as a leader. In Catholic parishes, authority resides in the pastor, as the local representative of the bishop. Some pastors are leaders and some aren't. Some religious and laypersons who share his pastoral responsibilities are leaders and some aren't. The combination of authority and style are central to what we address in this report.

### *The Leadership Samples*

For Report 9 we make the widest possible use of our various data sets. At times, we will consult the 1099-parish sample to generalize about the composition of leadership teams. At other times we will consult the three leadership samples — pastor, paid staff, unpaid volunteers — in 36 carefully selected parishes across the nation, so that we can grasp the internal workings of leadership. We will often match a parish's leadership to the characteristics of its membership, and thus we will have recourse to the sample of 2667 parishioners. Finally, we will consult parish ethnographies, written by our trained site visitors, to gain an interpretive understanding of parish life among the leaders.

Report 8, as have earlier reports, took care to point out the strengths and limitations of our study design. We will not repeat those caveats. We do, however, need to elaborate more on the method of drawing the leadership samples.

Because church law, previous studies, our pretests, and parish experience point to the central leadership role of the pastor, we collected interview data on all 36 pastors, and

extensive questionnaire data on 35 of the 36. (A religious journalist described our lone nonrespondent as "the lost shepherd.")

Beyond the pastor, however, identifying parish leaders is a difficult task. While canon law specifies various kinds of church vocations, it does not prescribe which of these, beyond the pastor, are to be the parish's leaders. During the time our data were collected, the new Code of Canon Law mandated that parishes have a finance council; the code also recommended that parishes have a consultative pastoral council, presided over by the pastor; the bishop can decide whether to mandate such councils throughout the diocese or in any given parish. Most parishes already had such instruments, either for "consultation" or "governance," depending on the parish. It is reasonable to assume that some leaders, particularly among the laity, will be found in such councils. Beyond this, parishes that can afford to do so will appoint and pay people to conduct various programs. But again, appointment to paid positions bearing programmatic authority does not uniformly signal elevation to a leadership role. Leadership is both a broader and a more restrictive concept than can be described by a parish organizational chart.

Leadership is fundamentally a matter of reputation. People who are leaders usually get their way; they convince others that something should be done. People who are leaders also get things done; they can be depended on to meet responsibilities. People who do not influence outcomes or fail to get their tasks done, no matter what their position in the organization, do not maintain their reputation as leaders. Yet, occupying certain positions in the organization provides the visibility and resources to influence and perform. That is why positions are reasonable starting points in the study of parish leadership.

We used both *positional* and *reputational sociometric techniques* to identify leaders in the 36 parishes. Based on pretests, we identified several positions that were well located for the assertion of leadership in the various functions of the parish. Beyond the pastor, these included: associate or assistant pastor or pastoral associate; director of liturgy or chair of the liturgy committee (whichever had greater authority); director of music or choir director, organist (whichever had greater authority); director of religious education; principal of the parish school, if it had a school; chair of the parish council; director of ministry to the sick or aged, or chair of this committee (whichever had greater authority); and director or chair of the social justice committee (whichever had greater authority). Pastors were asked to supply these names and indicate whether each was paid or volunteer. Pastors also were asked to list two or more additional paid staff members who were "really influential" and "got things done," and four or more volunteers with the same traits. Pastors quickly corrected our oversight and listed finance committee chairs among the volunteer leadership. Other people who did not currently hold one of these posts but who were perceived as parish leaders were added. The resulting lists were of various sizes, often depending on whether a parish had the appropriate director or a committee; pastors freely expressed the greater importance in their parish of other positions or persons, and included them on the list.

We then asked our site visitors to conduct interviews through a "snowball sampling technique" to assess the adequacy of the pastor's list and to make appropriate additions or deletions. "Snowball sampling" asks those designated as leaders to list other leaders. In only a handful of parishes were there important changes, such as the addition of a person or two whom the pastor had overlooked. Finally, we asked pastors and the resultant samples of paid staff and volunteers to list up to ten people in the parish who "are more influential than others" and to specify the parish functions where they seemed to be most influential. In our pretests we had also asked average parishioners to identify such people, but this request often yielded no data or unreliable data, an important finding in itself about the unclear crystallization of leadership statuses in the minds of ordinary parishioners. But among the leadership there was considerably more consensus. Thus, in addition to data on the pastors, we have successfully collected questionnaire data on 202 of 262 unpaid volunteer leaders and 89 of 117 paid staff leaders. While it is possible that these techniques generate a limited clique of people who cite only each other, seldom would such cliques be as large as our net was spread; thus, we are reasonably confident that these techniques have floated most of the names of the principal leaders.

Subsequent analyses in this report will be based heavily on these leadership samples. It is important to remember that these pastors, staff, and volunteers have not been selected through simple random sampling techniques across the country. They are from 36 parishes. Thus, tests of statistical significance to compare one group of leaders with another group are inappropriate. We will rely more on prose and less on percentages, so that there is less unwarranted precision resulting from our presentation of findings. Further, when we describe "staff" we are not speaking of all paid staff but only those staff who, through positional and reputational techniques, are described as the influential people who get things done in the parish. Because the numbers of leaders from each parish are unequal in size, ranging from 3 for a very small rural parish to 20 for a large suburban parish, we have taken a conservative approach to generalizations: not only must a large difference be observed across the leadership groups but it must also be sustained by the majority of leaders within two-thirds of the parishes. When we generalize within each parish, of course, our design yields a high degree of precision and confidence.

For the most part, the text generalizes across the leadership samples. Even with the conservative approach we have taken to such generalizations, they miss much of the flavor of leadership interactions *unique* to each parish. Therefore, we have also included little stories that describe life among the leadership within parishes. These vignettes summarize the triumphs and trials, the wisdom and worries of people trying to lead their parish communities. We have altered or withheld crucial identifying information so that the identity of these parishes remains confidential. The stories are set off by boxes and are scattered throughout the text.

### ***The Background and Training of Parish Leaders***

[NOTE to Webmaster: *The article "Bricks + Mortar + Timbers" was inserted within this section of the report. All six articles appear consecutively at the end of this report,*

*and just before the Acknowledgments. This particular article should be linked individually to this corresponding section when setting up the Webpages.]*

Our examination of the kinds of people who serve as parish leaders underscores a fundamental paradox in the contemporary parish: on the one hand, many leaders *spring up* from below, emerging as it were from "the people of God." On the other hand, central leaders — and certainly the most important source of authority in the parish is the pastor — are *assigned* from outside the parish. While it is true that early Catholic parishes in this country were formed by the people who then secured a shepherd from the mission societies in Europe, and even many current parishes evolved from the initiatives of laypersons who moved to the burgeoning suburbs, nevertheless, parishes are formally called into existence by dioceses and religious orders. The people turn to the dioceses and orders for clerical and religious leadership.

The pastor whose authority derives from the bishop is, by virtue of his ordination as a priest, called to be a servant. He is a servant not only of God but of the Church, which in post-Vatican II parlance, is the people of God. His assignment is to a parish, to a local community of the people of God.

There is inevitable tension among these metaphors in the American cultural setting. On the one hand, the Catholic church is clearly episcopal and clerical in its structures of authority. On the other hand, the local parish shows tendencies toward congregationalism as it relates to its pastor, and shares responsibilities for leadership in his ministries to the people. The tension is sometimes shown in differing degrees of attachment to the parish. The tension is often shown in differing models of decision-making, ranging from *authoritarian* to *consultative* to *democratic*. While the church in recent years has tried to move from the authoritarian to the consultative model, many parishioners demand of it a democratic form of responsiveness. We will see these tensions in what follows.

We would expect that the assigned leadership would come from outside the parish. Indeed it does. Less than one out of every ten pastors was born or raised in the parish he now leads. Even among the leaders on the paid staff, only about one out of every ten either lived in their current parish as a child or attended its parochial school. Perhaps the surprise was the mobility of the volunteer leaders. Only one out of every four volunteers was raised in the parish he or she now helps to lead or attended its school. Volunteers are not routinely drawn from the lifelong members of the parish. They are mobile people and, for the most part, have known life in other parish settings.

Staff and volunteer leaders both arrived on the average, about a dozen years ago, only a couple of years earlier than the average parishioner. They did not enter their current parish devoid of organizational experience, however. Both the average volunteer and paid staff member had had over a dozen years' experience working within the organizational structure of another parish. In a sense, then, each parish is training not only its own leaders but other parishes' future leaders. Furthermore, not only do pastors have considerable

mobility through the parish assignment system, but the other people with whom they share leadership are also mobile.

The fact that they are mobile does not mean that leaders do not develop strong attachments to their current parishes. Those reporting the strongest attachments are the volunteer leaders. (One is reminded of Thomas Jefferson's argument that loyalty to a country grows in direct proportion to its citizens' participation in self-governance; one is also reminded of the argument that citizen soldiers fight harder for the cause than do mercenaries.) The attachments of paid staff are relatively high. Of the leaders, the weakest attachments to their current parish are reported by pastors. Their level of attachment resembles that of ordinary parishioners. The volunteer leaders are only slightly more likely than ordinary parishioners to feel that their parish meets their spiritual needs, but they are quite a bit more likely than other parishioners to feel that it meets their social needs.

The parish, then, is an important point of social orientation for volunteer leaders. They are much more likely than pastors and parishioners to say that their closest friends are from the parish; paid staff have more close friends in the parish than do pastors and parishioners, but not nearly as many friends as the volunteer leaders have. Although staff interact a great deal with pastors and other leaders, less than half of their closest friends in the parish are fellow staff members. Those with the fewest close friends on the parish staff are the pastors. Apparently, paid parish personnel are no more likely to develop close friendships among the people with whom they work closely than they are with parishioners generally. These findings are reminders that there is a difference between working collaboratively on a staff and developing close friendships and mutual support in daily life.

It may appear that the pastor especially, and the paid staff feel slightly more isolated in the parish than do the volunteer leaders. We suspect that contention is not accurate. We think pastors and paid staff list most of their closest friends outside the parish because their relationships that have grown into deep friendships have occurred elsewhere; many would count among their closest friends fellow seminarians or novices or co-workers on previous assignments.

While they have not cultivated a circle of close friends in the parish, they certainly avail themselves of opportunities to talk with fellow staff members and parishioners. As a crude measure, we can examine the percentage of parishioners, volunteers, and paid staff reporting frequent or daily conversations with various people in the parish. Staff report far more conversations with people at all levels than do volunteers and ordinary parishioners. Volunteers report far more conversations than do ordinary parishioners. Volunteers and staff interact about as frequently with the pastor, but volunteers interact far more frequently with the parish council chair than do the paid staff members. That should come as no surprise, however, since the volunteers are often leading members of the parish council and are usually lay, while the paid staff, at best, attend parish council meetings as *ex officio* members. There is a very large gap between the staff's interaction with the pastor and their interaction with the council chair. Finally, one should not underestimate

the centrality of the parish secretary in the communications network; volunteers interact about as frequently with the secretary as they do with the council chair.

Parish leaders undertake a great deal of study and reflection to understand better their faith traditions, and responsibilities. Asked to reflect on the last three years, volunteers reported spending about eight days on the average in courses, workshops, or seminars to increase their own religious education or to develop skills related to their parish work. Paid staff had spent about eleven days on the average. Over the past three years, volunteers had spent on the average nine days on retreat, and paid staff had spent fifteen days. During the past year, volunteers estimated that on the average they had read about eleven articles or books relating to their faith or their parish work, while paid staff estimated nineteen such articles or books.

Volunteer leaders in our 36 parishes have completed more years of formal education than have ordinary parishioners; paid staff have completed considerably more than the volunteers, with over half of them holding graduate degrees. Although Catholic schools are often thought to be the training ground for future parish leaders, in our samples volunteer leaders do not differ from ordinary parishioners in the proportion having attended Catholic high schools or colleges. Paid staff, on the other hand, are quite likely to be products of Catholic schooling at all levels. Volunteers are likely to attribute their religious training to a Catholic education in general or to workshops; paid staff, on the other hand are likely to attribute it to formal degree or credentialed programs.

The leaders, both volunteer and paid staff, have roughly the same age distribution as the adult parishioners who responded in this Study. When compared with the gender distribution among our parishioners, the volunteers have a higher proportion of men, while the paid staff have a higher proportion of women. Women still predominate in both groups, however, and when the two leadership groups are combined 58% are women. One of the reasons that volunteers show higher educational attainment than ordinary parishioners is that a slightly higher proportion of volunteer leaders than of parishioners are men, and, excluding the youngest segment of the Catholic population, Catholic men have historically stayed in school longer than Catholic women. The much higher educational attainment of the paid staff which is disproportionately female, however, reflects the presence of women religious who have pursued advanced degrees in education and often in theology. We suspect the high proportion of women on the paid parish staff is a reflection of the pyramidal power and wage structures in American society. Women, it is argued, have cost less for the same unit of work, despite their relatively high levels of education. And the central location for power in the parish has remained the male clergy.

Within our 36 parishes, the volunteers are more likely than ordinary parishioners or paid staff to be currently married. The staff figure is lower, of course, because of the presence of women religious. Among those who have ever married, the volunteers have the largest families, ordinary parishioners the next largest, and paid staff the smallest. Neither volunteers nor paid staff were more likely than parishioners to have been raised Catholic; volunteers, however, are much more likely than ordinary parishioners to have

married a spouse who was raised Catholic. Volunteer leaders are more likely to be currently employed than ordinary parishioners (where the incidence of housewives and retired persons is higher) and to be located in white-collar or professional occupations. Despite the fact that volunteer leaders have shown past parish mobility, they are more likely than ordinary parishioners to have lived longer at their current address, to have moved less, and to reside closer to the parish plant.

Leaders are active not only in a wide range of parish organizations but are joiners in the outside community. The average volunteer leader belongs to about twice as many extra-parish organizations as the ordinary parishioner, and has more organizational involvements than either the pastor or the paid staff. These findings sum up to a confirmation of the old adage: if you want to get something done, ask a busy person. The volunteers have more family responsibilities, more community involvements — and more parish involvements than anyone else. The findings are also consistent with other research on community volunteers: the principal reason people volunteer is that they need to be needed.

For reasons we can only speculate about, leaders — whether pastors, paid staff, or volunteers — are all more likely than ordinary parishioners to trace their ancestry to Irish roots. Thus, the Irish leadership connection of the American church is hardly confined to the hierarchy.

Given their employment characteristics, it comes as no surprise that volunteer leaders have higher incomes than ordinary parishioners. Ordinary parishioners, however, have slightly higher incomes than the paid staff that their parish employs.

It is also not surprising, given the employment and income data, that volunteer leaders contribute larger amounts of money to their parish than do ordinary parishioners. But the differential is very large. While we have not standardized the figure by income level, employment, or region of the country, our crude estimates from the 36 parishes suggest that volunteer leaders donate nearly three times as much money to the parish as do ordinary parishioners. There are at least three interpretations for their generosity: (1) they have more discretionary money, (2) their money follows their time, i.e., they develop a deeper commitment financially to what they have helped shape, and closely related, (3) they have a better awareness of the financial need.

According to their reports, volunteers and paid staff attend Mass and receive the Eucharist more regularly than do parishioners, go to confession and pray more regularly, and are more likely than ordinary parishioners to share their religious beliefs with others. Paid staff are more likely than volunteers and much more likely than parishioners to read the Bible regularly. But both groups of parish leaders are *less* likely than ordinary parishioners to hear or watch religious radio or television. (That is probably also a function of the larger proportion of retired persons and widows in the parishioners sample.) As Report 6 noted, the prayer life of leaders is more likely to be focused on

members of the Triune God (Father, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit), while ordinary parishioners are more likely to involve the Blessed Virgin and saints in their prayers.

Turning specifically to the present leadership position of our samples, we find that the volunteers have, on the average, occupied their present posts for about six years, and the paid staff have occupied their posts for a little over five years. Two-thirds of the volunteers served in another leadership position within their parish prior to the present one and about 5% of these were paid. Among the paid staff about one-fifth previously were teachers, principals, or pastoral associates in the parish before they moved to their present post. Thus, there is considerable mobility from position to position not only between parishes but within the same parish. One-third of the volunteer leaders hold two or more major organizational responsibilities simultaneously.

Not a very high proportion of the "volunteers" actually volunteered for their current responsibilities. 35% were recruited by the pastor, 28% by other staff members, and only 31% actually volunteered or applied for the post. This is an important reminder that parishioners still need to be asked to serve and need affirmation of the importance of their service. Educational background, skills, and other social characteristics alone will not compel parishioners to offer their service. Among the paid staff, the most common avenues to a parish leadership position were assignment by a bishop or the superior in an order, recruitment by the pastor, or personal application — each in about equal proportions.

Because so many volunteers among the laity are now responsible for leadership of the parish's ministries, it is useful to examine the kinds of special training they receive through their parish. Presumably, if one is serving the parish as a communion minister, a teacher in the religious education program, a visitor to the bereaved, a financial planner, or whatever, the parish would provide for special training. In the sample of 1099 parishes, we find that 27% offer a parish-sponsored program for training parish leaders and 37%, with considerable overlap, offer programs in ministry training. Such programs are far more common in the urban and suburban parishes than in small town and rural parishes. They are also more common in the parishes staffed by religious clergy than in parishes staffed by diocesan clergy, but that is primarily because the former are disproportionately located in urban areas. The leadership training programs most commonly involve either local workshops or diocesan training programs. Most of the parishes' programs focus on the laity but a few also address the clergy in conjunction with their lay leaders. Some concentrate on a specific organization such as the parish council or a parish committee. Commonly leadership training programs flow naturally from parish renewal efforts. Perhaps the only surprise in these generalizations is that so many parishes recruit leaders but fail to provide training programs for them.

While this description of leaders' backgrounds, parish involvements, and training should not be seen as a statistical profile of all parish leaders across the country, it can at least provide a useful backdrop for the kinds of interactions among leaders and between leaders and parishioners in our 36 parishes that we will now describe.

## ***Planning and Decision-Making in the Parishes***

**[NOTE to Webmaster:** *The article "The Lay Parish" was inserted within this section of the report. All six articles appear consecutively at the end of this report, and just before the Acknowledgments. This particular article should be linked individually to this corresponding section when setting up the Webpages.]*

The national sample of 1,099 parishes showed that three-fourths of all parishes have a parish council or its equivalent. These data also show a little over half of all parishes have one full-time priest, one-fourth of the parishes have two full-time priests, and about one-sixth have three or more full-time priests. About one-third of the parishes have one or more part-time priests. Nearly one-fourth of the parishes have one or more permanent deacons, one in twenty have transient deacons, one-third have sisters on their pastoral ministry staffs (that is, outside school roles), and three out of every ten parishes include lay persons on their pastoral ministry staffs. Nearly two-thirds of the parishes hold staff meetings at least monthly, most commonly weekly. Report 8 described the wide variety of organizations and programs that have proliferated; usually they have committees over-seeing them. On top of this, about 45 % of the parishes have a parochial school or participate in a consolidated Catholic school. Put together with the parish council activity, we realize that Catholic parishes are not only large but organizationally complex.

About one-third of the parishes use a parish planning process to coordinate these organizational activities. Most commonly, planning is done in collaboration between the parish clergy and the parish council. In some instances it is extended to relevant committees and specially-designated lay organizations. In many instances, either diocesan representatives are involved in the parish's planning process, or the diocese establishes a training program to teach pastors and laity the rudiments of parish planning. About one out of every six parishes will hire an outside consultant to come in, typically for a week, to assist in planning or to facilitate the resolution of conflicts.

Within our 36 parishes, we have a more detailed picture of the processes of decision-making. In those parishes that have parish councils, three-fourths of the councils meet monthly; a couple meet more regularly than that and a few meet quarterly or semi-annually. One third of the councils consist of elected members only, while all but two of the remainder involve some combination of elected, appointed, and *ex officio* members.

The type of business handled by the council differs, often depending on the size of the parish and its staff. In two-thirds of the councils the pastor presents reports, and in half of them other staff also report. In all but two of the parish councils, the pastor considers the work to be parish "planning;" however, in only two-thirds of the parishes with councils do the staff members consider the work to be "planning," and in only slightly over half of those parishes do the volunteers describe part of the council's work as

"planning." Staff and volunteers are somewhat more likely than pastors to describe what occurs in council meetings as "informing" and "reflecting."

We suspect those involved in parish leadership bring different ideas about what is supposed to be happening in organizations like the council. Canons 528 and 529 of the Code of Canon Law present a lengthy list of the many responsibilities of the pastor. A consultative pastoral council (perhaps a parish council) is envisioned as an organization that can help identify needs, plan, organize, and review pastoral programs. But canon law makes it a consultative body, not insisting that it be a body with democratic decision-making rules (such as majority rule) for resolving conflict. Thus, it is possible that pastors invest different meanings to council deliberations than do staff and volunteer leaders.

Such differences in the labeling of council activities may be symptomatic of other perceptual differences in the extent to which pastors and other leaders share "authority." We asked each of the leadership groups, "In general, who normally makes most of the final decisions about the following: parish finances, parish school, parish organizations, parish social activities, liturgical practices, and social action programs." The response categories that we offered were "pastor only," "pastor and council," "pastor and staff," "pastor, council, and staff," "parish council only," and "other patterns" such as a committee, the relevant staff and committee, or pastor, staff and committee.

Several conclusions can be drawn by examining the responses within parishes. First, pastors consistently reported that they shared final decisions with staff, council, or committee, more often than staff and volunteer leaders felt these decisions were shared. Staff and volunteers are more likely than the pastor to see final decisions concentrated in the pastor. Perhaps, one could argue, the pastor is merely being modest about his authority. We think the difference in perception is based in the consultative and democratic models of authority. The pastor has sought out the views of other leaders, as representatives of those affected by final decisions. But the buck stops with him — so he makes the decisions. Other leaders, however, expect not only consultation but that the final decision reflect their views. They sometimes forget that whatever opinions are offered or votes taken, if any, are consultative. And so in their minds, the pastor has "concentrated" authority. The general mismatch in perceptions runs through the data but shows interesting nuances depending on the area of decision-making.

In over half of the 36 parishes, *financial decisions* are now thought to be shared by pastor and council. In one-fourth, they reside in the pastor alone, primarily because there is no council. Financial decisions constitute the policy area where there is greatest agreement between the perceptions of pastor, staff, and volunteers on the locus of control.

The other extreme is *parish organizations*. The pastor never says that he alone makes the final decisions over parish organizations; rather he shares these with council, staff, or relevant committee. The other leaders, however, think that power over organizations remains concentrated in the pastor alone in roughly one out of five parishes.

Where the parish has a *school*, there clearly is a decentralization of authority for it. Ironically, a few pastors feel they alone make the final decisions on the school, but none of the staff and volunteers perceive sole authority in the pastor's hands. Rather, they, like most pastors of parishes with schools, perceive that final decisions over schools involve some combination of school committees, staff, council, and pastor. In about half the cases, final decisions reside with pastor and staff or council; in the other half they reside with a school committee in concert with other parish leaders. Some observers have argued that, historically, the school was one area where women religious could stake out their control and guard it assiduously from the pastor. In time, school mothers became important allies, and so principals and mothers came to control parochial schools. We cannot test these claims with our data; there are simply too few cases. But we can observe from our parishes with schools that volunteers certainly perceive greater decentralization in the locus of control over schools than over other parish activities.

Parish *social activities* also involve a widespread sharing of final decisions, but the pastor is still thought to be quite involved in the decisions of about two-thirds of the parishes. Here too, the staff and volunteers attribute greater control to the pastor than he himself thinks he exerts.

*Social action programs*, on the other hand, involve greater concentration in the person of the pastor, or the pastor and council. We suspect this reflects the rather limited participation of parishioners in social action programs and the newness of parish organizations specifically designated to foster justice and peace in the larger society. At this point in the history of our sampled parishes, social action is still more of a top-down activity than a bottom-up activity.

*Liturgical practices* are even more concentrated, this time in the pastor alone or between the pastor and staff. The council has less involvement in liturgical practices than in any other set of activities listed in this question. The three groups of leaders for the most part agree on where decisions are made about liturgy. Beyond the staff and pastor or the pastor alone, an appreciable number of parishes seem to be concentrating liturgical decisions in a liturgical committee. These patterns may hint at some of the reasons why we observed in Report 6 that many parishes had difficulty planning and coordinating liturgies among the many individuals and groups responsible for *executing* liturgical celebrations.

We asked members of the volunteer sample alone the following question: "In some parishes decisions are widely shared. In others only the pastor or a small group of religious control everything. In general when you offer your suggestions and input about parish activities, do you think they actually influence: (1) the decisions your pastor makes? (2) the decisions parish staff make? and (3) the decisions the parish council makes?" Generally, about 1 in 10 volunteer leaders felt they had no influence at any level. In most of the parishes, the volunteer leaders felt that they were most likely to influence the council and the pastor, but felt somewhat less ability to influence the paid staff. (The parishes not having paid staff other than the pastor, or a parish council, were deleted from these calculations.)

When one recalls that staff are the group of leaders most likely to have frequent conversations with people at all levels of the parish structure, and when we bear in mind that staff are relatively close to volunteers in the leadership structure but pastors are a bit more distant, we can understand the tendency of volunteers to think they have *less* influence on the staff. Expectations may be increased. Yet when the desired change does not occur, it is likely to be staff whom they hold accountable. Organizational studies suggest that those closest in the pecking order are most likely to become scapegoats.

We then asked the volunteers whether they ". . . would like to have more say in how (their) parish is run?" Even though nearly 90% had reported that they have "some" or a "great deal of influence" on parish decisions, about 40% of the volunteer leaders expressed a desire to have greater "say." A wide variety of reasons were offered. Roughly one-third of these people made reference to clergy control; another third referred to the principal of democracy in any organization; and another third expressed a need either for substantive changes in parish programs or procedural changes in parish governance. Most spoke of the need for widening the group of people who plan, manage, and review in the parish, and for the pastor to respect the inputs of others; many felt that neither current governance procedures nor parish programs fostered a sense of community in the parish; several made reference to the need for improvements in music or participation in sung liturgies; others spoke of social programs or reaching out to people who do not feel at home in the parish. Again, we think it is no coincidence that volunteers mentioned clergy control and the principle of democracy more than any other factors: they are operating with a model of democracy consistent with American cultural values, but inconsistent with canon law. And so the tension between episcopal principles and congregationalism becomes heightened.

There are other ways leaders feel they can make an impact on the parish and effect outcomes. About half of the staff leaders and one-fourth of the volunteer leaders felt that they had budget control in their area of responsibility. Roughly the same proportions felt they had authority to staff committees in their domain. And about one-third of the staff and one-sixth of the volunteers felt they acted with the pastor's authority when they operated in their domain of responsibility. (These generalizations must be approached with some caution because responses differed considerably from leader to leader *within* the same parish on these questions, and thus, we lack our conservative double-check on these generalizations.) Thus, some pastors are finding ways to "communicate their authority" to a wider range of parish leaders while still acting within the canonical model.

### ***Conflict and Conflict Resolution***

[NOTE to Webmaster: *The article "The No-Conflict Traditional Parish" was inserted within this section of the report. All six articles appear consecutively at the end of this report, and just before the Acknowledgments. This particular article should be linked individually to this corresponding section when setting up the Webpages.]*

Another way to examine the sharing of authority in the parish is to review data on conflict and conflict resolution. We asked each of the three leadership samples a series of questions about the presence of conflict, who is pitted against whom, and how conflict is resolved among the leadership of the parish.

One should not assume that the presence of conflict in a parish is automatically harmful. There are productive conflicts that help parishes discern new needs and there are unproductive conflicts that fester and grow and sometimes destroy a parish. Finally, the absence of conflict in some parishes is more likely a sign of rigor mortis than of vitality and community. Some of our vignettes vividly portray what happens in parishes that fail to recognize conflict or suppress it.

In approximately one-fourth of our 36 parishes, the pastor, paid staff, and volunteers agree that there is no appreciable conflict. In parishes where conflict is reported, pastors are about twice as likely as staff and volunteers to say that it originates within the parish council and that it pits the pastor against the council. Staff are more likely than volunteers or pastors to feel that conflict has most frequently occurred between pastor and staff. And volunteers are more likely than other leaders to see very decentralized sources for conflict; it may come from a committee or from anyone who feels strongly about something. Thus, conflict is perceived rather differently depending on the organizational vantage point of the leader.

We can specify these vantage points even further by looking at the exact organizational location of the paid staff member or volunteer. (Remember that we are not generalizing to all such people across the country. For example, when we speak of directors of religious education, we are describing only those DREs located in our 36 parishes. Others have conducted surveys of members of specific church professions and these should be consulted.) Associate or assistant pastors or pastoral associates are the leaders most likely to perceive conflict; they report that most of it comes in differences between staff and council, pastor and staff, or pastor and council. The chairs of parish councils are also quite likely to perceive conflict; they locate its source within the council, between pastor and council, or widely in the committee structure or among parishioners.

Those most likely to perceive the pastor and the staff as the source of conflict are the directors of religious education and the principals. This perception is quite understandable. The principal and the DRE are trying to protect their budgetary turf, sometimes from each other, but commonly from the variety of programs that have sprung up in the post-Vatican II parish. The pastor, on the other hand, is responsible for all of these programs and knows that the largest item in the budget is often the target for assaults. The educators, well-trained in their own profession, are likely to feel that the pastor understands little about education. And sometimes isolated by design and a decentralized power structure, the educators are less likely to interact regularly with parish leaders outside school or religious education committees. The potential for conflict is larger.

People responsible for charitable efforts, helping the poor, and visiting the sick are also quite likely to sense conflict but its source is usually quite decentralized. Another set of positions whose occupants report a lot of conflict are chairs of liturgy planning committees and the organists, choir directors or others responsible for liturgical music; the conflict is not concentrated in a single source, but it may come from a wide variety of locations. Finally, parish secretaries sense considerable conflict but they too trace it to a wide variety of sources. No other patterns are evident among the leadership positions. (Again we urge caution with these generalizations because they are drawn only from 36 parishes.)

Pastors in three-fourths of the parishes where conflict is reported are confident that the issue is resolved without one or another side "winning." But the pastors are operating from a decision model that has an implicit goal of "win-win," not the democratic dichotomy of "win-lose." The other leaders are not quite so sanguine. Staff and volunteers say that the issue is talked out in a satisfactory way in about half of the conflictual parishes, but if someone wins, volunteers say the pastor is twice as likely to win as any other party to the conflict, and staff say the pastor is three times as likely to win. The associates or assistants on the pastoral staff are quite likely to say that the pastor wins or that the conflict grows. Secretaries think the pastor typically wins. Directors of religious education and principals are especially likely to say that the conflict grows or the pastor wins. The chairs of the parish councils are those, next to the pastor, who are most confident that the issue gets resolved, although if there is a winner, it is usually the pastor. Again, no other patterns stand out. Yet implicit in all of these patterns is the win-lose criterion of democratic leadership. We cannot tell whether the pastor is thought to be the "winner" so often because of the different decision model, or because he has failed to resolve conflict in a way that most parties feel they are winners. For some the consultative model can remain little more than a rationale for authoritarian rule.

### ***Leaders' Feelings about Each Other***

[NOTE to Webmaster: *The article "The Ethnic Transition — How Long..." was inserted within this section of the report. All six articles appear consecutively at the end of this report, and just before the Acknowledgments. This particular article should be linked individually to this corresponding section when setting up the Webpages.]*

An important ingredient in productivity, conflict resolution, and morale in any organization is the regard people hold for each other, both as individuals and as a team. We asked the three leadership samples to characterize what they liked best and least about the parish staff (including the pastor) and to describe the strong and weak points in their personal relationships with staff members. The questions produced large amounts of information which we have reduced through content analysis and classification of responses. Ten general categories of positive responses and eleven categories of negative responses were used. Although the question does not tap feelings about volunteer leaders,

it does provide a reasonable estimate of how the leadership samples feel about their staff and pastoral leadership.

Overall, volunteers and staff had about the same ratio of positive to negative comments, with the positive ones outweighing the negative ones by a ratio about 3:1. Pastors were even more positive with a ratio of over 6:1. On the positive side, *volunteers* were most likely to mention the competence of the staff, their sensitivity to the needs of parishioners, their efforts to improve parish life and programs, and their good teamwork. On the negative side, volunteers were most likely to mention bad teamwork and insensitivity to the needs of parishioners. By a very wide margin staff were likely to note good teamwork, then competence, good relationships with the pastor, initiative, and friendliness; on the negative side staff were especially likely to note poor teamwork and poor relationships with the pastor. Pastors were especially likely to mention competence, good relationships between pastor and staff, and teamwork; on the negative side, only poor teamwork received much comment from pastors. All three samples of leaders did take note of the presence of committed volunteers or a shortage of volunteers. Very few mentions, however, were addressed explicitly to whether the men and women collaborated well, or to specific stances toward the implementation of Vatican II guidelines. Perhaps these are incorporated into broader judgments about teamwork, relationships with the pastor, sensitivity to parishioners' needs, etc.

When we coded the quality of relationships with staff members our findings are similar to those involving judgments about staff characteristics. Pastors report having the best relationships with staff; volunteers also report quite good relationships, but less satisfactory than those of the pastors; and staff, while clearly positive, nevertheless, describe less satisfying relationships than either pastors or volunteer leaders. Staff, of course, are caught right in the middle of the episcopal and congregational forms of church organization.

Where does the dissatisfaction seem to concentrate? In our 36 parishes, by far, the least satisfied staff members are those who serve as either directors of religious education or principals of schools; about 40% of them cite poor teamwork and one-third report poor relationships with the pastor. Half of the associates or assistants on the pastoral staff make negative judgments about the staff; while many feel there is good teamwork, some of them describe unsatisfactory relationships with the pastor. The group next most likely to express discontent is the parish secretaries who, while feeling the staff is competent and shows some teamwork, wish staff would show more initiative. The liturgical musicians also express considerable discontent, especially citing poor teamwork, unsatisfactory relationships with the pastor, or lack of sensitivity. The parish council chairs admire the competence of the staff and, often, their sensitivity to parishioners, but one-fourth of them feel there is poor teamwork; they are less likely than other major parish leaders, however, to cite unsatisfactory relationships with the pastor.

In our parishes, then, pastors and parish council chairs seem to have a high level of respect for each other, and even though they sense that the council is a locus for conflict,

they share the feeling that most conflicts can be resolved. Perhaps such feelings develop out of mutual respect: the council chair grows to appreciate the problems a pastor faces and the pastor recognizes the chair as a potential partner. Or perhaps because the pastor and staff have to live together professionally while the council chair has extra-parish sources of satisfaction, the chair has the luxury of overlooking festering conflicts. We cannot say. But we can note that similar feelings of respect and ability to resolve conflict are not shared with such robust confidence by some other key staff personnel, particularly those in liturgy and on the secretarial staff. The DREs and principals as a group, on the other hand, perceive conflict, sometimes complain that the pastor usually wins or that conflict grows, yet also show a high proportion who feel that the conflict gets resolved. This paradox can be understood better by looking at male-female relationships.

### ***Women and Parish Leadership***

[**NOTE to Webmaster:** *The article “Different Models of Urban Organizational Complexity” was inserted within this section of the report. All six articles appear consecutively at the end of this report, and just before the Acknowledgments. This particular article should be linked individually to this corresponding section when setting up the Webpages.*]

Although women are heavily involved in the leadership structures of our parishes, one might argue that they are not the most influential leaders. It may be illusory to cite the figure that 58% of those outside the pastor who were named as leaders are women; they may not have the same level of respect as men, or they may be consistently frustrated by decisions the men of the parish — particularly the pastors — make. Some sociologists claim that in American society, the men do what they want to do and the women do what needs to be done; some sociologists of religion claim the parish is no different. We are particularly sensitive to this issue because some of the indicators of dissatisfaction with parish decision-making showed up among the positions disproportionately occupied by women — e.g., directors of religious education, organists or choir directors, parish secretaries. We have some data that bear on the matter, but the debate will not be resolved by looking solely at 36 carefully selected parishes.

Earlier we mentioned that we had asked all three leadership samples — pastor, paid staff, and volunteers — for a list of up to ten of the most influential people in their parish. On the theory that *the* most influential leaders will be mentioned first, we have examined the gender of the first three names to appear on each list. This might offer a rough approximation of a leadership elite within the leadership. Our summaries will be based only on the volunteers and staff lists, because the wording of the question on the pastors' questionnaire was likely to exclude the pastor from his own list. The results show a slightly different picture of the place of women in the top leadership of the parish and lend modest support to the arguments that the parish leadership, while shared with many women, is still dominated by men.

If we leave the pastor's name on the resulting lists — and he appeared regularly on the lists from all but three parishes — we find that both volunteer and staff leaders named males to the top three positions approximately 60% of the time. But one might agree that such a procedure is inherently biased because the Catholic parish structure locates authority in the pastor and he must be male. Therefore, we reconstructed the lists, this time excluding the pastor. Among the volunteers sample, we find that male leaders are mentioned more frequently than female leaders. Among the staff, however, female leaders are mentioned slightly more frequently than male leaders. One of the reasons males are mentioned more frequently than females among the volunteers is that volunteers are tied more closely to the parish council and men outnumber women as council chairs by a 2:1 ratio. And vice versa, the ratio of women to men among the paid staff leaders is much higher. Overall, then, men are mentioned slightly more often than women among the top three leaders, but the disparity is not large when we exclude the pastor.

Next, we turn to perceptions of influence over the decisions of other parish leaders. Again using our conservative criterion based both on absolute proportions and patterns within two-thirds or more of the parishes, we found that the men and women in our volunteer sample did not differ in their degree of perceived influence over the decisions of the pastor, council, or staff. Nor were women any more likely than men to want more say in how the parish is run. Women volunteers are quite a bit more likely than men volunteers to think that the pastor dominates decisions on the school and parish social activities; on other programs their patterns are similar to men. Relative to male staffers, women on the parish staff do not think the pastor dominates school decisions, but they clearly do feel he controls liturgical practices and social programs. In both the volunteer and staff samples, it is the women responsible for the social activities, liturgical practices, and social programs who perceive the pastor's control — more so than anyone else does. The data hint that pastors and women in parish education have developed ways to share authority, but pastors and women organizing social activities, directing liturgical music, and leading social programs have not achieved a similar measure of shared respect and authority.

Women are less likely than men, among both the volunteers and staff, to perceive conflict among the leadership of their parish. When conflict is perceived by women, however, it is disproportionately among the staff women, and the conflict is said to revolve around pastor and staff differences. Yet relative to staff and volunteer men, staff women are more likely to feel that their conflict gets resolved, while the volunteer women feel that their conflict festers and grows. Perhaps this is evidence that some women on staff, particularly the educators, are better able to communicate their viewpoints than are women volunteers; or it may hint that the pastor devotes more effort to resolving conflicts with women staff members. Whatever the interpretation, the suggestion from the data is tantalizing and calls for research on larger samples.

Perhaps also organization theory can shed light on the findings. Women educators are in positions that have had long standing in the parish; their roles are crystallized; people know what to expect of them and how to treat them. Women in liturgical music

positions are in roles of recent origin in many Catholic parishes; they are at the center of the storm, on the one hand receiving constant criticism from parishioners who dislike the music, and on the other hand receiving little support from pastors whose seminary training involved little exposure to liturgical music. Some parish musicians have had very weak training in either liturgy or music: Despite the long experience of Lutheran and Episcopal parishes with music ministers and the presence of organizations like the American Guild of Organists and the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, few Catholic parishes know what to require of their musicians and their pastors are uncertain about how much authority to delegate to them. These liturgical roles have not yet crystallized. Women leading social concern programs face similar problems but are not as vulnerable as the liturgical musicians to weekly exposure. Finally, the volunteer women who organize parish social activities or run the altar guild have been there "forever," but suffer from being taken for granted like "the handmaidens." The problems each of these types of women face in the parish depend a great deal on organizational expectations.

Staff women generally report better relationships with the parish staff than do staff men. Volunteer women, however, report slightly worse staff relationships than do volunteer men. Staff men are a little more likely than staff women to make negative judgments about staff capabilities and relationships, but there are no similar gender differences among the volunteers. When they do make negative assessments, both staff and volunteer men complain about lack of initiative, while the women volunteers complain about poor relationships with the pastor, lack of a sharing spirit, traditionalism and insensitivity, and the women staffers cite poor teamwork. Women in both leadership groups are more upset than the men by the shortage of volunteers.

How can one summarize our data on women and parish leadership? While women have penetrated the circles of parish leadership in large proportions since Vatican II, they still are not so likely as men to be found in the *inner* circles. Men remain more influential, but they had a running start with the male priesthood. Since that advantage does not appear likely to change soon, what can be said about gender relations among the leadership? Staff women in some positions and with certain backgrounds and training seem able to get their point across to men, especially the pastor; women less well-situated, particularly many volunteers and the staffers in conflict-centered positions such as parish liturgy and social action programs, appear more vulnerable to traditional male dominance in the parish and express more frustration with it. Our data do not permit a prediction for the future.

### ***Diocesan Relationships***

[**NOTE to Webmaster:** *The article "The Dominant Pastor" was inserted within this section of the report. All six articles appear consecutively at the end of this report, and just before the Acknowledgments. This particular article should be linked individually to this corresponding section when setting up the Webpages.*]

Parishes do not exist in a vacuum. They are under the authority of a bishop. Their pastor and other priests are assigned by a bishop or in collaboration between a bishop and the provincial of a religious order. Women religious are assigned by superiors after consultation between the pastor and the religious order. While parishes do make many other staff appointments through their own discretion, nevertheless the parish and its entire program remains under the oversight of a bishop. Therefore, another element of parish leadership concerns the perceptions of parish leaders toward their diocesan bishops and staff.

We asked all three leadership samples: "In general, what do you like best about the operation of your diocese in relationship to this parish? What do you like least?" We coded the positive responses into eleven general categories and the negative responses into fifteen general categories. The patterns of responses among the three groups are quite different when the diocesan leadership is the subject of assessment than when the parish leadership is being judged.

First, far less information is elicited about diocesan leadership. Only about half of the volunteers offered positive statements and only about half, often the same people, offered negative statements. A large proportion of the volunteers simply did not know much about the diocese — an important finding in itself. Among the staff and pastors, all offered some positive statements; over half of the staff and nearly all of the pastors also offered negative statements. As one might well expect, diocesan relationships are far more salient in the lives of church professionals than they are in the lives of volunteers.

The substance of the assessments also differs considerably. Over a third of the *volunteers* cite positively the moral leadership, sensitivity, and good communications experienced with the diocese. Those categories also evoke the most negative reactions, with about one-third of the volunteers citing insensitivity, lack of moral leadership, or poor communications. It is interesting to note the ways in which the American church reflects American culture in these comments. While the volunteers see both good and bad in their leadership, it is *moral* leadership that they seek. When they get it they are happy; when it is lacking they note its absence.

The positive references toward support for parish priests, encouragement of laity, and provision of educational and liturgical resources and training far outweigh the negative references. Quite a few volunteers feel the diocese drains more financial resources than it returns in services and staff support.

A handful complain about ideological conflict over church issues among the diocesan leadership; about equal numbers among them argue that the diocese lacks unity with the larger Catholic church or that it shows unity with the church.

Of those volunteers who made comments about diocesan relations, about two out of every five remarked that their parish was somewhat isolated from the diocese. The source of isolation was very different, some because of geographical location, others

because the parish was served by priests from a religious community. Sometimes such isolation was viewed positively, sometimes negatively. For volunteer leaders, however, the parish is clearly a more important frame of reference than the diocese.

The ratio of positive to negative mentions about the diocese was considerably higher among staff than among pastors. The reader will recall that it was just the opposite when the subject was parish staff. Many pastors indeed offer positive comments, especially about diocesan moral leadership, sensitivity, support for priests, and communication. Many recognize diocesan financial support, educational resources, and encouragement of the laity. Several referred to a helpful marriage tribunal. What seems to bother parish pastors in some dioceses, however, is the lack of sensitivity and communication. Further, over half of them complain that the diocese drains off too much financial resources, takes too much of the pastor's time, or is administratively top-heavy. A handful cite the lack of resources or training. A few more do not like the ideological conflict among the diocesan leadership or the lack of unity with the church at large.

The principal bases for the positive ratings of the diocese among the *paid staff* are good communication, moral leadership and sensitivity, the provision of resources and training, support for the parish pastor and encouragement of lay leadership. No negative category stands out among the paid staff, but two clusters do attract some mentions: (1) ideological battles and lack of unity with the church (but this is mentioned only half again as often by the staff as it is by pastors) and (2) the drain on financial resources and pastor's time.

To beleaguered diocesan officials who feel they hear constant complaints from parish staff members, these findings may provide some solace. While staff may be very articulate with their negative comments, diocesan officials might remember that many parish staff members have a reservoir of positive feelings about their diocese.

It would be tempting in light of recent events in the American church to ask whether the lack of unity that leaders perceive is concentrated in dioceses where the leaders are too "progressive" or too "conservative." While we have a good sampling of dioceses with bishops whom church insiders have given ideological labels across the spectrum, we do not feel our data are appropriate for such an endeavor. The samples are too small and the questions were not designed for that purpose. Furthermore, across the three leadership samples, comments about diocesan unity and disunity with the church at large, or about ideological strife represent less than ten percent of the total number of positive and negative mentions. We cannot tell whether that is unique to the period of time when the data were collected, or whether it represents an enduring characteristic of parish leaders.

It does not surprise us that parish leaders in our Study — pastors, paid staff, and volunteers — were far more likely to focus their concerns on their own parish programs and parish performance than they were on cross-currents in the church at large. For, in the words of others who have focused our attention on parish life: "We are all products of the

particular." While Word and sacrament, tradition and vows unite parish leaders with the larger church, they are still responsible for the *local* community. And whether that local congregation of believers and doubters succeeds in being a Christian community depends in part on their leadership. They judge the diocese, but primarily they hold each other accountable. And despite all our generalizations in this report about the leadership, it is the vignettes we have told in the boxes that matters to "my" parish. We will continue these explorations in Report 10 addressed to parishes *as communities*.

[NOTE to Webmaster: The following six articles were inserted within sections of the above report. These should be linked when set-up for the Webpages.]

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### ***Bricks + Mortar + Timbers = More Than a Building***

Embarking on a building program is always a challenge to a parish. How the leadership, particularly the pastor, handles consultation and conflict leaves a lasting impact on parishioners. These two small-town parishes had very different experiences.

Fr. Joe of St. Mary's is described by his parishioners as a "live wire." He is white; most of his parishioners are black. There is a white parish in town but it has little to do with the parishioners of St. Mary's. It resents the forceful leadership he provides in the consolidated Catholic school, and it rejects St. Mary's offers of hospitality. Some white Catholics, embarrassed by the bigotry of their parish, have transferred to St. Mary's.

The St. Mary's parish council has two dozen people. They are proud of this parish, and feel that what they do, counts. Although they are poor people, some barely literate, and in a small parish, their new building signals their sense of common responsibility and their theology. The focal points of worship are evident but a feeling of community permeates the assembly. The people went into the forests, cut down trees, and richly crafted their altar, ambo, font, and furniture. They commissioned black artists to make other objects of liturgical art that express Vatican II theology. The black people of the area are so proud of this building that, Catholic or Protestant, they have donated time and money to it.

Empowerment came in the planning process. Fr. Joe acted more as a consultant, encouraging the parishioners to express what their house of prayer should be. They asked him for his viewpoints, too, for they respect him. He is no shrinking violet: his homilies are forceful expressions of both the Catholic understanding of life and our obligations as co-creators of the world God made. No solace. All challenge. Being God's own means being called to a lot of work. The religious education classes are deadly serious matters and there is no shortage of teachers or students. There is also no shortage of volunteers for both works of mercy and political witness. And the parishioners enjoy the fellowship of church dinners. Both Fr. Joe and the Gospel he preaches and lives told these people they are somebodies. They find dignity in their *common* efforts. Their building is *theirs*. But

they worry what will happen when Fr. Joe has to leave their parish; in the words of one lay leader, "He helped us find out who we are, but will some other priest take that away from us?" The supply of Fr. Joe's is terribly small, they say.

Fr. Ben had an assignment from the bishop: sell the old church at St. Martin's, build a new one, and raise the money to pay the debt quickly. He did it. Fast. Fr. Ben is a remarkable entrepreneur. He has good contacts. He likes these assignments.

Fr. Ben likes his people, too. He has done so much for them. But he sits in the rectory for days on end without anyone visiting him. He is lonely. He can't understand it. He sold the old building within weeks after his arrival; the new building. . .and now the debt is minimal. He told the ladies of the parish who stuffed fundraising letters: "I will raise this money in no time." They thought they were wasting their time. But Fr. Ben did it! He is really an administrator, the leaders say.

The leaders aren't quite sure what they are supposed to do. All but one are volunteers. There is no money for more staff. The religious education director tries to figure diplomatic ways to get funds for materials. The music director is identified by other leaders as an obstacle to congregational singing. The ladies' group does whatever Fr. Ben assigns and they stay very active. But they say there is only one way — Fr. Ben's way. And the women say, "You work *for* him, because he never lets anybody work with him."

That is the way the leaders presume it is supposed to be. One mused: "When we say the Our Father, we know who we are talking about." They have had a lot of them in recent years at St. Martin's. They are to be loved, honored, and obeyed. The parishioners say they need to find each pastor's particular gift — Fr. Ben's is fund-raising and administration.

The leaders say that when they try to take more initiative, he seems to pull back and attaches less importance to the activity. The parish council chair say: "He just isn't a spiritual leader. But we will adjust to him. If the past is any predictor, there will be a new one soon."

When he sold the old church Fr. Ben sold many items of furniture or equipment which people had made or donated for the old church. He used the money to outfit the new church with items *he* chose. But he gave the people ownership of the new items — he let them donate additional money for them and used plaques to recognize the donations.

Fr. Ben built the church building. He is lonely.

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### ***The Lay Parish***

Some rural or small-town parishes are isolated, quite small, and experience frequent turnover of pastors. The supply of priests in their diocese is insufficient to cover

both the larger and smaller parishes. During the reassignment process, there will often be several months without a resident priest. Quite commonly, a circuit-riding priest will serve three or more of these parishes or missions. The people want to keep their parish. How do they cope with the infrequent presence of a pastor? These three parishes developed such vital lay leadership that the presence of a priest is viewed as either a burden, redundant, or an enjoyable luxury.

St. John's has a history of high turnover, dating into the late nineteenth century. A high proportion of the turnovers were problematic — alcohol, nervous breakdown, sexual orientation, departures from canon law, or whatever. Turnover has continued up to current times: in the last dozen years there have been ten pastors. Some of the people muse that their parish is under a curse. Others resentfully say it is the dumping grounds for priests who fouled up elsewhere. A few years back, a resident deacon and some lay persons took control of the situation. During one of the priestless transitions, the deacon organized a parish council with full decision-making powers, pulled together a wide range of committees that coordinate monthly, seasonal, and annual events. All report to the council. A parish assembly, a kind of committee of the whole, reflects on progress and sets goals periodically. In the interim, the committees and the council run the parish, especially through the leadership of the deacon and his wife.

Some activities are very vital in the community: family-based religious education, Catholic Church Women, the singles club, a prayer chain, the parish picnic, Cursillo and Marriage Encounter. Masses celebrate the community life vigorously. But the pastor, even as presider, is often not well integrated into *their* Mass.

There is no question that the atmosphere is thick between the parish leaders and the most recent pastor. He says St. John's is the worst assignment in the diocese, and feels totally isolated from the people. (His perceptions of their religious values and parish priorities are the most inaccurate of any of our 36 pastors.)

In recent months, he has suspended meetings of the parish council and took control of all financial records. They claim he will not allow them access to the books. The parish council, however, is still holding meetings to which he is not invited. While they do not know the financial situation of the parish and how this affects their planning, they still coordinate parish committees through the council. Communication is difficult because the pastor feels a lay council is an illegitimate body in a Catholic parish.

There is also some tension between the established leaders and aspiring leaders. Newcomers have noted the participatory nature of St. John's and want a share of the action. The established leaders jokingly call themselves a clique, recognize some of their exclusivity, but trace it to what they have been through together. They want to make sure that never again does the laity live at the mercy of the diocese. Their parish will be theirs.

Some leaders expressed the concern that the vitality of their parish may be its own undoing: since the diocese sees St. John's surviving every pastor assigned, it may as well

continue to assign basket cases. One priest in the last ten was greatly respected, however, but he was on his first assignment and the diocese had other plans for him.

Some leaders are embarrassed by the way they exclude Fr. Kleinkampf from decisions. Recently they have tried to talk over more matters with him and reach some accommodation. But it will be difficult. They perceive that, in his ecclesiology, the laity are the enemy.

Blessed Sacrament, another rural parish, has had no resident priest since the early 1970s. A circuit-rider comes to town to celebrate Mass and tend to parishioners' needs one day during the week and for one Mass on Sunday. Their little village has a tremendous booster spirit and a strong sense of ecumenism with the Methodist congregation, the only other church in town. A community service club takes the place of Knights of Columbus for the men, but the women do complain about the absence of male volunteers. There is no shortage of female volunteers; the women have organized the parish. Religious education boasts 100% of the young people; weekly and sometimes daily Bible study attracts the adults, especially women. The altar society takes care of social, janitorial, and outreach programs. A vigorous effort recruits high school students into parish responsibilities. Nearly all young people go off to college, but later come back to farm the family acreage. The parish has a remarkable mix of all ages in its leadership. And almost every family is married into another family.

The role of the priest at Blessed Sacrament is pretty much limited to sacramental functions. The entire milieu of the parish is one that encourages lay responsibility. A committee plans the liturgies. There is a large choir. When the circuit-rider cannot be present, the laity conduct a communion service and devotions. The people of the parish are grateful for their part-time priest, but if necessity forced it, they are confident they could survive with even more infrequent priestly services. Said one middle-aged liturgical leader with a twinkle in her eye: "When the Vatican decides to ordain women priests, I'll be here and I'll be ready."

Holy Redeemer parish, like St. John's, also has experienced high turnover of priests. It had developed little lay leadership outside the altar society. Parish vitality and enthusiasm had reached rock bottom in the early 1970s. Then in the mid-70s a pastor was assigned who encouraged charismatic prayer. Something happened to the people. While he didn't stay long, he left parishioners with a deep sense that they are the church and little will happen unless they do it. By the late 1970s, Holy Redeemer had a council and committee structure organized completely by the laity; they set goals, developed their budget and fund-raising procedures, and hired staff.

While charismatic prayer remains outside the regular liturgies, it is not identified as the principal source of vitality now. Rather, vitality comes from vigorous adult and children's religious education, social events, and ecumenical involvements in prayer, educational, and charitable activities. The other source of vitality is the rural culture: the

people have to depend on their *own* initiative in the face of a harsh environment, but they have also learned shared ownership and cooperation.

The current pastor is frequently gone from Holy Redeemer. He also serves at a distant mission, in the military service, and as an institutional chaplain. He finds the people a delight and encourages self-sustaining ministerial activity and self-governance. He says they are proving to the diocese that a little rural parish should not be closed

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### ***The No-Conflict Traditional Parish — Dead or Alive?***

In some small-town and small-city parishes, Vatican II never really happened. The Mass is in English and the celebrant faces the people, to be sure, but other elements of the celebration and parish life are about as they were in the 1930s. Our measures of leadership interactions produced very little conflict in these traditional parishes.

Our Lady's parish is an ethnic parish in an economically stagnant mill town. Her people are working-class. They have a strong work ethic and they give generously, within their means, when the parish has fund drives. The convent and school were closed long ago and there are few families with young children left.

The pastor admits to being conservative and tradition bound. He aims the Mass at people over 50 with an eighth-grade education. Liturgists describe it as a privatistic Mass, one that does not celebrate the community.

There is a leadership structure, but it is more or less a formalism. The pastor is critical of the parish council: "They are talkers not doers." But council members say they haven't received any instructions from the pastor about what they should be doing. He says he is very lonely now that the parish no longer has a second priest. He would have to talk with the parishioners more and that is not like talking with a priest. The parishioners respect him as a very holy man. He doesn't show much initiative, say people who occupy leadership positions, but a priest's job is to be holy, show the way to heaven, and motivate others to keep up the church building.

St. Mel's in the Sunbelt is served by an older pastor who really enjoys keeping books. He likes things orderly and finds meaning in housekeeping functions. He doesn't mix a whole lot with the parishioners and doesn't see why a lot of social activity is desirable. In his view, the Church is on a pilgrimage to the Father. He does visit the sick and offers communion to the dying. He has office hours 1/2 day each week when people can come talk to him, but people seldom come.

The parish once had an annual fair. He replaced it with a financial festival day and is proud of the fact that he raises just as much money. It was too much of a burden to call people and get them to serve on committees and work together. He feels it is better this way. He is very efficient about money.

The parish participates in a consolidated Catholic school. Young parents — and there are quite a few in town — can send their children to the school with reduced tuition, through their membership in St. Mel's. Some of these parents are active in school affairs but say they don't have the time for parish activities. Younger and older people who are interested in adult religious education and spiritual growth have to go to a neighboring parish for their program. They don't transfer membership elsewhere, though, because Father wants them to honor parish boundaries.

Liturgies are described as ill-prepared. The musicians say they are not sure what they will do until they do it. They claim it doesn't matter because the pastor never talks to them about the liturgies.

Many organizations, including a parish council, exist on paper. Even the traditional organizations — altar society, CYO, Knights of Columbus, Catholic Daughters of America — experience low turnout. People who hold leadership positions say there are many lapsed Catholics in the parish and mixed marriages among the young. Once in awhile they have talked about an evangelism program, but Father hasn't been very enthused so they haven't done anything yet. No one could think of any conflict that mattered at St. Mel's.

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### ***The Ethnic Transition — How Long Does It Take to Die and Be Reborn?***

St. Rita's is in the inner city of a large metropolis. It once had 5000 members, whites of European background. Now it numbers 150 members, mostly blacks, mostly converts. It is described as a matriarchal parish, with only 10% of the members male, and most of the lay leadership female. The pastor is assisted by a sister who serves as pastoral associate.

St. Rita's is still trying to recover from a shock in the early 1970s, when it had already become a black parish. The shock was not simply the ethnic and racial transition, but primarily, what the diocese and a pastor thought a black inner-city parish needed.

They decided to make St. Rita's an experimental parish for the diocese. The church building would serve as a community center for dances, social, and athletic events during the week, but would be used for Masses on Sunday. In the words of some present-day leaders, pews were removed and in their place came basketball hoops and dance-floor spangles. By the time the majority of parishioners were consulted, the physical transformation had occurred.

The church, in their views, had failed on two counts: (1) it had desecrated a holy place — Bas-relief mosaics and altars presided over dances, drinks, and drunks; and (2) the clergy, in the parish and beyond, had failed to consult with the black parishioners to

get their views on the functions of a church building in the black community. They felt powerless in a plantation system.

By the mid-70s a slow reconstruction of confidence and loyalty began. Black parishioners badgered the diocese to send a workshop leader to help them formulate long-term goals. A new pastor came. Important committees on spiritual and community development, outreach, and communications were created. Special groups of similarly situated people were formed (e.g., widows, victims of chronic illnesses). The pastor now had a functioning infrastructure to replace the apathy, anger, and powerlessness of a decade ago. He canvasses the ever-changing neighborhood looking for lost Catholics or possible converts.

The leadership structure that has emerged is fluid and would hardly be captured by an organization chart. Participation, even in the parish council, is sometimes sporadic. Not being predictable, not being taken for granted, some leaders say, is a way of showing the white community that spontaneity can accomplish as much as orderliness.

Either the pastor or the pastoral associate attends all meetings; they continue to view themselves as the orchestrators of the parish. Given the matriarchal nature of the parish, increasing responsibility devolves on the pastoral associate. They readily admit that they are sometimes swept along by an unpredictable tide, that the people have ways of communicating that baffle them, that they grow constantly just trying to keep up with the people. Yet, the people and their spontaneous leadership always seem to come through: for example, great care is taken by the pastor and appropriate leadership in planning each Mass but there is still room for a song leader to sweep the assembly into a cycle of devotions, or at a church supper where no one signs to bring a hot dish, everyone shows up with her favorite recipe.

In the face of much adversity, the leaders and parishioners at St. Rita's are beginning to show some self-confidence. They are loyal — even when they move far from the parish boundaries they find busfare back to Mass and parish activities. They aren't sure what the future will bring, but they will share it together. And, it will not have the rudeness of the streets of their city.

Church of the Assumption, a national parish in another city, is not so far along with its ethnic transition. Its members are virtually all of one European ethnic stock, but their neighborhood is changing; they are moving out and Hispanics are moving in. A new urban expressway coursed through the parish and bifurcated many streets.

The previous pastor, in the words of some leaders at Assumption, took a bunker mentality to all the change. First, he tried to move the church to another neighborhood but that split the leadership, a rather active group at the time. Failing that, he stayed for a time but had no contact with the newcomers. The school was apparently torched and the pastor blamed the Hispanics and their gangs. He was transferred.

The new pastor has not been at Assumption long but he is finding quiet ways to divest the image of his parish as a foreign force in the neighborhood. He talks with the Hispanic children as they play on the playground. He recently concelebrated a Mass in a nearby church where many Hispanic youths were confirmed. In short, some diplomatic feelers have been sent out to the new community.

But what of the old community? Once 4500 strong, it still has about 1000 members. The pastor is under no illusions about their openness to the newcomers. He characterizes them as "hard workers, hard drinkers, self-centered, and conservative." He surmises they would resist any liturgical change that would celebrate some Masses outside their native tongue or English in favor of Spanish: "He who loses his language loses his faith."

The parish has some organs for lay leadership, but people are not so involved now as they were when the proposal to move the church was discussed. Some have died; younger people are leaving the national church for the territorial parishes of their suburban neighborhoods. Some of the leaders admit they are between a rock and a hard place: they have always felt national parishes are essential for the preservation of the faith, but their world is no longer arranged the way it was. Most of them would prefer not to confront the question and they support Father so long as he does not raise it.

The diocese, they and their pastor feel, offers little help. They feel the Irish clergy have always forded it over their ethnic group; pastors of their nationality were never permitted to pursue advanced degrees, to get assignments outside their own ethnic parishes, or to move into diocesan leadership.

So far, the people in leadership positions respect their new pastor. He is very attentive to details, works hard, and does what a pastor of a national parish is supposed to do — but he hasn't made any radical proposals yet.

Church of the Assumption's dilemma remains: what is the national parish to do when the young folks are assimilated, many of the older folks move out of the neighborhood, and foreigners with a different language move in?

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### ***Different Models of Urban Organizational Complexity***

Many of the large urban parishes have organizational structures similar to the complex corporate, professional, or governmental organizations in which their parishioners work. Usually they have large paid staffs. Although not all have parish councils, all but two have consultative, planning, and policy review organizations that meet regularly. One parish that lacks such an organization is experiencing a difficult transition from a very dominant pastor to a pastoral team. The other is trying to find new life and let form follow function. In contrast to many of the pastors serving small-town

and rural parishes, most current pastors of our urban and suburban parishes have personality traits, based on the Myers-Briggs inventory, that lend themselves well to the complex parish structures they coordinate. Yet there is considerable diversity in organizational design. Four rather different models of complexity are illustrated here.

St. Peter's parish is on the economically prosperous fringe of a large city. It is relatively new, founded in the early 1960s. Its families are often transferred into the region and include many managers of national and transnational corporations. It started with four hundred families and a school building. The physical plant has continued to grow with a fully integrated set of buildings that reflect the many ministries offered at St. Peter's. Most recent is a large housing complex for the elderly which is seen as broadening the parish's ministries from the nuclear family to all ages.

Growth that reflects theological and cultural understanding is a central theme of the parish. Its instrument is *conversion* — not in the sense of an individual's decision for Christ, but through involvement in educational and spiritual programs and in small-group activities that minister to some need in the church or civil community. Presently, St. Peter's staff estimate that about 300 people are converted, and thus serve as the leadership pool for the parish's many ministries. Another 600 are regulars at Mass and occasional participants in other activities. And a final 600 to 900 are on the periphery, sitting in the rear half of the assembly at Mass and ignoring opportunities for involvement. An enabling model of ministry seeks to move all parishioners toward the first group.

The current pastor acts as a chief policy officer, broker, and motivator. No one doubts that he is in charge, not as an autocrat, but manning the desk where the buck stops. He delegates much authority to his large staff, parish council, and committee chairs. Paid personnel are selected both for special talents and an ecclesiology that places responsibility on the parishioners. In their respective domains, staff are like the pastor — policy officers, brokers, and motivators. They are held accountable for performance, and one criterion is their ability to involve parishioners in the common responsibilities. Father Eddie does not want this organizational model to degenerate into the replacement of credentialed priests with a set of credentialed nonpriests.

While this ecclesiology is attractive to upper middle-class, educated, post-Vatican II Catholics, implementation is never easy. Staff admit that parish council meetings involve too many didactic exchanges where staff members are lecturing lay volunteers on what the laity should be doing. On the other hand, many lay leaders take a personal, if not corporate, delight in goals met. For example, the finance committee chair thinks the "investment" in a professional music minister has paid off not only in the quality of music that the three choirs perform at Mass, but in the satisfaction that all people feel in participatory Masses. It is an investment in parish cohesion.

Cohesion has not always characterized St. Peter's. During the Vietnam era, several parishioners reportedly left because the pastor was too outspoken in his opposition to the war. Yet now the parish has a large and vigorous human concerns committee that helps

parishioners find opportunities to address issues of social justice. And the parish is deeply involved in refugee resettlement.

Generally the volunteer leadership is supportive of such involvements. Our data suggest there is grumbling among some of the laity: they hear too much about social justice, and too much money is going to the elderly housing project. Yet most of the same people express approval of the pastor and his model of the church. Some pass the blame to the diocese, by saying that their parish is okay but their bishop preaches too much social concern and expects it out of the parishes.

Another source for cohesion is the full integration of the school into the parish's organizational structure. The principal sits on both the parish council and two committees. Many active parishioners are involved in the school and home association, at the same time that they serve on other parish committees. In fact, when people get "converted" at St. Peter's through its religious education and spirituality programs, they typically take on three or four assignments. The web of interlocking involvements is so intricate that it is easy for parishioners to share ownership for large parts of the parish's programs, despite St. Peter's size and complexity.

Cohesion at St. Anthony of Padua, another large parish on the fringes of a city, derives from a different source: the kinds of people who live in the neighborhood and their almost political-machine-like block structure. St. Anthony's does not have a parish council; it has a 25-member appointed advisory board that consists of virtually all immediate past and present organizational leaders. It is not a policy-initiating group. The pastor, together with his several assistants and deacons, initiate all policy and administer all spiritual functions. It is still in many respects an old-time ethnic parish, led by many priests, religious for the schools, and now deacons. But the advisory board is not composed of "yes" men and women. Their ears are close to the people through the block network of communications. Like precinct captains, they report in, and like members of the party central committee they discuss vigorously the pros and cons of the initiatives proposed by the party leader. In this case, the pastor listens to his board of advisers because he respects their abilities.

The long-term pastor has a remarkable command of information about each dwelling unit in the parish, its residents, their occupations, their relatives, and so forth. In recent times he has learned that a computer can also store such information. Thus, he is often consulted as though he were a real estate clearinghouse. Many of the parish staff or committee chairs say that Msgr. Antonelli has referred most parish newcomers to their housing.

Detractors — are there are hardly none within the parish — charge that this is a racial steering system designed to maintain the parish's traditional ethnic base. Perhaps. That is the way this parish community maintains its identity. For those who are within, it is a caring, generous extended family. Life revolves around school athletics and plays, block parties and fairs, Sunday and daily Mass, and the sacramental preparation of children.

Catholics and non-Catholics alike are served by many of these activities, as well as St. Anthony's ministry to the sick.

Traditional organizations flourish — the Holy Name Society has 1000 members and the women's club has 1500. But only recently, through the efforts of younger associate pastors, has there been an initiative for adult education. The kind of liturgy planning that would encourage greater participation in the Mass and coordination among various liturgical leaders is also in its infancy. The Sunday celebration at St. Anthony's is characterized as "early post-Vatican II." There is little outreach outside the parish boundaries, apart from what individuals acting in their jobs downtown would do to minister to the world.

The parish's leaders seem to think that their leadership structures are well-suited to the parish community and will survive a change of pastors. To them, a parish council is somewhat formalistic when communication from the grass roots is so effective and the desire for change is not welling up from the parishioners. In short, this model seems to work.

A very different model is found at Corpus Christi parish, also on the fringes of a large city. It was founded about three decades ago in a rapidly growing section of the city, but its physical plant is all but swallowed in adjacent commercial and corporate development. Its parishioners, like St. Peter's, are the mobile families of the managers of corporate America. Because its parishioners drive in from nearby housing developments, Corpus Christi lacks the sense of neighborhood that characterizes St. Anthony's.

Pluralism defines Corpus Christi's parish programs and pluralism defines its leadership structure. The primary nodes in the structure are threefold: the pastor, the staff, and the finance committee; the secondary nodes are various long-term programs as well as midterm programs that spring up to meet new needs. Although there is a parish council, it functions more as a rubber stamp for professionally researched decisions reached elsewhere in this decentralized structure.

There is no question among the leadership that this structure is efficient and effective at solving problems. The parish is blessed with outstanding staff who take charge of their area of responsibility, mobilize lay assistance, and develop effective fund-raising techniques. The parish is doubly blessed by lay leaders who transfer their corporate financial skills to their work on the Corpus Christi finance committee. And the parish is triply blessed by a pastor who is an effective broker of organizational interests. Finally, the parish has exceptional professionals in the counseling and family services field who can respond to newly-identified needs.

What more could Corpus Christi ask for? The concern is that the sum of the parts, even when it is liturgically based, does not add up to a sense of community. The various units are like interest groups in an interest-politics model. The major leaders, so effective in their own areas, are sometimes competitors for the resource pie. The council members,

who respect each of these leaders so much, have not really developed the capacity to make hard decisions based on a set of parish priorities. And the large body of the laity is still waiting in the wings, the beneficiaries of a rich parish life at the same time they are "free riders."

Considerable energy was generated through parish renewal weekends a few years ago. That energy was directed initially at the parish building program. But the problem now is to transfer the parishioners' energies into long-term involvements in its program. Too much expertise, said one of the leaders, is both the blessing and the curse of a parish like Corpus Christi. The parishioners still have to learn to "be the church."

Queen of Peace parish also had a remarkable outpouring of energy a few years back, but it eschewed a complex, pluralistic, professional structure in favor of activities that would keep the energy flowing. Queen of Peace is a twenty-five-year-old parish in a middle- and upper-middle-class suburb. There is plenty of money in the parish. Its fifteen-year-old church building is architecturally striking. What is most striking about Queen of Peace is its current emphasis on renewal, education, evangelism, and prayer life.

Queen of Peace had started to settle into an affluent, spiritually satisfying parish. Some years back the parish council was dissolved for lack of interest. But a new "take-charge" pastor arrived, used the RENEW program to transform the whole parish, and won't let the flame die down.

Queen of Peace could afford a large paid staff of coordinators for this or that, but its staff is skeletal for a suburban parish — a pastor, an associate pastor, and a parish coordinator. It has no school. But what it does have is massive religious education for children, youth, and adults. The volunteer teachers are well trained. The teenagers, a visibly enthusiastic lot, are channeled into SEARCH and youth ministry. The teenagers practice personal evangelism in the schools and make house visits.

Their parents practice an evangelical, if somewhat pentecostal, style of religion. Although charismatic prayer is not a formal part of the Mass, it is encouraged by the pastor and surfaces in the devotions. Devotional services are long and, to a liturgist, resemble a liturgical smorgasbord of many faith traditions. But participants claim to find in the frequent devotions a genuine sense of prayer and peace. They also find the inspiration to proclaim the Gospel in the community.

The house of worship is devoid of distinctively Catholic liturgical art. The sense of gathering and welcome to strangers is generous. The devotional literature is from both Catholic and non-Catholic evangelical sources.

Not surprisingly, a parish on evangelical mission has little organizational superstructure. While its people's lives may be complex, the parish exists to empower the people to spread the Gospel. Queen of Peace does not have a parish council now. The staff members make decisions. When conflicts arise, they are approached through prayer

until consensus is reached. The central organizations are the RENEW program, liturgy, and religious education. Their committees or coordinators meet with staff members to review plans. Several other organizations exist —ladies sodality, men's groups, etc. —but they do not have fixed moorings in a leadership structure.

Queen of Peace is moving toward an expanded "staff" structure which will include the three staff members and the volunteers who lead the parish organizations and ministries. Their purpose is to coordinate activities better, to assess needs, and plan programs. Each member of the expanded staff, however, will remain directly accountable to the pastor.

What organizational direction Queen of Peace will eventually take is difficult to tell. At this point, spiritual renewal and evangelical outreach are the objects of attention; the school, social service, or social action ministries characteristic of many similarly-situated parishes are not within the renewing ministry of Queen of Peace. Some of the organizational leaders remain troubled that their pastor is not moving directly toward a parish council. They suspect he doesn't think lay-directed religious organizations will maintain their vitality; or that he regards parish councils as I bothersome structures. In a lengthy paragraph which we have paraphrased, a lay leader lays out the paradox: "Jesus | promised the gifts of the Spirit so that the disciples could lead the church. We are his disciples. We are sharing the I message with each other, but we aren't doing much leading yet."

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### ***The Dominant Pastor — But Then What?***

The "great man" approach to history focuses on the lasting impact a powerful person leaves on a community. The impact may be positive or perverse, suitable for a time but stagnant through time. Eventually, however, the great man passes on and the community must find itself. Some communities are prepared; others aren't. These two old suburban parishes illustrate two stages of the process.

Father O'Rourke ministered to St. Paul's parish community for three decades. The parish had existed for a century and has had other pastors with similar life spans. O'Rourke predated Vatican II and did ruffle to change his style of leadership in the years thereafter. All who recall him use the term "autocrat." The bishop said he had to establish a parish council. Fr. O'Rourke did — for one week. He introduced the liturgical changes he liked from Vatican II — but never taught parishioners why the new procedures were desirable. As his health declined, his longtime secretary made parish decisions. Through time, a director of religious education found ways to act as a nonthreatening intercessor on behalf of parishioners. It was ironic that these two women should take on such central roles in the policy process, since Fr. O'Rourke did not take well to women proposing or administering anything.

He died.

And a large suburban parish in a well-to-do suburban area found itself entering the 1980s with rattle staff, no lay identity, and no experience with self-governance. A brief transitional pastorate was followed by the present three-priest pastoral team. They recognize that it takes time to expand the instruments of self-governance but they are moving in that direction, sometimes carefully, sometimes a bit clumsily. They do not yet have a functioning parish council but that is developing.

In the interim, some important decisions had to be made. There seemed to be a need for a parish center, so the pastoral staff canvassed leaders of parish organizations and other key people to identify the priority needs of the parish. These organizational leaders seem happy with the products — not only what will be a well-designed addition to the physical plant, but experience with communication and goal-setting that is to be channeled into the new parish council.

The three priests seem to work effectively as a team, largely through what they describe as consensual decision-making, but the model does not yet embrace the larger paid staff and the volunteer committees that had mushroomed around staff functions. The liturgy committee, for example, seems to have broad planning powers but their plans do not seem to be well articulated in the music director's actions. The music director says that one or the other member of the ministry team will veto some of her ideas or the liturgy committee's plans, and some of the liturgy committee's plans make no musical or liturgical sense. No one yet seems to know who is accountable to whom. And joint liturgical efforts involving at least five agencies — religious education, liturgy, music, communion ministry, and ushers — appear to involve hopelessly byzantine efforts at coordination. No one wants the return to the autocrat; yet all are experiencing growing pains in moving toward shared responsibility. Considerable staff turnover is likely; with high hopes come higher frustrations.

St. Paul's parish has a difficult legacy to live down. Through patience, false starts, scaled-down hopes, and forgiveness, some of its leaders think it can work out its problems. Through the years, the laity have developed their skills with little blessing from above, both in parish organizations and in ecumenical ministries — education, youth, charity, and social action. It is yet unclear when these skills will come home in a structure like that of St. Peter's parish (see elsewhere).

Fr. Jensen is a "great man" nearing the end of his active ministry. Christ the King parish which he has led for nearly a quarter century is practically his "new creation." Christ the King had been there for years on the rural fringes of a city. In the 60s the young families of high-tech professionals moved into the area and the farmers soon found that their parish had changed. The two groups did not know how to deal with each other.

Enter Fr. Jensen. He sensed the future of the parish was with the high-tech types. Farmland was quickly swallowed in housing developments. He recognized that these mobile nuclear families had needs for religious education, liturgy, and a sense of

community integration to replace their sense of rootlessness. He disbanded nearly all the old organizations, through which the few farmers kept their "cliquish" control. He replaced them with new education, liturgical, and common interest groups. He insisted that every newcomer belong to at least one of these and cajoled the emerging group leaders to pursue the newcomers relentlessly until they joined a group. The parish grew; staff and new functions were added. Fr. Jensen insisted there would be no special collections — only a tithe, a predictable percent of income. The programs are many; the staff are outstanding; the budget approaches \$400,000; and the people keep participating.

*Fr. Jensen is in charge.* The budget is not really a budget because it is not attached to programs; the staff and groups come to Fr. Jensen, make a carefully researched and articulated case for funds, and he assigns the money. So far the manna has continued to materialize.

Fr. Jensen delegates to staff most decisions about program administration and expenditures. A large parish council acts as a board of directors, reviewing current programs and suggesting long-range directions. Several council members expressed reservations about their organizational model. It cuts red tape. Bureaucracy does not interfere with ministry. But more routinized channels for upward communication are needed.

Staff and volunteer leaders seem reasonably satisfied with this benevolent dictatorship by the "chairman of the board and chief operating officer." They think it works for now. But they say it works because it serves a philosophically homogeneous parish. In the words of Robert Bellah and associates, it is a "lifestyle enclave" of people with similar needs and similar notions of the church. To outsiders it appears splendid — everything that a post-Vatican II parish should be liturgically, educationally, as a community of common identity. But then one asks: how does Prince of Peace minister to marginal members, the ones who don't look like mirror images of the faithful? How does Prince of Peace interact with other Catholic parishes or people with other visions of the church? Its social awareness groups show deep concern for justice — as a matter of principle — but do they show love to persons in need, those who are different? Are they a country club or a church? These are questions that trouble some leaders.

The other question that troubles leaders is: how does a young homogeneous parish that was called into existence by Fr. Jensen survive his passing, along with their own graying? They are not yet confident how deep their sense of community is; it is untested by adversity. Nor are they certain they have the instruments of self-governance that can "routinize charisma." They will probably find out over the next decade.

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