A Broad Assessment of Your Parish

This includes:

1. The Shape of the Parish exercise on page 123 of *Fill All Things*. In completing the exercise, it might be helpful to review the factors shown in “Assessing the Shape,” pages 152-154 of *Fill All Things*.
2. An assessment of your parish’s spiritual practices using the IYHS Model
3. The Leadership Assessment (note – Martin Smith’s paper on Pastoral Leadership Today is in the reading packet

Please fill them out. Keep a copy for yourself to bring and send a copy to all the other participants, Bob, and Michelle. ***Send no later than Tuesday January 23, 2018. Please hold all this material in confidence.***

You should also come knowing some of the basic facts about your parish in case they prove relevant to the work – Average Sunday Attendance, trends on ASA, basic demographics of your region, parish financial health. No need to send any of that in advance.

# The Shape of the Parish: An Exercise

Following is an exercise for assessing your parish. My experience is that it provides the base you will need to understand and use the model. Please follow the steps below:

1. Using the circles below, in circle #2 put your parish's average adult Sunday attendance. Be sure to include all acts of corporate worship from Saturday evening through Sunday evening. For the most part these are the people you see frequently and regularly. They may range from weekly to every few weeks in their participation in the Eucharist.
2. In circle #3, first put the parish’s adult attendance at Christmas or Easter.
* Then subtract the number you have placed in circle #2. Put the result in circle #3
* This makes up those people who relate to the church primarily through the major holidays; also possibly through family occasions such as baptisms, weddings and burials.
1. For circle #4, you will not place a number here. Instead, make a few specific notes of ways in which people relate to the parish but don't ever attend the regular corporate worship of the church. It may be people who are connected through family who are members or because they are part of a group that makes use of the property or are in some way served by the parish. You may be able to name some of these people.
2. In circle #1, write the number of those that you see as having a deep, mature faith & practice.
3. Then subtract that number from what you have in circle #2. Place that number in circle # 2 in place of the earlier number.

Assessing the Parish’s Spiritual Practices

**Your Spiritual Discipline**—I have a spiritual disciple grounded in the Church’s tradition

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  No |  |  | Very much so |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**Overall**

**1. The degree of awareness** of spiritual practices **and proficiency** among regular attendees (circle one)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No idea | 15% of the adult average Sunday attendees are aware of the core spiritual practices and few are proficient | 40% of the adult average Sunday attendees are aware of the core spiritual practices and 5% are proficient | 80% of the adult average Sunday attendees are aware of the core spiritual practices and 30% are proficient |

**Sunday Eucharist[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**2. Members’ ability to participate**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Most are frequently confused and uncertain about how to participate.  |  |  | A critical mass of people “flow” with it. Mostly don’t need a Prayer Book or leaflet. |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**3. Congregation or audience**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| We are like an audience. We wait for instructions and prompting before participating. |  |  | We are a congregation—competent in the liturgy. There are no instructions during the Eucharist. |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**4.** **Competence of liturgical assistants**—We effectively equip those with a special role in the celebration, e.g., cantor, lector, ministers of the altar, acolyte.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| We do a poor job  |  |  | Done well |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**5. Liturgical presence of the presiding priest**—Asacramental presence. The person and the role are held together. The priest’s personality doesn’t overwhelm the role; the role doesn’t make the personality disappear. Graceful, attentive.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Awful  |  |  |  Done well |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**6.** **The liturgy is usually well done.** It has the structure, climate and rhythm of Apostolic faith. It requires some competence. It has the potential to catch people up in something beyond themselves; to feed wonder and awe. The congregation knows how to participate without prompting.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not at all |  |  |  Very much so |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**7.** The **preaching** usually has a good pace, style, sense of ease, and length. It connects the tradition with life. There is an authenticity about the preacher and what is said.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not at all |  |  |  Very much so |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**8.** The **Liturgical Space** is graceful, not cluttered; is beautiful; fits the congregation’s size and style of worship. Those serving at the altar can move about without awkwardness.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not at all |  |  |  Very much so |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**9.** The Holy Eucharist is celebrated on **enough occasions**, at times each week as to allow people with a variety of schedules to find one that might serve as their weekly spiritual practice.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not at all |  |  |  Very much so |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**Participating in the Daily Prayers of the Church**

**10.** The parish offers a **public form of the Daily Office**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Never | Sporadically or at during some season(s) of the church year | A few days each week | Most days of the week |

**11.** Those **participating in officiating** at the parish’s public offering of the Daily Office are:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| There is no public offering of the Office |  |  | Both clergy and lay members officiate on a regular basis |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**12.** The **parish equips and supports** parishioners in saying the Daily Prayer of the Church on their own in the course of daily life by offering training and guidance.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not at all |  |  | Regular and frequent training and guidance are provided |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**13.** 15 – 20% of those regularly attending a weekly Eucharist **say the Office in some form.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Few or none in the parish say the Office |  |  | At least that many |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**Disciplined ways of reflecting**

**14.** The **parish provides members assistance** in identifying and maintaining ways of being reflective.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not at all |  |  |  Regularly |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**15.** The parish **engages in reflective processes**, ways of listening to and learning from its own life as a community.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not at all |  |  | Regularly |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**16.** The parish’s reflective processes have helped it **become more flexible and adaptive.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not at all |  |  | Very much so |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**Participating in the parish community**

**17. This is a parish community** in which people are free to be themselves; to speak and listen fully and authentically. In which differences are accepted (we can fight with those we love). In which we can make decisions and solve the problems we face.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not at all |  |  | Very much so |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**18. Connection with people.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Most don’t know anyone well |  |  | Regular attendees usually know a number of people and have a few friends in the parish |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**19. Participation in parish social life** is easy for members to engage. The climate is one of acceptance whether you participate or not.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not at all |  |  | Very much so |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**Service**

**20. Service in Daily Life** (within our friendships, families, work, and civic life):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Few have a clear understanding of how they serve in daily life |  |  | Most regular attendees are very clear about service in daily life |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**21. As a parish community** we have a form of serving beyond the parish’s needs that is **sustainable and in proportion** to what we can manage.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| We are overwhelmed by it |  |  | It’s easily managed |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**22.** Our parish’s corporate service ministry **fits our gifts** as a parish.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not a fit |  |  | Fits us |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**The Process of Change**

The parish can also model an approach to change or experimentation and learning from experience. It can teach methods that allow people to face change

**23. An adult foundations course** is offered regularly and frequently in the parish.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Never |  |  | Regular & frequent  |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

**24.** The parish has a climate and an approach to the spiritual life that encourages **experimentation *and* the engagement** of the tradition.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not the case |  |  | Very much so |
|  1 |  2 |  3 |  4 |  5 |

|  |
| --- |
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# Leadership Assessment

The first section of this assessment is based on Julia Gatta’s *The Nearness of God*. The second section uses a quote from Peter Steinke’s *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times* to help you consider some elements of emotional intelligence and change theory and method.

SECTION ONE

1. Pastoral Oversight

Gatta writes about the shepherding metaphor of the Scriptures. How it assumes “intimate mutual knowledge between shepherd and sheep: the shepherd knows the sheep.” And how the “sheep, in turn, recognize the shepherd’s voice, follow his lead, and find true pasture and even eternal life with him”” [p. 88] Later she writes, “we usually feel a firmer, more integrated sense of vocation when distinctly priestly ministries are grounded in the regular pastoral oversight of a given congregation.” [p. 92] “To exercise oversight in our communities, we will have to know our parishioners well. Gaining this knowledge takes a long time, and we never really come to the end of it.” [p. 104]

She notes that the priest is responsible for the oversight, the tending, of the whole congregation. [Note this is the same idea as seen in Martin Smith’s *Pastoral Leadership Today* – see Reading Packet]. She writes of “the real danger of the popular understanding of the good shepherd, especially for pastors, is to lose sight of the flock as a whole.” “Oversight means, literally, ‘seeing over,’ scanning the wider horizons, looking beyond the immediate; it involves getting and maintaining the big picture.” [p. 90]

1) Knowing the congregation

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I don’t know people very well. I seem to frequently misunderstand people in the parish—what they care about, what they are willing to do. |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

 |  |  |  |  | I know the people of the parish—what they care about, where they are in their spiritual journey (including as seen in the Shape of the Parish model), [Note: It doesn’t matter how this understanding is gained, whether through regular visiting, parish gatherings and programs, or in spiritual guidance.] |

Comments:

2) The congregation following my lead

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I don’t seem to get heard in the congregation. I often feel misunderstood and/or discounted. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Members take me seriously when I propose a direction; it’s obvious that they are listening and considering what I say. I feel respected as a leader. |

Comments:

3) My focus #1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I have a tendency to get focused on individuals in some form of difficulty, those who are angry or upset with me, or are straying, and/or those chronically critical.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I stay focused on the congregation as a whole. Tending to those experiencing some form of distress is done within that broader task. |

Comments:

4) My focus #2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I tend to denigrate or neglect the hard work of oversight in favor of more emotionally satisfying one-to-one pastoral care. (p. 90) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I maintain an adequate focus on the general oversight and tending of the congregation. |

Comments:

2. Pastoral Oversight and Eucharistic Presidency

Gatta quotes Austin Farrer, saying the priest, “who bears the Sacrament is the sacrament himself; he is, one might almost say, himself a walking sacrament.” “The image of a walking sacrament also illuminates the expectation most people entertain of finding in their priest—the baptismal holiness to which they are themselves called.” [pp. 91 – 92]

1) Perceptions – my own (as priest)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I see the administrative and leadership work of the priest as a distraction from my “spiritual” duties. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I see the administrative and leadership work of the priest as an essential expression of my “spiritual” duties. |

Comments:

2) Perceptions – in the parish

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| There’s a strong perception in the parish “that the laity exist to carry on the day to day ministry if the church” – in the sense of the administration, leading the vestry and its meetings, overseeing the well being of the whole. The priest is there to do the “magic.” (Though most would find other words to say it.)  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Those at the center of the parish’s life seem to intuitively grasp a relationship between the presiding of the priest in the congregation’s life and the priest presiding in the Eucharist. |

Comments:

3) Presiding at the Eucharist

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I am uncomfortable in the presiding role. I either withdraw from it (in hesitation and uncertainty) or I use it to overwhelm the congregation (by speaking too loudly and functioning as something of a cheerleader)  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I am at ease in the presiding role. I establish the rhythm and pace of the liturgy. I see to it that there is a calm and grounded climate before beginning and during the celebration. |

Comments:

4) Presiding in the parish community

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I seem to have an inflexible leadership style (e.g., I want everything to be participatory or I want to make all the important decisions). I lack skills for designing and facilitating meetings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I am able to move among leadership styles with ease. I have the skills needed to design and facilitate an effective meeting. |

Comments:

3. Benedictine Models of Leadership

Gatta suggests that it may prove useful to ponder the role of the abbot in the Benedictine community as a way of illuminating the role of the priest in charge of a parish church. She writes, “The Benedictine abbot is suppose to lead and govern his community, but Benedict insists that he wield his authority moderately, always seeking the counsel of his brothers.” “We see in the Rule the ideal blending together of the charismatic authority of personal holiness with the stable authority of ecclesiastical office.” [p. 95] The Benedictine style of leadership seeks consensus through a commonly held vision of the Christian life. Consensus can take a long time to achieve.” [p. 96]

1) Taking counsel with the community

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I tend to take counsel with the community *too little* resulting in reactions and responses such as frustration, anger, that I’m cutting them out, that I don’t trust them; passivity, informal lobbying. |  | I seem to get the balance about right. |  | I tend to take counsel with the community *too often* resulting in reactions and responses such as being inundated, that their time isn’t valued, that I’m avoiding responsibility, and that I don’t trust myself; feeling burdened, scattered, no sense of grounding and direction. |
|  1 | 2 |  3 | 4 |  5 |

Comments:

2) Methods

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I don’t have the skills and methods necessary to involve the community in decision-making except in the most formal and traditional of ways. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I have adequate skills for involving the community in decision-making.  |

Comments:

3) The spirit in which I take counsel

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I am really engaged in a facade of collaboration. I use the various methods to “ensure the acceptance of (my) own view.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I enter into the process with “genuine humility and self effacement” … an openness of ‘heart and mind to the mysterious action of God. [p. 96] |

Comments:

4. Administration as Pastoral Care

Gatta assumes that “thoughtfully executed parish administration supplies the harmony, efficiency, and beauty in which the defining ministries of the church can then occur.” [p. 99] She quotes Louis Weeks: “Congregations that effectively handle administrative work often have a transformed understanding of it. They don’t do administration *instead* of pastoral care; they engage in church administration *as* pastoral care.” [p. 100] These mundane tasks require a certain kind of reflective skill to perceive how grace might be operating in them; pastors need to cultivate their capacity to *see*.” [p. 100]

1) Overall stance

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I tend to get caught up in the details of administration. It takes a lot of my time as I micro manage things. |  | I tend to see how to do parish administration so it “supplies the harmony, efficiency, and beauty in which the defining ministries of the church can then occur.” |  | I tend to avoid parish administration. I see it as interfering with my real pastoral and spiritual responsibilities. |
|  1 | 2  |  3 | 4 |  5 |

Comments:

2) Under and over managing

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I tend to under manage things. I avoid accepting responsibility. I try to “delegate” when it’s really an excuse to escape work I don’t like. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I tend to over manage things. I have a perfectionist stance that doesn’t allow others adequate space to exercise responsibility. |

Comments:

3) Wisdom and skill for collaboration (see *Management of Organizational Behavior*, Hersey, Blanchard, Johnson; also *Fill All Things*, Gallagher, pp.151 – 1540

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I don’t have the skills needed for effective “situational leadership.” I don’t know how to assess the existing willingness and competence of individuals or groups and to provide the appropriate direction based on that assessment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I do have the skills needed for effective “situational leadership.” I effectively assess the existing willingness and competence of individuals or groups and provide the appropriate direction based on that assessment. |

Comments:

4) Staying grounded and integrated

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I tend to allow the use of my time to be driven by the expectations and demands of parish busy work. I seem to not have adequate time for silence, prayer, study and relationships. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I manage the “demand system” effectively scheduling time for silence, prayer, study and relationships. |

Comments:

SECTION TWO

The author Peter Steinke believes that “the leader is always in a position to influence the emotional field.” (p 68, *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times*). He assumes that the influence is demonstrated through “the leader’s being (demeanor, spirit, and poise),” and through “the leader’s thoughtful functioning”.

1. In each area, assess both yourself and how parish leaders in general function.

 Self = S

 Parish leaders in general = PL

a. Being calm in a crisis (reflection, thoughtful action in the face of one’s own anxiety)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Very poor at this |  |  |  | Excellent at this |

b. Having focus when the situation is bewildering. This is related to understanding the primary task of a parish church, having clarity about direction, and remaining focused on that direction, even when solutions are not clear. Requires having reliable methods for gathering data and reflecting carefully on the current situation, in light of parish purpose.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Very poor at this |  |  |  | Excellent at this |

c. Challenging in the face of parish stagnancy (taking into account readiness—see “Assessing Readiness,” *Fill All Things*, pgs 152-154). May involve effective listening processes, gathering and sharing valid and useful data (i.e., information that can be publicly validated and that is relevant to the group and the circumstances), and initiating healthy practices under the priest’s control, such as offering patterned public worship, introducing and enforcing meeting norms, etc.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Very poor at this |  |  |  | Excellent at this |

d. Helping the parish engage needed change when faced with new situations (rather than focusing on tranquility, unity, not upsetting people). See Change Formula description. Requires adequate Vision for what is possible, consistent with parish purpose; methods for confirming and sharing or generating Dissatisfaction with the current situation (see item (c), above); willingness to take First Steps toward the change, and skill with how to do so, as well as skill in knowing what those First Steps should be

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Very poor at this |  |  |  | Excellent at this |

2. What are examples of a behavior or stance used in your parish, including by you, *in place of* being calm, focused, challenging, change oriented? These would be examples of a patterned attempt to address the circumstance in ways other than what Steinke suggests.

Crisis:

Bewildering:

Stagnancy:

New situations:

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1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)