CHANNELING PROCESS: Parish Church Use

The goal in this process is to gather information on the "rubs" people are experiencing in the parish, e.g., concerns, new ideas for improvements, etc. The process, if done regularly and frequently, will help keep issues in a process planned change and renegotiation. It is also designed to help the parish's leadership stay in touch with the system.

There are two primary ways that most parishes can make productive use of a Channeling Process:
1. As part of a parish conference or community meeting – a yearly gathering, open to all members; use the process to allow comments on any aspect of parish life.
2. The Vestry and Rector do the process at least once each year and more frequently if needed. It's also useful when done 5 or 6 months after #1

The Process
1. On newsprint, gather the team's "rubs" in two columns

date CONCERNS	WISHES FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Record all comments. Use the speaker's words.

2. Have the group prioritize items in each column.

Give each person one vote for every 3 or 4 items in a column. Members of the team go up to the newsprint to place a check mark showing their votes.

Do not "group" items that seem alike until after the voting. A slight difference in wording may be important to some people.

3. On another sheet of newsprint, list the priority items and indicate a follow-up action for each.

date PRIORITY ITEMS	FOLLOW UP

The follow up action listed would be along the following lines:
*   A person (or special team) agreeing to do some work on the issue and report back to the whole group.
*   A person (or special team) being authorized to take action as they see fit.
*   Agreement to consider the issue at a future meeting the team for problem solving or strategy development.
*   Items could be referred to the vestry, a member of staff or another group.

Variations

*   The use of a broad system assessment process may help the Channeling Process cover a broad field while also focusing on critical elements of the parish system.
*   Focus the process on a specific area of parish life, e.g., spiritual formation, adult formation, liturgy.

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