

St. Augustine's Church, Oakland
Leadership and Vestry Retreat
February 25 – 26, 2011
Working Packet

*I don't know whether the bird you are holding is dead or alive,
but what I do know is that it is in your hands. It is in your
hands.* Toni Morrison

*Give them an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage
to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you,
and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works.*
The Book of Common Prayer

Clearly we must work hard.
Saint Teresa of Avila

I will trust in the Lord and not be afraid
Isaiah 12:2

Objectives

1. Assess the state of the parish.
 - Life Cycle, Key Factors, Size
 - Review parish trends
 - Demographic trends
2. Learn and use a few methods for life in Community
 - Better communication/listening; managing disagreement
3. Explore ways in which we can revitalize the parish through spiritual practices and ways of managing change
4. Understand what is likely to be required of the parish if it is to turn things around
 - Look at the role Shaping the Parish can play in this
5. Understand and explore the options available
 - Both the standard options and the specific choices we face

Schedule

Friday

6:00	Gather – Dinner
7:00	Evening Prayer – Bob
7:15 – 9:00	Working session

Saturday

7:30 – 8:30	Breakfast, walks
8:30	Morning Prayer - Michelle
8:45	Working session
12:00 – 1:30	Lunch, walk, relax
1:30	Mid day Prayers – Michelle
	Working session
4:30	Blessing by Fr. Williams and close

Michelle and I will facilitate everything including the worship. We want you to focus on your time with one another and the work to be done.

Ways of working together

1. Listen to one another with respect. Use communication skills that help listening and reduce tensions.
2. When dealing with difficult or important issues waiting for everyone to be present.
3. Be willing to openly try new methods and explore one another's ideas while together.

Friday Evening Prayer

Officiant O God, make speed to save us.

People O Lord, make haste to help us.

Officiant and People

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Except in Lent, add Alleluia.

O Gracious Light *Phos hilaron*

O gracious Light,
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the vesper light,
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,
O Son of God, O Giver of life,
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

Psalm

141 Domine, clamavi

¹ O LORD, I call to you; come to me quickly; *
hear my voice when I cry to you.

² Let my prayer be set forth in your sight as incense, *
the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

³ Set a watch before my mouth, O LORD,
and guard the door of my lips; *
let not my heart incline to any evil thing.

⁴ Let me not be occupied in wickedness with evildoers, *
nor eat of their choice foods.

⁵ Let the righteous smite me in friendly rebuke;
let not the oil of the unrighteous anoint my head; *
for my prayer is continually against their wicked deeds.

⁶ Let their rulers be overthrown in stony places, *
that they may know my words are true.

⁷ As when a plowman turns over the earth in furrows, *
let their bones be scattered at the mouth of the grave.
⁸ But my eyes are turned to you, Lord GOD; *
in you I take refuge; do not strip me of my life.
⁹ Protect me from the snare which they have laid for me *
and from the traps of the evildoers.
¹⁰ Let the wicked fall into their own nets, *
while I myself escape.

At the end of the Psalm is said

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:**
as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen

Reading

Matthew 5:38-4

The Prayers

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Officiant Let us pray.

Officiant and People

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

That this evening may be holy, good, and peaceful,
We entreat you, O Lord.

That your holy angels may lead us in paths of peace and goodwill,
We entreat you, O Lord.

That we may be pardoned and forgiven for our sins and offenses,

We entreat you, O Lord.

That there may be peace to your Church and to the whole world,
We entreat you, O Lord.

That we may depart this life in your faith and fear, and not be condemned before the great judgment seat of Christ,
We entreat you, O Lord.

That we may be bound together by your Holy Spirit in the communion of [____ and] all your saints, entrusting one another and all our life to Christ,
We entreat you, O Lord.

Collects

Invite Intercessions & Thanksgivings

Together

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

Then may be said

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

The Officiant

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore.
Amen. 2 Corinthians 13:14

Saturday Morning Prayer

Officiant Lord, open our lips.
People And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Officiant and People

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. *Amen.*

Except in Lent, add Alleluia.

The Psalm

Psalm 137:1-6 *Super flumina*

- ¹ By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, *
when we remembered you, O Zion.
- ² As for our harps, we hung them up *
on the trees in the midst of that land.
- ³ For those who led us away captive asked us for a song,
and our oppressors called for mirth: *
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion."
- ⁴ How shall we sing the LORD'S song *
upon an alien soil?
- ⁵ If I forget you, O Jerusalem, *
let my right hand forget its skill.
- ⁶ Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth
if I do not remember you, *
if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy.

At the end of the Psalms is sung or said

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen

Reading

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:10

The Prayers

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Officiant Let us pray.

Officiant and People

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Suffrages

V. Show us your mercy, O Lord;
R. And grant us your salvation.
V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;
R. Let your people sing with joy.
V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;
R. For only in you can we live in safety.
V. Lord, keep this nation under your care;
R. And guide us in the way of justice and truth.
V. Let your way be known upon earth;
R. Your saving health among all nations.
V. Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
R. Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.
V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;
R. And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

Collects

Invite Intercessions & Thanksgivings

The General Thanksgiving

Together

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to your service,
and by walking before you

in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. *Amen.*

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

The Officiant

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and
the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore.
Amen. 2 Corinthians 13:14

Saturday Noon Prayers

O God, make speed to save us. P. 103
O Lord, make haste to help us.

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:**
as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen

Psalm 104 *Benedic, anima mea*

- ²⁸ All of them look to you *
to give them their food in due season.
- ²⁹ You give it to them; they gather it; *
you open your hand, and they are filled with good things.
- ³⁰ You hide your face, and they are terrified; *
you take away their breath,
and they die and return to their dust.
- ³¹ You send forth your Spirit, and they are created; *
and so you renew the face of the earth.
- ³² May the glory of the LORD endure for ever; *
may the LORD rejoice in all his works.
- ³³ He looks at the earth and it trembles; *
he touches the mountains and they smoke.
- ³⁴ I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; *
I will praise my God while I have my being.

³⁵ May these words of mine please him; *
I will rejoice in the LORD.

³⁶ Let sinners be consumed out of the earth, *
and the wicked be no more.

³⁷ Bless the LORD, O my soul. *
Hallelujah!

At the end of the Psalm is said
*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:**
as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen

Reading

Matthew 6:1-6

The Prayers

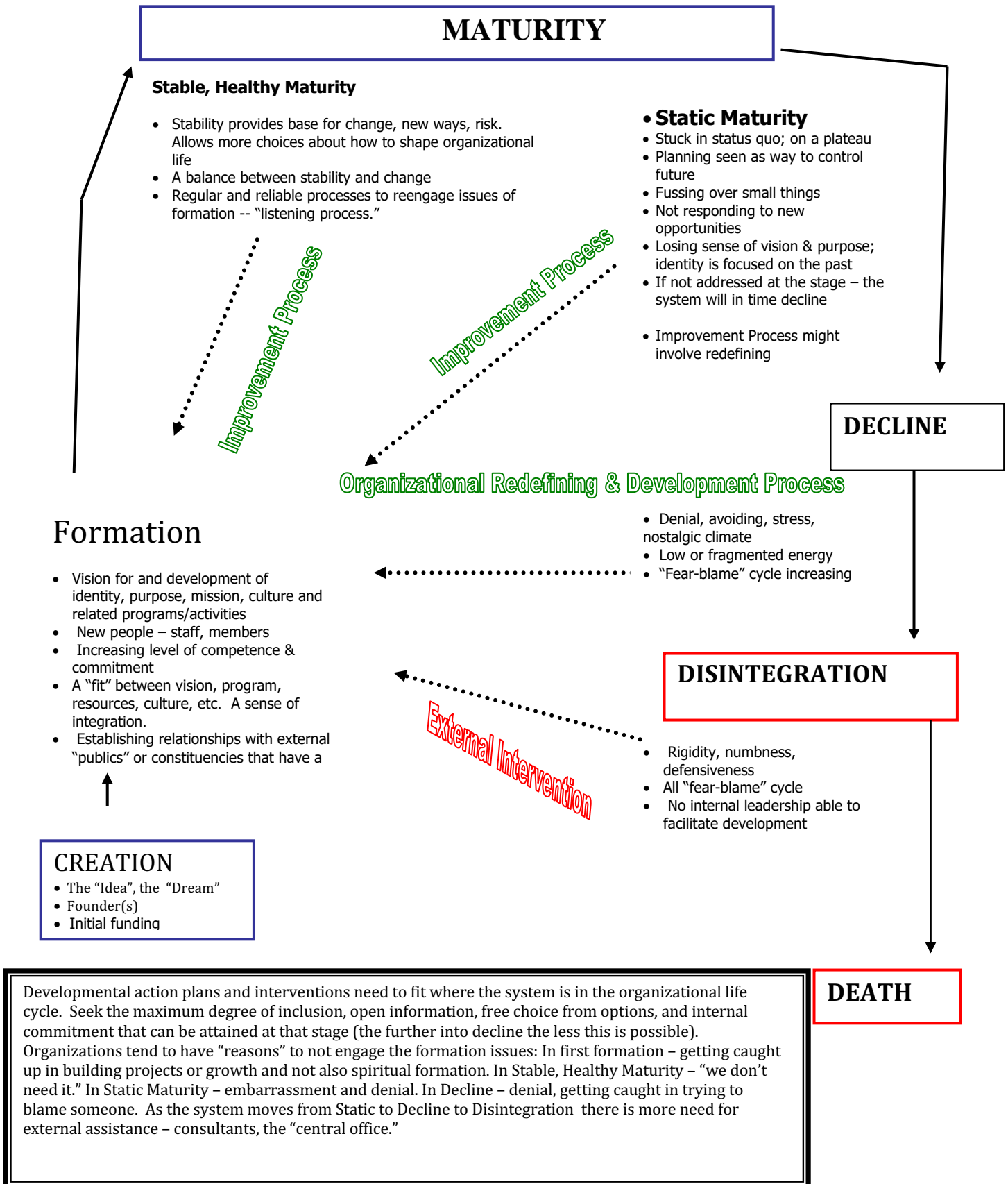
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy

Lord's Prayer; Collects

Intercessions are invited

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE CYCLE



Some Key Factors

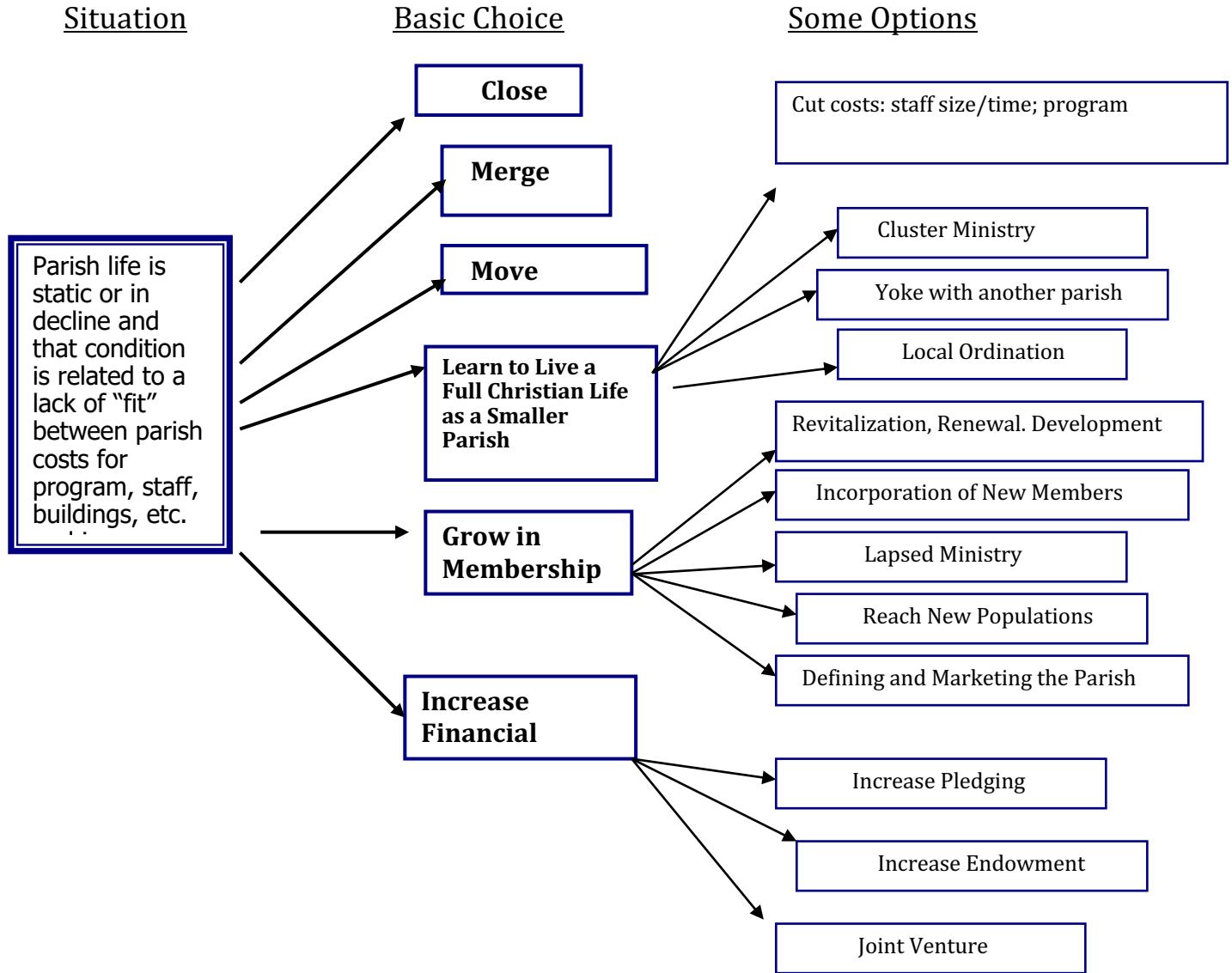
Please assess your parish using these factors:

	Low				High
1. Overall satisfaction with parish life & ministry	1	2	3	4	5
2. Formation of adult members as Christians in the tradition of the Episcopal Church - the total impact of Liturgy, spiritual guidance, overall parish climate, programs. At least 1/4 of those present on Sunday are very competent in the spiritual practices of the Episcopal Church.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Vibrant - The extent to which parish life is vibrant, creates a "buzz" that excites the congregation and spills over to the wider community; an attractive energy	1	2	3	4	5
4. Alignment - The elements of parish life are mostly in alignment: income-expenses, the energy and funds to carry out the vision we have; liturgical space or number of services to match the number of attendees, and so on	1	2	3	4	5
5. Sunday - Great Liturgy and social time together	1	2	3	4	5

Copyright Robert A. Gallagher 2009

Congregational Options

When congregations are static or in decline (see Organizational Life Cycle) they may face choices about whether to “downsize” parish structures and programs or to attempt to increase in size. This diagram offers the standard options available in such a situation. Congregational leaders can use the diagram to explore the choices before them and add, revise and drop options.



In exploring options the parish may want to consider:

1. What are our strengths? How might they serve us in pursuing selected options?
2. What new strengths do we need to develop?
3. How do we undermine ourselves; shoot ourselves in the foot? How might that impact what we want to do now?
4. Are we more prepared to act on some options than others? Which ones?
5. What can we do to expand our options – deal with anxieties, get information and so on?
6. What is the level of internal commitment among leaders to the option we select? Is it there in a critical mass of the membership?
7. How to build commitment and the ability to collaborate around the option – develop inclusion, participation, acceptance of people and our parish culture. Increase information flow; make decisions based on free choice rather than habit or pressure.

Copyright Robert A. Gallagher, 1994, 1999, 2007

The Change Formula

$$C = D \times V \times F > R$$

Change equals **Dissatisfaction X Vision X First Steps** that is greater than the **Resistance**

The idea is that if you are seeking some significant, system-wide change there are several core elements that need attention.

We need a critical mass of the organization to:

1. Be **dissatisfied (D)** with the way things are (in relationship to the proposed change). This often doesn't come until some force from outside the organization creates a crisis for the organization.
2. To have a **vision (V)**, an image or an idea of what improvement would look like, that is grounded in the hopes and dreams of employees or members. An old saying among leaders is - - "Being right is only one-quarter of the battle." It's not uncommon for leaders to have a vision of what improvements are needed. The problem is that just communicating the vision (or mission, or strategic plan) will not bring change.
3. With a clear sense of what needs to be done as **first steps (F)**. This means having a picture of what we can do differently in the short term that will move us toward that vision. Four major factors for leaders to take into account are: 1). What competencies need to be developed or strengthened for people to be able to function in the changed situation? People don't like to feel incompetent and change often creates that feeling. 2). People are often hesitant to accept and implement the change because they fear losing friends and colleagues who are in opposition. 3). Having the needed resources to make the change. 4). Beginning to create an alignment of structures, process and practices that will be in harmony with the new way.

Resistance (R) is likely to be present in all change efforts. The combined weight of the dissatisfaction, vision and first steps needs to be able to overcome that resistance. That means if any of those elements (D, V, F) is "0", the change will not be possible.

It is useful to use Chris Argyris's intervention theory in applying the change formula. The theory suggests that the more people you get involved in diagnosing the situation, exploring options, and shaping a picture for the future, the more likely you are to develop a commitment in people that is sustainable under pressure and over time.

Dick Beckhard and Reuben Harris described the change formula in an article. They attribute its creation to David Gleicher.
Robert A. Gallagher 2005

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 1 2 3 4 **Very much so** 5

7. **Visitors pick up that they may choose to actively participate or allow the congregation to carry them.** The congregation competently participates and therefore models. There are ways of providing assistance to visitors without moving in the direction of turning the congregation into an audience – directions and/or rehearsal before the Eucharist begins, worship leaflets with adequate information on the liturgical action of the congregation, members offering hymnals/Prayer Books, and so on.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 **Very much so** 5

8. 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 1 2 3 4 **Very much so** 5

9. 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 1 2 3 4 **Very much so** 5

10. We have a way of **getting visitor contact information** that is easy for the visitor to respond to (for example, asking for the minimal amount of information needed for a next step – name, e-mail, phone). The process is quick and easy, for example – we don't bother to ask for information that fits a later stage - about participation in parish groups. [Note: If the person gives you basic contact information they know you'll be in contact]

Not at all 1 2 3 4 **Very much so** 5

11. We are good at **getting visitors to come to coffee hour.**

Not at all 1 2 3 4 **Very much so** 5

12. The **coffee hour** is well attended, lively; people appear to be glad to be together. The beverages and food served is at least as good as what people would receive in a successful coffee shop.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 **Very much so** 5

13. We provide **attention to visitors**, and newer attendees, by making sure that they are not abandoned. We have lots of nametags available for members and visitors to put on. There's a person or two who accept responsibility for this (they have the gift and some training in hospitality and listening). [Note: A coffee hour is primarily about the community's need for connection. It's a mostly informal time allowing people to wander the room and talk with a variety of people. That needs to be protected while visitors are paid attention to]

Not at all **2** **3** **4** **Very much so**
1 **2** **3** **4** **5**

14. The **priest makes contact** with visitors at coffee hour and follows up with the person within the week.

Not at all **2** **3** **4** **Very much so**
1 **2** **3** **4** **5**

15. We understand the **difference between welcoming and inclusion**. Our task is to be a welcoming community. Inclusion is a longer-term process and involves the new person making choices to be included.

Not at all **2** **3** **4** **Very much so**
1 **2** **3** **4** **5**

16. Other (if any):

Not at all **2** **3** **4** **Very much so**
1 **2** **3** **4** **5**

Orienting

An opportunity, in a very basic and initial manner, to become familiar with and connected to the people and ways of this parish. The person is trying to get a sense of whether he or she will fit in here. Early on they begin to explore a place within the community and to develop the core competencies needed to live in the community. This is the beginning of the parish's effort to orient people for a fuller relationship with Christ and his Church. As known and lived in the Episcopal Church.

1. **Information on parish life is available.** This may be a packet or a handbook with information on parish guilds and organizations, educational & spiritual formation opportunities, sacramental standards, and so on. The information is also on the web site.

Not at all **2** **3** **4** **Very much so**
1 **2** **3** **4** **5**

2. There is an **orientation to participation in the Eucharist** available on a regular basis (offered frequently enough to pick up even small groups of new people within a month or so. Might be an occasional session of 40 minutes just after the Eucharist and/or booklets that describe the ways in which members of the congregation can participate). There are booklets available on the congregation's Eucharistic practices. [Note: The orientation is not an "instructed Eucharist" that cuts across the community's usual worship and is theoretical in tone. It is about how people in the congregation can participate – in the spoken parts, in silence, in the use of the body]

Not at all **2** **3** **4** **Very much so**
1 **2** **3** **4** **5**

3. A **gathering** that is partly social and partly educational; done as needed, at least once every 3 – 4 months. It may be a social event at the rectory – with priest and 2 – 3 parish leaders who are good at such events. Or it could be a newcomers class in the parish hall.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 **Very much so** 5

4. There's an **orientation to core spiritual practices** available on a regular basis (offered frequently enough to pick up even small groups of new people within a month or so). There is a booklet available on spiritual practices.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 **Very much so** 5

5. Other (if any):

Not at all 1 2 3 4 **Very much so** 5

Integrating

This is about integrating a person into a healthy and faithful community. It assumes there is ongoing attention to the formation of the parish community and that people may be integrated into that process. The parish needs an ability to help people enter more deeply into the Christian life; to assist them in forming a spiritual discipline (rule of life;) and in developing increasingly mature habits for Christian living. A very useful resource in doing this is a foundation course for adults. A foundations course is a substantial educational and training program that is repeated over the years and is used to incorporate people into the parish and the spirituality of the Episcopal Church.

1. New people and long-term members have regular opportunities to **develop a spiritual discipline** and a rationale for it.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 **Very much so** 5

2. New people and long-term members have regular opportunities to build **relationships and friendships** with others.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 **Very much so** 5

3. New people and long-term members have regular opportunities to **learn the tradition, especially the daily and weekly rituals** -- Holy Eucharist, praying the daily prayers of the church with the church (Office), and forms of personal devotions that fit the person's personality and provide ways of reflecting that allowing us to see our experience in relationship to who we are as baptized members of the Body

Not at all 1 2 3 4 **Very much so** 5

4. New people and long-term members develop an awareness that we are **representatives of Christ and his Church wherever we may be**; seeing that most people's ministry is in their family, with friends, and work and as citizens.

Not at all **2** **3** **4** **Very much so**
1 **2** **3** **4** **5**

5. New people and long-term members are helped to **establish a responsible form of participation in parish life**. For some that will be focused on the basics of Sunday Eucharist, pledging and attending a few parish meetings; for others it will involve accepting a leadership role.

Not at all **2** **3** **4** **Very much so**
1 **2** **3** **4** **5**

6. Other:

Not at all **2** **3** **4** **Very much so**
1 **2** **3** **4** **5**

Copyright Robert A Gallagher 2008, 2009

Doug Walrath's version of size categorizing

Below is a sample of his approach.

	Very Small	Small	Middle-Sized	Moderately Large	Very Large
Average Sunday Adult Attendance	Under 50	40 - 100	75 - 200	150 - 400	Over 350
Key Characteristics	Tight-knit group; regular interaction	Familiar faces; Dominant core group	Full time priest; "full program"	Diverse community & program	Comprehensive program; specialized staff
Typical Interaction Pattern	Know one another & regular interaction	Majority have regular interaction	Clergy & some lay have current information on members; most interact regularly, some only within sub-groups	Same as for middle size. But only a core interact regularly; majority interact in sub-groups	No one has current information about all members. Regular interaction is all in sub-groups
Typical Planning Pattern	Spontaneous, informal. Based on member experience	Usually spontaneous, informal. . Based on member experience	Usually formal; by vestry & rector. Based on group data and at times research	Formal. By vestry, rector & sub-groups. Often a lot of research	Formal. Vestry or planning group coordinates sub-groups. Usually uses a consultant. Formal research.

Size and Dynamics

As mentioned before, as the parish grows there will be a tendency to increase coordination, routines and standard practices, formal communication and decision-making processes. For example:

TRUST DEVELOPMENT

Smaller sized parishes tend to rely more on interpersonal relations. Larger parishes more on the system's processes and structures. Trust involves the experience of behavior that shows reliability, responsiveness and congruence. In smaller parishes it is more in the relationships among people, and between leaders and the group. It is very "personal", i.e., "I trust Mary". In larger parishes the reliability needs to be seen in the decision-making processes; the congruence in the alignment between stated core values and organizational practices.

COMMUNICATION

In smaller parishes communication is more word of mouth. Word of mouth continues to be a factor in all size parishes. It's one that larger parishes sometimes overlook or attempt to shut down. As size increases additional methods are used. Communication "out" by a quarterly newsletter; announcements in the Sunday bulletin; an e-mail announcement system. As size increases the reliance on a web site or printed materials usually increases. It's simply no longer possible for most people in the system to get accurate information by a "word of mouth" system. There is more bringing information "in" from the members by survey and testing processes or group discussions. Large parishes may make special efforts at getting all leaders "on the same page". Even offering "talking points" about how to explain some issue the parish faces.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

In a smaller parishes the effectiveness of communication (in all directions) and the level of trust can be increased by having leaders with competencies in interpersonal communications, human interaction and group dynamics. In a larger parish those skills are still important but need to be added onto with skills in large group gatherings, design skills, organizational dynamics, etc.

Size and the Parish's Primary Task

My assumption is that most Episcopal churches see the primary task of the parish to be the formation of members - growth into the maturity of Christ. As a denomination it is one of our strengths. We know something about spiritual life and development. In another place I use a model to diagram the way in which the primary task is engaged. In the *Renewal-Apostolate Cycle* the task is pictured as a movement between those things that *renew* a person in baptismal identity and purpose and an *apostolate* in their daily life. In *renewal* we are made "light"; in *apostolate* the light shines in our families, workplaces and civic involvement. To use Evelyn Underhill's images, in *renewal* we are "given...to God, laid on His altar as a sacrifice of love, and consecrated, transformed by His inpouring life" and in *apostolate* we are "to be used to give life and food to other souls".

There are three assumptions I make between the ministry of formation and parish size:

1. People can grow in Christ in any size parish. That's based on the assumption that any size parish can live a complete Christian life. All parishes are engaged in "restoring people to unity with God and each other in Christ." All parishes are places of worship-doctrine-action.

2. Some sized parishes may serve some people better than others. Some will grow best in a small parish, others in a larger parish. Some people work out their baptismal life best in a small community in which they know and are known. Others find more formal educational and training programs useful.
3. It may be that the Episcopal Church's culture and approach to spiritual formation is more effective in some sizes than in others. The images many Episcopalians carry of the parish church is of a parish in which you know, and are known, by many other people, including the priest. Formation is largely by participation in the Sunday Eucharist and in the exchanges of the community that gathers for that Eucharist.

In general, you interfere with effective attention to the primary task when you live out-of-alignment. Insisting on a series of standing committees and programs in a small parish is a way of draining energy into administration. Managing that structure, and coping with the resistance that is likely to emerge, is where the energy goes. The need remains to work at the primary task in a manner that fits a small church. The same problem occurs in a large parish when the rector spends a lot of time visiting people or the vestry insists that it must be involved in everything. It focuses the leadership's attention on making something work that is out-of-alignment. It creates unproductive stress in parish life. More importantly it establishes a "demand system" that draws the attention of leaders away from the primary task.

I see three possible exceptions to the caution. One is that a parish may so value a certain way of approaching church life that it is willing to struggle with some adaptation. For example, in a very small parish with a Sunday only priest, it might be common for leadership to revolve around a couple of key lay leaders and a norm that everyone was involved in making all the decisions. I was vicar in a very small parish where there were strong values about trust and empowerment. So, small teams, responsible for the various aspects of life such as property or hospitality, were given the authority and responsibility to move things along without coming back to the whole group. It worked because most people valued it and several members had experience with self-managing teams at work. A second exception might be when the parish's culture is strongly influenced by some factor(s) other than size. At Trinity Church, Castine, the members come from a high achievement culture. They are good at making things happen. So, the parish tends to be doing more than might be anticipated based on size. A third possibility is when you are trying to make a transition up in size. The parish needs to over-function for a time if it is to make the transition. In the first two cases the primary task is probably addressed in a satisfactory manner. The combination of the member's competencies and values provided a degree of efficiency. In the third case, the primary task is likely to be interfered with. But it is being interfered with in any case because things are out of alignment. So, for a period of time energy goes into making the transition so alignment can be restored and the primary task engaged efficiently and effectively.

Size and Membership Growth

Growth Methods and Size

In 1977 Carl Dudley wrote what remains true in 2002, that small churches are often torn between the way of life that has worked best for them (i.e., a single cell in which "being together" is at the center of what offers meaning and joy) and a series of "shoulds" and "threats" carried by denominational authorities and clergy (e.g., you "should" grow, you "should" be more "mission driven", you "should" offer more programs for your members; you will die if you don't grow, etc.). The implications of Dudley's work are that this type of congregation is a mission driven resource for a significant number of people; that what happens in such small parishes is how some people best grow in Christ. Dudley suggests that small parishes do have growth methods appropriate to the parish culture. "One growth pattern is "adoption", a process by which the new member "joins the past" in order to share the present. Another pattern is the assimilation of whole families together, not separate individuals. A third approach is the recovery of Calvin's wholistic use of stewardship: i.e. God's care for the whole

community through the church as His steward." The last approach is much the same as the Episcopal tradition of parish churches that at one time may actually have had geographical boundaries and now can see the scope of its mission as including some specific community (which may be a neighborhood or town, an ethnic group, the performing arts community, etc.)

The bias in the larger church system can be oppressive for small churches. Mission gets defined in terms of membership growth and justified by a marketing device, i.e., "the great commission" (an act of branding that uses of a passage in Scripture, declares the passage "The Great ..."; and may be more rooted in an American preoccupation with quantity than it is in the Gospel). Clergy frequently come with an assumption that there is something wrong with the small parish culture and proceed to offer programs and activities appropriate to larger systems.

It is "fair enough" for diocesan authorities to decide that they do not want to pay the bills of a small parish for decades or that the neighborhood of the church is experiencing a significant population increase and that they want to serve that new population. Diocesan officials and parish clergy (who are likely to be part-time or a cluster team) can make an assessment -- Is there a realistic chance of significant growth in this area? Do the demographics support that possibility? Is the existing building large enough that a number of additional members can be accommodated? Are we willing to invest the money and time to help growth take place? What are the options - growth from the base of the existing parish, a parallel congregation in the parish, starting a new large parish in the area, etc.? If significant membership growth is not likely, then the strategy that will make sense is to support the natural growth processes of a small parish culture -- adoption, etc.

In larger churches membership growth can be facilitated with strategies such as:

- Add staff -- in a small parish make the part-time vicar a full-time vicar
- Increase marketing -- spend time getting your approach right and communicate "out" more
- Arrange your greeting, orienting and incorporating processes to work for an increased flow of potential members
- Intentionally open up and explore issues of leadership, inclusion and participation styles, what will happen Sunday morning, how the building will be used, how the change will impact the way in which baptismal-renewal occurs in the parish, etc.
- Acknowledge grief and pain in the change process
- Be clear that you want to grow -- test this out openly with people from time to time. There needs to be a critical mass prepared to support and work for membership growth.

All of these strategies assume that the potential for growth exists.

Growth Plateaus and Leadership

A plateau is when a parish seems stuck between sizes. It just can not make the move from "Small" to "Middle-Sized" and from "Middle-Sized" to "Moderately Large" and so on. Alice Mann writes of "plateau zones" in which attendance hits a place on one side or another of a size type and just hangs there. (*The In-Between Church*, Alban, 1998) The numbers and patterns of parish life just don't change enough to settle into a stable size.

A parish might hit a growth plateau for a number of reasons.

1. The church is just too small. New people visit. It feels crowded, people end up in the worst seats, it is hard to find a parking space; they don't come back or they drift away.
2. The community is largely "churched" Most people in the region have existing, well-established religious relationships.
3. The parish just likes being a certain size. This may be conscious or sub-conscious. Members like being in a small parish and they find ways to keep it small by not inviting new people and by not making space for those who just show up

4. The community has changed and the parish has not come to terms with the change. The change could be in race, class, generational, or values group. In any case the kind of people who had made up the parish no longer live in the community in large enough numbers to allow the parish to grow in the way it had grown in the past.

5. The parish has a troubled culture as an organization. Healthy people don't feel attracted to belong. Deal and Kennedy describe troubled organizational cultures as having certain characteristics: inward focused and not paying attention to contextual trends and forces; not attending to strategic issues; high levels of chronic dissatisfaction, victim mentality, etc.; a sense of fragmentation or inconsistency in which people can't figure out the norms and don't come together when common effort is needed; a lot of dramatic emotional outbursts or a pattern of crisis; and subculture issues in which there is not adequate contact across groups, or groups are in some form of struggle with each other, etc.

6. The parish doesn't have the leadership with the competence and/or commitment and/or emotional-spiritual maturity to navigate the changes needed to change sizes. New people come. The parish appears to be growing. After a few years it is back where it was.

A parish may have several of these "reasons" in play at the same time.

What to do about a plateau?

If your primary issue is too little space -- make more space, expand the building, add parking spaces, add another celebration of the Eucharist. If the issue is that the community you are in is already "churched" - there may not be much you can or should do. Focus on being a healthy, faithful parish church and on making sure people know who you are. If it's that people just like the small church culture consider accepting that as the starting point, as strength to work with.

All the other causes of a plateau have more complex and costly solutions.

1. Pay attention to the parish culture. How does it approach membership growth? Change? Leadership? Etc. It badly oversimplifies the situation to act as though once you figure out what size the parish is; there are certain built-in strategies to pursue. Leaders need to know how to "read" the organizational culture, appreciate the "best" of that culture
2. Develop competence in the ministry of change and development.
3. Learn the standard strategies for size change and the related issues and dynamics. Below is a brief exploration.

Edward Koster explored the issue of plateauing in "Leader Relationships: A Key to Congregational Size" (July/August, 1987 *Action Information*, Alban Institute). He claimed that the plateaus come when the congregation reaches 100 and 200 average adult attendance. In Walrath's model that would be the transitions from "Small" to "Middle-Sized" and from "Middle-Sized" to "Moderately Large". Koster sees these two transitions as especially difficult to make. He does tend to give excessive weight to size in determining the role of leaders to the neglect of polity, denominational and parish culture, the degree of clergy presence in a parish, etc. What he is onto, is that the way in which a parish organizes itself and fulfills leadership needs works best when it fits the parish's size. Therefore, what works well at one size is not only unlikely to fit the next size up (or down) but also isn't well suited to the transition process. That means that to move off a plateau will require leadership different from what has been the case in the parish.

Alice Mann's work in *The In-Between Church* uses Rothauge's size model in describing transitions, up and down. So she looks at the change up from "Pastoral" to "Program", as well as the transition down from "Program" to "Pastoral". It's a very useful model.

My assumption, from Koster and Mann's work, is that if the parish is to grow -- the parish needs to be able to process more information, make more complex decisions, and be generally more decisive. The processes for inclusion, information flow, setting direction, and collaborating will all need to change to

fit the size you are moving toward. In a sense, you need to wear shoes that are too big so you can grow into them. For example, once a parish has made the transition from "Small" to Middle-Sized" the parish will have more people around, the number of people taking initiative and getting work done will have expanded, parish space use will increase with more activities, etc. That will organically bring a shift in the pattern of interaction -- people will no longer know everything that is going on and they will not know everyone in the parish or everyone playing leadership roles. That in turn will increase the level of tension in the parish.

While all this is going on there may also be a change in the clergy- lay authority relationship. It is somewhat like the change that takes place in non-profit organizations that have gotten by on limited staffing and volunteers and then hires a full time executive director. The ED has been hired to help the organization cope with the increasingly complex and demanding situation it faces. People outside the organization begin to contact the ED instead of the committee head. New members may develop a working relationship with the ED rather than the volunteer president. In the community the local newspaper makes contact with the new ED (because that's who is answering the calls coming into the office). The web of relationships is changing organically. And with the ED feeling responsible for dealing with the increased scope and complexity the organization faces (after all that's why she was hired) and with the ED in touch with more parts of the system than any other person, seeing more connections among the elements of the system, and beginning to see what might improve the ability of the organization to accomplish its work, with what use to be spread out among a number of people now taking place within one person -- power is shifting in the organization.

The amount of time the staff person is putting in is one factor in what emerges. But even if the organization already had a full-time staff person who had been managing things in a low-keyed administrative manner that fit the need at the time; now the context and the organization have changed. The staff person will either change their approach to the work to fit the increased size and scope of the work or will become a source of the organization's inability to navigate the new situation. Then the organization either applies pressure or freezes into an approach to leadership that can't address what is before it.

Now let's go back to the tricky part -- wearing shoes too big for your existing size so you can grow into them (caution - it's just an image trying to get at one point, don't press it!). When a parish does this several things are true:

- it feels awkward and unfamiliar
- you are spending money and energy that serves your hoped for size and not your existing size
- that may feel stupid and bring resistance to the changes
- dynamics kick in that are like those experienced when the size has changed (e.g., because you there are more activities offered, even if they are not fully used, some people will begin to notice that they don't know everything that is going on in the way they use to; depending on who they are they will feel excited or anxious; that may cause resistance
- power will begin to change; and that may bring more resistance

© Robert A. Gallagher, 2002

Shaping Your Spiritual Discipline

A Renewal Pathway

General thoughts

- Our pathway is in response to, and in cooperation with, God's love and presence
- The objective: To live in Christ and for Christ to live in use; Holy Worldliness; habitual recollection. We seek maturity in Christ, to live as mature Christians in daily life
- -Not a state of being that once arrived at just continues on; but a state of being requiring the humility of living within the Body of Christ with its dependence on life in community. The core cycle of renewal – apostolate continues at all stages of Christian maturity.
- -Maturity is marked by an increased consistency of personality in which the person is brought into harmony, is reintegrated, as the whole being is concentrated on God. There are two aspects of this harmony I'd highlight – 1). Remembering who we are, i.e., baptized members of the Body of Christ, instruments of his love and 2). Emotional stability; a capacity to be centered; emotional intelligence.
- This maturity is the result of living within the Body of Christ; living in its rhythms, being feed by its sacraments and the organic life of the Body. Christian maturity is the product of persistence in living a disciplined response to God's love.

The “best” pathway into maturity will be shaped as we take into account:

- The tradition of the church – what we have learned about the process of sanctification
- Differences in personality – while all may need certain common foods to nurture us, we will also be feed by taking into account our own particular needs
- The culture and age we live in – Some carry us more than others; some require more self consciousness, responsibility and discipline.

A Pattern

What I'd suggest for most of us who live in a modern and/or postmodern culture and age, when we are not automatically reinforced by our culture, is something along these lines --

1. Eucharist and Daily Office

This is the source of our frequent and regular participation in the rhythms of the Body of Christ – Eucharist once/week. Office with psalm, reading and the prayers on 3 - 4 days of the week; some more limited participation in the Office on the other days.

2. Disciplined ways of reflecting

We need ways that allow us: a). to reflect on our experience in relationship to who we are as baptized members of the Body; b). to draw learnings from that reflection on experience; and c). to act on those learnings with the behaviors of new life.

Three disciplines need for everyone pursuing maturity

- Prayer that brings the stuff of our life into conscious relationship with Jesus Christ, in a manner that allows us to be reflective about our life, e.g., meditation, *lectio divina*
- Spiritual guidance – working with another person; in groups, yearly retreat, one-to-one

- Prayer that develops our capacity for stillness and silence; our ability to listen to God, others, our self.

3. Other disciplines useful for you

It may be that nothing else is needed beyond the core pattern of Eucharist, Office and disciplined, reflective prayer.

There are all sorts of devotions that might enhance and supplement the core.

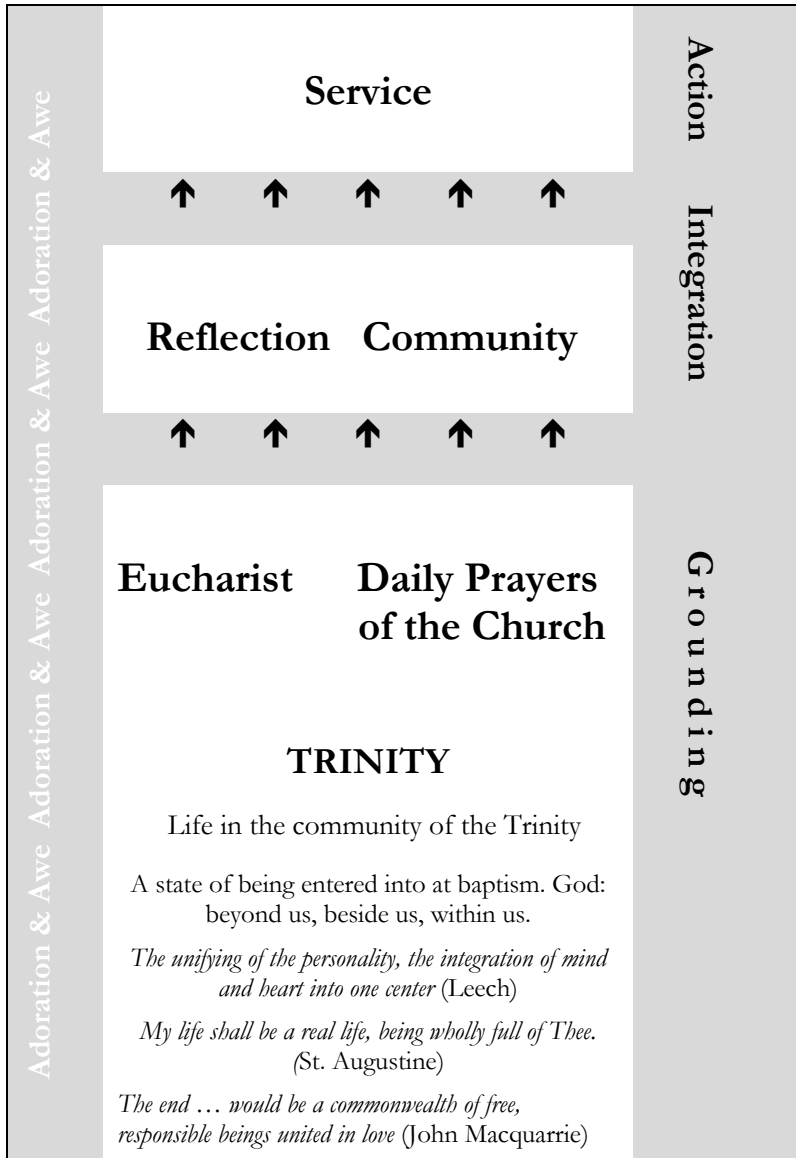
Experiment

The way to find the pattern that best serve you at this time in your life, in you current state of maturity – is by experimenting and reflecting on & learning from that process.

For some of us it is a new idea that we are responsible for our own spiritual life; especially with the thought that we actually may need to change our behavior and values as part of that responsibility. On the journey into maturity we will/may find ourselves needing different things at different times --- spiritual guidance that is more a form of direction and coaching than suggestion and encouragement; times of more affective forms of prayer; times of acceptance more than challenge or of confrontation more than support.

Copyright Robert A. Gallagher, 2004

Spiritual Practice Map from *In Your Holy Spirit Books*



Weekly Practice: Holy Eucharist

The Holy Eucharist celebrated several times each week as to allow people with a variety of schedules to find one that might serve as their weekly spiritual practice.

Daily Practice: The Daily Prayers of the Church

There are two things to do here. The first is to equip and support parishioners in saying the Daily Prayer of the Church on their own in the course of daily life. The second is to offer the Daily Office in some routine form on most days of the week.

Reflection

There are two primary acts for the parish to take. One is to offer members assistance in identifying and maintaining ways of being reflective. The second is for the parish itself to engage in reflective processes, ways of

listening to and learning from its own life as a community. The beginning place for this is to create an environment with significant space for stillness and silence.

Parish Community

The parish needs to provide opportunities for social life among parishioners and create an environment in which they may find and live what Augustine called a “real life,” a life in which they might be genuine, be open and honest about themselves, and still be in deep relationship with others and God. This is a community where our differences can be expressed and will be accepted; in which we can fight with those we love without fearing the loss of the relationship.

Serve

The parish can hold in front of its members the moral vision of Christian Faith. The primary place, the most effective place, of service for the Christian is in his or her daily life. We serve within our friendships, families, work, and civic life. The parish can help members identify how they serve, how they may better serve, and the gifts each brings to that task. The parish can also have at least one service ministry that is done as a parish. This is a call to a wise and generous love.

The Process of Change

The parish can provide a foundations program that equips people to take responsibility for their own spiritual life and moral action in daily life. It can also model an approach to change or experimentation and learning from experience. It can teach methods that allow people to face change.

Copyright -Michelle Heyne and Robert A. Gallagher, 2011. Permission is given to use this handout in parish and diocesan education programs.

From:

In Your Holy Spirit: Shaping the Parish Through Spiritual Practice

Robert A. Gallagher, published by Ascension Press, 2011

In Your Holy Spirit: Traditional Spiritual Practices in Today's Christian Life

Michelle Heyne, published by Ascension Press, 2011

Available at:

<http://episcopalbookstore.com/product.aspx?productid=5619>

<http://episcopalbookstore.com/product.aspx?productid=5620>

Assessing your spiritual practices

Sunday Eucharist

1. Attendance (circle one)

About 1/4 of the time Half the time ¾ of the time Just about every Sunday

2. My ability to participate (Circle the number that is closest to your experience)

I am frequently confused
and uncertain about how
to participate

I can “flow” with it. I
mostly don’t need a
Prayer Book or leaflet.

1

2

3

4

5

Participating in the Daily Prayers of the Church

3. Doing the Office in some form on my own or with others

Never

Only when offered at a
meeting or retreat

Sporadically or at during
some season(s) of the church
year

Most days

4. Knowing how to do the Daily Office

I have no idea.

I understand how to use
it in the Prayer Book and
ways to innovate the use

1

2

3

4

5

Disciplined ways of reflecting [“Listen to your life”]

Grounding/centering yourself so you can reflect. The spiritual practice of “pondering” and seeking God’s presence in the people, circumstances and things of life. Practices that connect daily life to God.

5. Ways that work for me

I don’t have ways
that work for me

I have ways that are
effective for me

1

2

3

4

5

Participating in the parish community

6. The community I seek is one 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.

I don't want church
to be that way

1

2

3

4

It is what I seek;
and more

5

7. Connection with people

I don't know
anyone well

1

2

3

4

I know a number of
people and have a few
friends in the parish

5

8. Participation in parish social life

Not at all

1

2

3

4

I participate
regularly and
frequently

5

Service

9. In Daily Life

I don't have a clear
understanding of how
I serve in my daily life

1

2

3

4

I am very clear about
serving in daily life

5

The process of spiritual growth

10. Foundations

I have a poor
foundation in the
spiritual practices
of the church

1

2

3

4

I have a strong
foundation in the
spiritual practices of
the church

5

11. Experiment

I don't know how or
feel confident enough
to experiment with
spiritual practices

1

2

3

4

I have a sense of how
to innovate &
experiment with
spiritual practices.

5

LEVELS OF CONFLICT

Based on Speed Leas, Moving Your Church Through Conflict

For it to be a system conflict a significant percentage of people, or people with significant influence, need to be upset with the practices/policies/style/person of the current leadership.

A task of leaders is to develop the organization’s capacity to solve problems and manage the “rubs” that are a normal and useful part of organizational life. This allows the organization to be a more productive and satisfying environment while also heading off serious conflict. As part of its life an organization needs to be engaged in a developmental process of building trust, developing communication and negotiating skills, and establishing processes to manage concerns and new ideas. This gives people the ability to keep conflict at the lower levels. As conflict moves to higher levels people tend to resist skill development, elaborate problem solving methods, the introduction of new ground rules, etc. So, these things are best done when the organization is not in conflict.

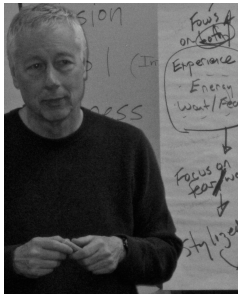
LEVEL	SYMPTOMS	STRATEGY
<p>I PROBLEM TO SOLVE</p>	<p>Objective of those involved: fix the problem Tone/behaviors: optimistic, collaborative, problem not person focus, rational; language is clear, specific, here and now, adult; real differences over goals, values, needs, plans, information; people understand each other and disagree.</p>	<p>1. Facilitate decision making by <u>collaborative problem solving</u>, or if not possible, by <u>negotiation</u>, or if not possible, by <u>formal authority action</u> (by voting or leader decision.) 2. <u>Methods</u> -- establish meeting norms, use a facilitator and a disciplined process, brainstorm and prioritize, use communication skills, etc.</p>
<p>II DISAGREEMENT</p>	<p>Objectives: self protection, not getting hurt; solve the problem Tone/behaviors: cautious, not hostile; general language to protect people and self, e.g., “there is no trust”, “we need more openness”; hostile humor, distancing comments; withhold information that might serve the other side or damage your side.</p>	<p>1. <u>Reduce tension and facilitate people’s work together</u> --the need here is to keep people close enough to work though their differences and not engage in withdrawal or begin to get aggressive. Encourage people to “hang in”, attend and prepare for meetings; coach people to act, to be assertive, help people fully express their concerns and to listen to the concerns of others; provide ways to build relationships, ways for people to know each other as people, to speak with each other about common interests and needs. 2. <u>Methods</u> -- role reversal, expectations clarification, paraphrase and itemized response, brainstorm and prioritize, use facilitator, etc. 2. <u>Establish ground rules</u> -- get agreement about how we will work on the issue, e.g., no threats, identify sources of information, direct sharing of differences, no personal attacks, no withdrawing; norms for meetings, etc. 3. <u>Make decisions</u> -- collaborative problem solving --- negotiation --- formal authority</p>

<p>III CONTEST</p>	<p>Objective: win, not yet at level of wanting to hurt the opponent. Tone/behaviors: win/lose dynamics, threatening, difficult, resistance to peace overtures, hanging back waiting for others to show weakness, personal attacks, emotional appeals, limited social contact; language is distorted - overgeneralized (“you always..”, “everyone..”), exaggerated, making a case, expecting magic or rapid change, expecting others to read your mind, extreme, only two sides, lose the shade/gray.</p>	<p>The overall need is to reduce fear and distorted thinking; to provide a sense of order.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All the strategies mentioned for Level II, as possible. 2. <u>Structure the process</u> -- work out a clear process; dates of meetings, time lines, etc. Revise it as needed; but work at maintaining a sense of order and direction. There is a high need for a process that is seen as fair, open, and legal. 3. <u>Use an external consultant</u> 4. <u>Contact between parties to the conflict needs to be carefully managed</u> -- opportunities for people to express feelings and clarify their interests need to be provided for each side; this usually needs to first be done apart from the other side; when they are ready to work together, then have a carefully facilitated meeting. 5. <u>Decision making</u> -- the same sequence as at other levels; however, the more persuasion, compelling and voting the more likely that people will leave the organization.
<p>IV FIGHT/FLIGHT</p>	<p>Objectives: hurt/get rid of the others; being “right” Tone/behaviors: factions inflexible, clear lines, strong leaders emerge; language becomes ideological - about principles, truth, rights; parties detached, causing each to lose sense of the pain they cause; attempt to enlist outsiders in the cause, parties will not speak with each other, self righteous, cold</p>	<p>More tension will require more structure.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Use an external consultant/mediator</u> -- this can not be someone from the central office. 2. <u>Follow the book</u> -- legal issues may be involved, trust is very low; follow the organization’s standards. 3. <u>Communicate through third parties</u> -- seek an agreement for third parties to serve as “go-betweens” to carry messages, look for possible areas of agreement, Most likely to be useful when the issue is clear. 4. <u>Be tougher about the ground rules</u> -- enforce expectations about personal attacks, loaded language; might have a group that monitors agreements and gives feedback to violators. 5. <u>Decision making</u> -- likely to be by formal authority. Some are likely to leave.
<p>V INTRACTABLE SITUATION</p>	<p>Objective: destroy the others Tone/behaviors: attempts to do serious damage to the other’s reputation, position, well being; attempts may continue after the parties have been separated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The conflict is no longer manageable. - Outside authority will need to make difficult decisions. - The parties need to be separated. - Some people may need to be asked to leave.

The Consultants



Michelle Heyne brings empathy, humor, and a solid grounding in ecclesiology and effective organizational dynamics to her work as a consultant and trainer. She is committed to helping parish leaders bring about effective change by developing the skills they need to make the most of the gifts they already have. She has worked as a financial services executive for over 25 years and served as a parish lay leader for 15. Michelle lives in Seattle.



Robert Gallagher brings 40 years of experience in leadership training and parish development. Bob offers exceptional skills in facilitating shifts and changes in people and organizations. He provides practical methods and vision for a transformed parish. He's served on an industrial mission staff, as a parish priest and a diocesan staff person. He is the founder of the Church Development Institute. Bob has a masters degree in Organization Development from Goddard College. Bob lives in Seattle.

Bob and Michelle are close friends and colleagues. They have founded [Shaping the Parish](#) and recently written companion books on spiritual practice.