

## Interview Process as System Intervention

This process has been used as a major intervention in parishes as a way of:

1. Helping leaders better understand the congregation
2. Strengthen the relationship of spiritual guidance and support among members
3. Getting the spiritual life onto the parish's agenda and into the minds of many members
4. Providing a starting point for further work in assisting people establish a rule of life, or spiritual discipline
5. Focusing a critical mass of people on the primary task of a parish church

Interviews are not only a data gathering process but are also system interventions. They are not neutral; they affect the people being interviewed and those doing the interviewing. Interviewers need to have an adequate degree of emotional maturity to be able to listen without judgment, or turning the interview into an opportunity to teach, or making it about themselves.

The method may be used in an expanded process that includes a significant portion of a congregation's members. This is a relatively easy way to engage a number of people in an exploration of their spiritual life while in the same action begin to establish a parish culture more oriented toward the primary task.

### *Preparation*

A good preparation for interviewing is to have someone else interview you asking the same questions you will ask others.

### *Interview Questions*

1. What are the major sources of pressures, demands and expectations in your life? How do you see them as helpful or stressful?

2. How do you work at “balancing” these expectations, demands and pressures?
3. How do you renew yourself emotionally and physically?
4. How do you renew yourself spiritually?
5. How does your practice of Christian faith and/or the congregation’s life help or hinder each of the areas noted above?
  - a. Expectations/demands/pressures
  - b. Emotional/physical renewal
  - c. Spiritual renewal
6. How does your practice of Christian faith and/or the congregation’s life relate to your work, family and civic life?

### *Steps*

1. Interviewing
  - a. Recruit nine people willing to do the project.
  - b. That initial group does the interviews with its members--possibly do in groups of three; move around the circle with each getting to interview, be interviewed and observe.
  - c. Debrief the interviews first in the groups of three and then in the larger group. What went well? What needs work?
  - d. More interviewing: Have each of the nine interview three new people. (you will now have a total of 36 people involved)
2. Invite everyone that has been interviewed to a 2 1/2 - 3 hour session to explore the interviews

### 3. Session

- a. Explore the interviews. Possibly share in small groups
- b. Present the Renewal - Apostolate Cycle. This is to provide a theoretical undergirding for what they talked about in the interviews. Q&A
- c. Invitation to another short process to improve spiritual practice.

### 4. Follow up session on improving spiritual practice

- a. Provide a process with worksheets making it easy for participants to assess their current spiritual practice and shape a rule of life to experiment with.
- b. Offer a Lenten check-in session every Lent. Use a similar process of assessment and identifying what rule of life they would like for the coming period of time.

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# The Renewal – Apostolate Cycle

The Renewal - Apostolate Cycle is a way of describing a central dynamic of Christian life. The Cycle focuses our attention on the Christian’s movement between being renewed in baptismal identity and purpose and living as instruments of God’s love and grace in daily life. The Cycle is interested in both the individual’s movement and in the ways in which the parish church supports and facilitates that movement and in the ways in which the parish church supports and facilitates that movement. This is the primary task of any parish church.

## RENEWAL

Renewal in baptismal identity and purpose in worship, study and being equipped , for Christian action



## APOSTOLATE

Participation in the work of Christ in service, evangelization and stewardship

In areas of:

- Workplace
- Family & Friends
- Civic Life
- Church



### A Cycle

The cycle is between a conscious and intentional attention to God, prayer life, our relationships, Christian formation **and** a subconscious reliance upon God as members of the Body of Christ, in the workplace, family, civic life and congregational life.

### In that Cycle:

#### We need:

To accept our dependence on God

To accept responsibility for ordering our spiritual life

To accept our interdependence with others in the Church

#### Which is helped by:

Openness to spiritual guidance

Establishing a rule of life

Life in Christian community, a parish church

#### Which the parish helps by:

An emphasis in its life on worship; nothing comes before the Eucharist and Daily Office. Also, more attention to formation and spiritual growth than other programs or ministries.

Offering programs and guidance in creating, experimenting with, and revising a spiritual discipline.

Being a healthy and faithful parish church and by helping people relate to the parish community in ways appropriate to their personality and the parish’s capacities.

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