



Using “Take Counsel – Stop Grumbling”

The web page --

<http://www.orderoftheascension.org/the-invitation-2018-take-coun/>

There are two parts to this. The first is about managing change. The second is a string of ideas on how to make use of “The Invitation.: Take Counsel – Stop Grumbling.”

Managing Change

Educational and training efforts are by their nature trying to create change. We seek some impact upon those participating. We hope for some change in attitude and stance or skills and knowledge or possibly the overall climate of the parish. All that is assuming that we are beyond the place of education as entertainment – “My slides of the Holy Land.”

Think about how your parish will hear what you are about to do. A bit of time in empathetic thinking, empathetic prayer, is likely to prove useful. We’re not talking about the one or two of your most fearful people. When you speak of “stop grumbling” will a significant number of people in the parish think you’re attacking them. That you are criticizing them? If so, offer an explanation that takes that into account. If your parish is in the middle of a mid to high level conflict – you may not want to insist they read the articles emphasizing proper norms for managing that conflict – as they will already have violated the norms, they will only feel judged and it will increase their resistance.

If you are going to mention “taking counsel” - are you prepared as rector to do something about that? Are you ready to more frequently, and with more care, use methods that allow real “taking counsel?”

You might want to refer to "[The Process of Change](#)" (chapter 7) from *In Your Holy Spirit: Shaping the Parish Through Spiritual Practice*.

- *Understand and use a critical mass strategy.*

If you are thinking of helping people develop new skills consider working primarily with those most ready to engage the work. Build a healthy center.

- *Begin with what’s easy to do.*

Before you begin think about this question – How do I do this in a manner that sets off no resistance at all? What group in the parish would love to work with this?

· *Understand what's involved in the "Use of Self"*

How does this apply to you as the rector? What in you wants to grumble? What in you resists listening to some people?

Read the whole chapter. See what it says to you and your situation.

Making use of "Take Counsel – Stop Grumbling"

Before you do anything else –

Read everything on the web page. Do that over two or three days. Make notes on your responses. Identify the elements that got you thinking about what you might do.

What do you want to accomplish as you use "Take Counsel – Stop Grumbling?"

What's your objective? Here are a few examples of possible objectives.

1. To develop in the parish more sensitivity to the spiritual dynamics involved.
2. To increase your skills as rector in helping the parish live within the spiritual dynamic.
3. To increase the skills of at least 10% of your more active members in ways to take counsel and in that increase trust and harmony in the parish.
4. To develop a more respectful climate
5. Other

Do not linger over this for more than a couple of days. Decide what you are trying to accomplish and begin. You can modify it as you go along.

Examples of how you might use the material

1. Post an explanation and link on your parish web site. Download posters and bookmarks. Place them around the parish.
2. Select 10 – 15 pieces from the material on the web site. Each week include something from that piece in your parish e-newsletter with a link to the whole piece.
3. Select two or three listening processes offered in the material. Begin to use them. Remember what you learned in reading "The Process of Change" – use them with groups most willing to do that. Ask the group if they would be willing to work with you in learning to make effective use of the listening processes. Sometimes it helps to explain that you are doing this as part of a program you're participating in or for your own learning.

4. Offer educational or training programs working with the theme and the materials on the web page.

Ask for help

This isn't a test. Test out your ideas with others.