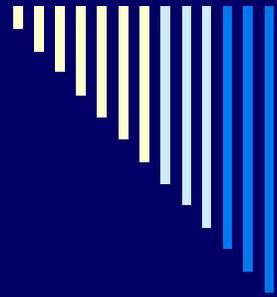


**Emerging Models and Practices
of Parish Leadership**

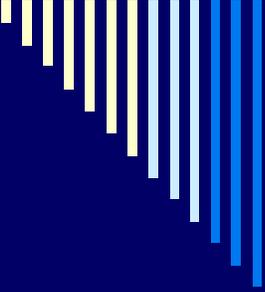
**National Ministry Summit
April 21, 2008**

**David Ramey, President
Strategic Leadership Associates**

**Marti Jewell, Director
Emerging Models Project**

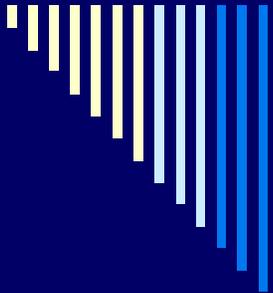


- ❑ **Symposia Participant Profile**
- ❑ **The Concept of Emerging Models**
- ❑ **Parish Structures**
- ❑ **Parish Leadership**
- ❑ **Best Practices**
- ❑ **Action Group Reflection Process**



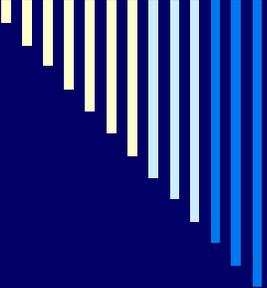
Symposia Participant Profile:

- 80% of U.S. Dioceses participated in these gatherings between November 2005 and November 2007.
- Participants included 529 pastoral leaders throughout eight regions of the U.S.
- Gatherings included representation of priests, deacons, parish life coordinators, pastoral associates and parish team members, diocesan pastoral leaders, pastoral councils, and young adult ministers.
- 82% of participants completed extensive 27-item questionnaires documenting their pastoral experiences and future expectations.



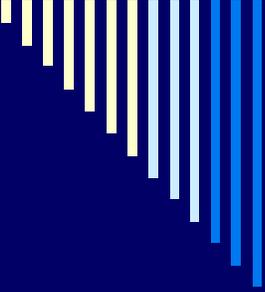
Symposia Participant Profile (continued):

- They represented a balance of men (50%) and women (45%).
- 46% were from parishes with households over 1,200 family units and an equal number represented parishes with households fewer than 1,200 units.
- 70% had achieved advanced degrees.
- 69% were between the ages of 50 and 69.
- Multi-cultural pastoral leaders and young adults were under-represented.



Symposia Participant Profile (continued):

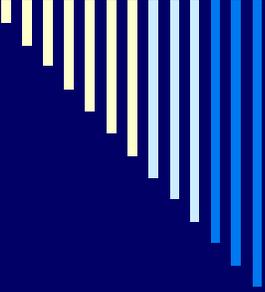
- ❑ 47% represented parishes with a pastor responsible for a single parish.
- ❑ 11% had pastors responsible for multiple parishes.
- ❑ 31 parishes were led by a Parish Life Coordinator in accordance with Canon (517.2).



Challenges for Leadership in a Vibrant Faith Community:

- Systemic and structural issues in church leadership

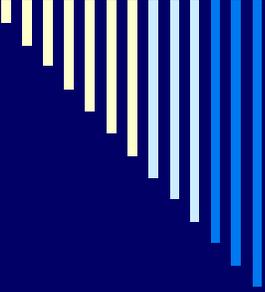
“We have no set-up for individuals responding to new ministerial responsibilities. Leaders don’t just happen, they need to be supported and invited. Having a program to help this happen is important. There are unmet needs that new generations of ministers will try to meet.” (Pastor – South Region)



Challenges for Leadership in a Vibrant Faith Community: (continued)

- Emerging issues of theological, cultural, and multi-cultural diversity

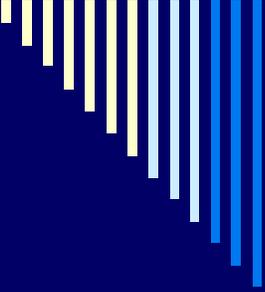
“One challenge is ethnic diversity and people who think differently from one another. Seminary formation is another challenge. How are seminarians being taught to work collaboratively? Each community is different. What works for one may not work for another. We can’t be locked into a ‘one model fits all’ mentality.” (Diocesan Representative – Southwest Region)



Challenges for Leadership in a Vibrant Faith Community: (continued)

- Dominant culture of self-centeredness and busyness versus collaboration (trends in the dominant culture)

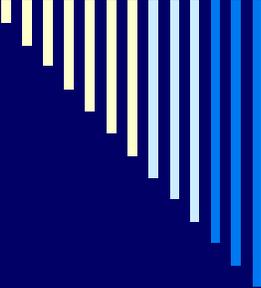
“People get so bogged down with day-to-day tasks that time and energy are not devoted to envisioning and moving forward to a new future. We need to evangelize and draw in more people to relationships with Christ through the church.” (Participant – North Central Region)



Challenges for Leadership in a Vibrant Faith Community: (continued)

- Overcoming parochialism with a resistance to change

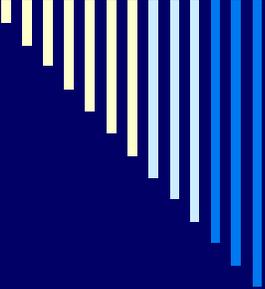
“There is resistance to change. There needs to be an openness to change and a pastoral team that can minimize the effect of change on the parish. Sensitivity to multi-cultural communities is needed.” (Pastor – Southeast Region)



Challenges for Leadership in a Vibrant Faith Community: (continued)

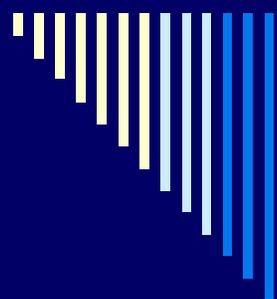
- Emerging personnel issues involving the need for extensive training, education, and formation of future pastoral leaders, particularly in rural areas or areas without a Catholic university presence.

“We need to help parishes cluster to share ideas, resources, and leadership. Vibrant parishes attract diverse people, so there is need for conflict resolution – how to build community with creative tension accepted. Nurture people’s skill sets/tools to be better ministers. Teach them how to collaborate better when good people with diverse ideas get together.” (Pastor – Northeast Region)



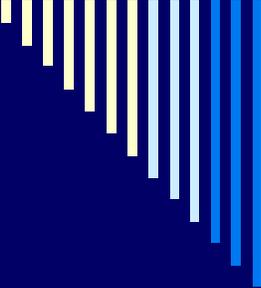
Observations on Parish Structures and Models:

- Exceeding diversity of models driven by:
 - ✓ Economics
 - ✓ Geography
 - ✓ Demographics
 - ✓ Not necessarily a preferred ecclesiology or diocesan planning process



Observations on Parish Structures and Models: (continued)

- ❑ What we expected were “emerging models” as well-defined parish structures and roles of leaders.
- ❑ What we encountered was a dynamic, challenging, and thoughtful emergence of “models as the practices of leaders” creating the future.

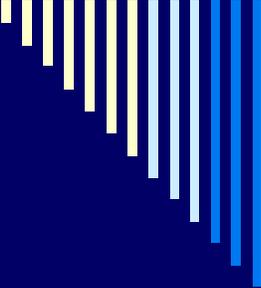


Parish Structures of the Future:

A total of seven structural models of parish leadership were identified throughout the symposia process, with seemingly infinite variations. Most importantly, however, across these parish structures pastoral leaders are giving birth to new models of leadership through:

- Intentional planning and visioning processes in their parishes

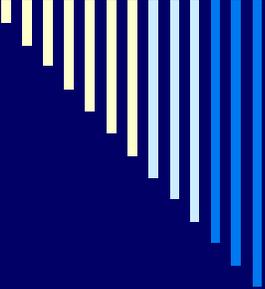
“We are working toward a model of stewardship where we first adopt an attitude of gratitude for all that has brought us to where we are today. The second step is to look at what is already happening and look at what still needs to happen, then discerning our gifts to widen our gratitude and depend our commitment to one another.” (Pastoral Associate – Southeast Region)



Parish Structures of the Future: (continued)

- Innovative approaches to clustering parishes and inter-parish collaboration

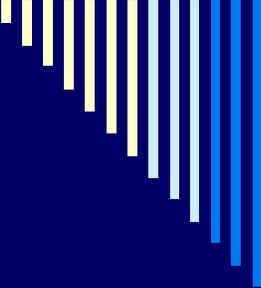
“We worked on a non-parochial approach to create communities of faith (clusters) consisting of several parishes where talents and resources were shared. We took inspiration from Acts II:44: ‘They shared their goods in common’ and from the maxim ‘United We Stand, Divided We Fall.’ Don’t do separately what we can do better together.”
(Pastor – Northeast Region)



Parish Structures of the Future: (continued)

- Intentional formation of lay leaders

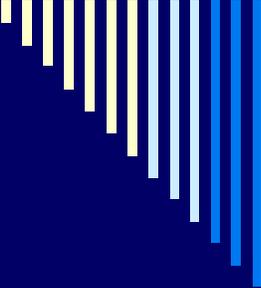
“Local communities will call forth their lay leaders. There will be more discernment of gifts and more formation to build the skills to use gifts for the common good.” (Parish Life Coordinator – Southwest Region)



Parish Structures of the Future: (continued)

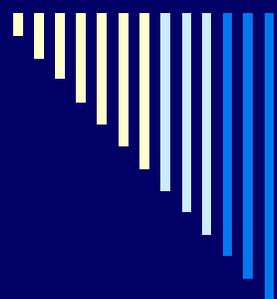
- Concentration on smaller, more intentional faith communities within the parish, providing outreach to individuals and families

“There will be small faith communities with parish life leaders. Churches will assume greater roles in funding social institutions as our economy favors the rich. Laity will assume more responsibility for administration. There will be male and female presiders.” (Pastoral Associate – Southwest Region)



Observations on Parish Structures:

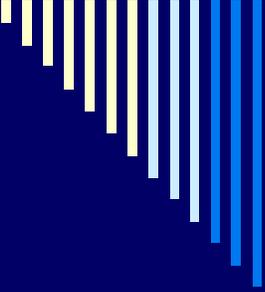
- Emerging structures of parish leadership include:
 - ✓ Traditional priest/pastor-centered parishes
 - ✓ Collaborative pastoral teams, pastoral councils, and ministry oversight and planning boards
 - ✓ Parish life coordinators with regular presence of priests/pastors for Eucharist or with infrequent priest/pastor presence (rural, urban poor)
 - ✓ Clustered and merged parishes with nominal integration of ministries
 - ✓ Clustered parishes with distinct identities served by fully-integrated pastoral teams and/or shared ministries
 - ✓ Mega parishes with distributed leadership groups for lay coordination of ministries
 - ✓ Parishioner led parishes
 - ✓ Ecclesial movements



Leadership of Parishioners

Active and engaged parishioners:

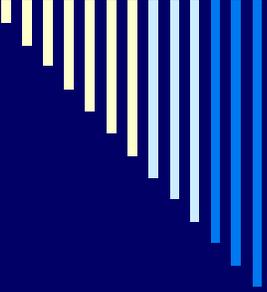
- Engaged in future visioning and growth of parish
- Lay led ministries, often with training and evaluation
- Developing new ministries, especially outreach
- Integral parish council structures



Leadership of Parishioners

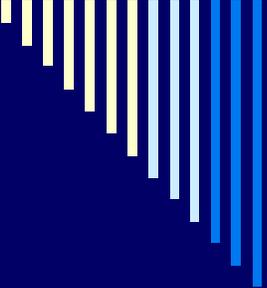
Where not engaged:

- Lack of empowerment
- Dominance by some parishioners
- Expectation that the pastor must be the leader
- Lack of role for the parish pastoral council



Leadership of Parish Pastoral Staff

- ❑ Pastoral work
- ❑ Planning, organizing, and implementing programs
- ❑ Empowering and facilitating the gifts of the community



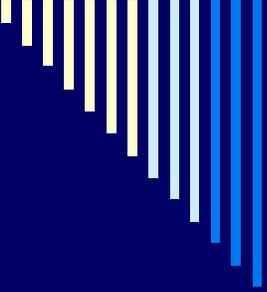
Leadership of Pastoral Staff

Where done well:

- Collaborative team atmosphere
- Strong leadership roles

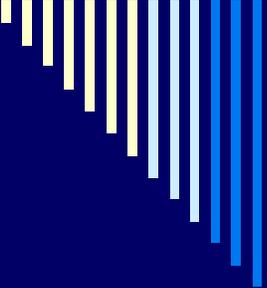
Where hindered:

- Weak team dynamics
- Controlling leadership style of pastor
- Lack of resources



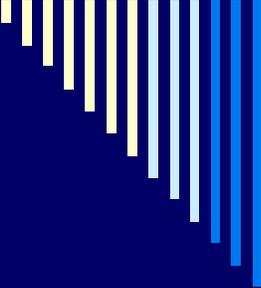
Leadership of Pastors and Parish Life Coordinators

- Facilitators/overseers
- Consultative, collaborative, calling forth the gifts of others
- Gatekeeper and change agent for new roles, structures, and programs



Future of Parish Leadership

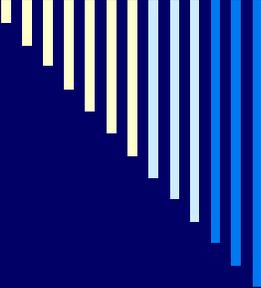
- Collaborative, team oriented leadership
- Leading and sharing ministry in clustered parishes and small faith communities
- Increased dependency on the leadership of lay ecclesial ministers, deacons, and parishioners and lay led communities
- Recognition that all ministry is rooted in discipleship



Concluding Observations on Pastoral Leadership Best Practices:

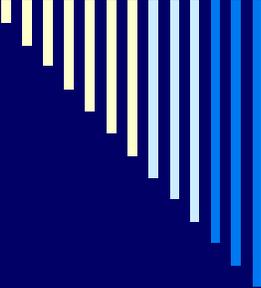
Happening now/foreshadows needs of future

- Emergence of a total ministering community with a growing recognition and appreciation of a common baptismal call to discipleship with different expressions among clergy, non-ordained professionals, and lay leaders working together in building the spiritual vitality of parish life
- High level engagement of parishioners in ministry formation at the diocesan and parish levels, which results in lay led ministries and the development of new ministries
- Redefinition of the role of pastor and parish life coordinator as dynamic facilitator and chief collaborator calling forth the gifts of others and serving as a change agent for new roles, structures and programs



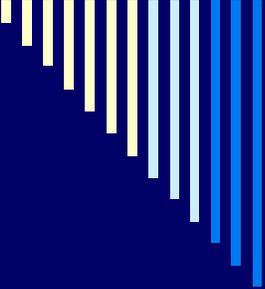
Concluding Observations on Pastoral Leadership Best Practices: (continued)

- ❑ Extending the role of parish staff to include much of the day-to-day pastoral ministry and programming of the parish, as well as calling forth the gifts of parishioners.
- ❑ Collaborative pastoral teams which facilitated the formation of lay leadership rather than administering their own projects and priorities
- ❑ Deep-seated spiritual vitality linked to the centrality of the celebration of the Eucharist and sacramental life as the fundamental defining characteristic of Catholicity in parishes
- ❑ Intentional efforts to embrace multi-culturalism even before parishes themselves have become multi-cultural in their membership



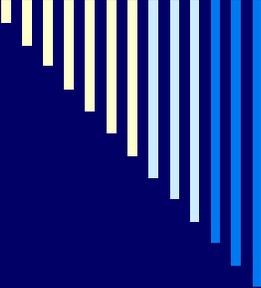
Concluding Observations on Pastoral Leadership Best Practices: (continued)

- ❑ Intergenerational faith formation through various evangelization and catechetical programs based in the RCIA, biblical studies, sacramental preparation, and youth catechesis
- ❑ Proactive outreach to individuals and households within the parish despite the size and complexity of the parish structure, inviting each and every household and parishioner in the life of the parish and its future formation
- ❑ Proactive efforts to reach youth and young adults through cross-parochial ministries, digital ministries, integrating young adult leaders into the life of parishes, and catechetical programs age appropriate to young adults in their 20s and 30s.
- ❑ Intentional collaboration among churches to share resources whenever possible, transcending the boundaries of each parish as a stand-alone enclave



Concluding Observations on Pastoral Leadership Best Practices: (continued)

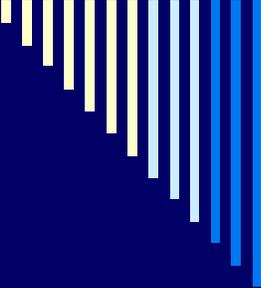
- Commitment to justice evident in practice and usually demonstrated at a high level in parish organizations with a specific council or commission devoted to justice ministries
- Greater accountability in parish life and transparency of personnel management, financial management, and ethical standards of conduct in dealing with employees and members



The Parish of the Future:

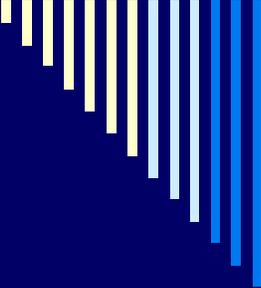
Conclusions about context:

- ❑ Smaller faith-based communities (more intentional faith communities)
- ❑ Mission-focused communities for the church and in the world
- ❑ Inclusive of diverse people and forms of leadership
- ❑ Celebrating, vibrant, and welcoming
- ❑ Increased lay leadership (rooted in the gifts exercised by its members)
- ❑ Redefinition of ecclesial leadership (diverse models)
- ❑ Changing parish structures:
 - Clustered/regional community
 - Inter-parochial ministries
 - Mega-churches
 - Church of a whole community not parish



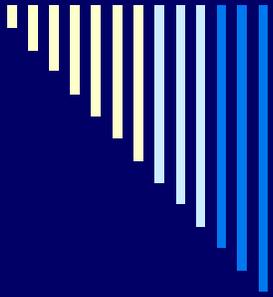
A few final words from pastoral leaders...

“More lay leadership will emerge and be affirmed by the gathered community. The parish will become the resource for small faith communities with gatherings of people who recognize their interdependence as a means of survival. We will increasingly become globally aware and responsible. (Pastoral Associate – Upper Midwest Region)

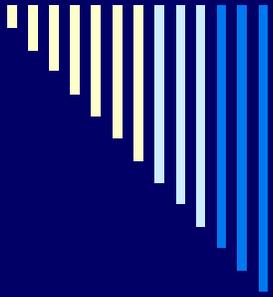


A few final words from pastoral leaders...

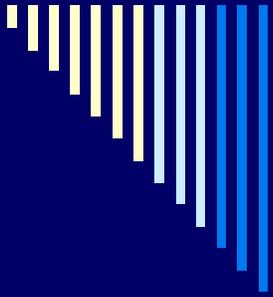
“It could very possibly be identical to how it is today or it could be very different, depending upon numerous variables that could go any number of ways. We believe in persevering in ministry and continuing to serve the Body of Christ rather than wait for changes to happen to be active. We hope it will reflect a collaborative leadership team, an active laity, and a secure clergy that can allow others to share in mission and ministry with greater openness for leadership for Catholics of other than Anglo-cultures/ethnicities.” (Diocesan Representative – Mid-Atlantic Region)



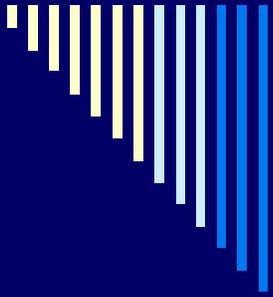
“Small parishes held together by a faith-filled community of believers rooted in love and service to God and to each other; maybe a priest; maybe not.” (Pastoral Associate—Mid-Atlantic Region)



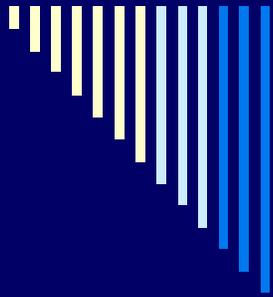
*“I believe the parish of the future will be more open and committed to lay leadership and find a new (or renewed) understanding of Eucharist, creatively discovering ways to celebrate our being Eucharist for one another, of living our sacramental life in light of a diminished population of ordained ministers.”
(Pastoral Associate – Southeast Region)*



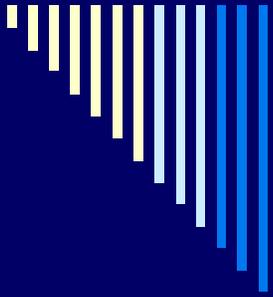
“Hopefully, we will continue to see the ascendancy of the laity and the renewed confidence in the indispensable ministry of lay and clergy ministers. I would hope we would be communities driven by a clear mission to continue the work of Jesus Christ to sanctify, teach, and lead persons to faith and eternal life. Concretely, this occurs, hopefully, through vibrant liturgy, education, and mission.” (Priest – North Central Region)



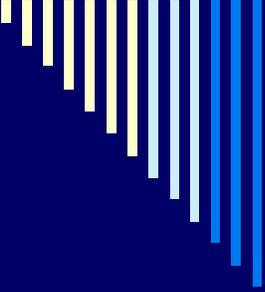
“Maybe it will be young, Hispanic, immigrant and under-educated. Maybe it will be the one sign of hope and home of truth in an increasingly relativistic, pluralistic, technological, impersonal, globalized, homogenized and economically interdependent world. I hope it will look more like the early church, like RCIA communities around the country, and will foster unity, not uniformity.” (Participant – South Region)



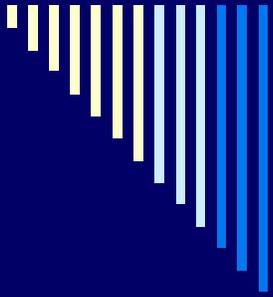
“Many diverse structures depending on the size and geographical location (urban, rural, suburban, but also Northeast U.S. versus West or South); reading the signs of the times – outreach and service dependent on needs of local community and beyond; foundation as communities of prayer (personal and communal) centered on Christ; truly hospitable, welcoming, inclusive, collaborative in our diversity.” (Diocesan Representative – Northeast Region)



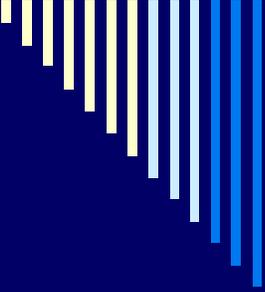
“Academically well-prepared lay leaders with more young people choosing lay ecclesial ministry as a career option. Leadership communities led by ‘volunteers’ who are well formed and understand their responsibility as baptized.” (Diocesan Representative – Southwest Region)



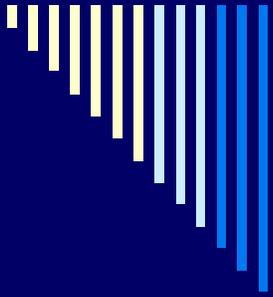
“The parishioners will have a far greater sense of ownership of the parish with various appointed ministers responsible for many more aspects of parish life. Many ministries, unheard of and unthought of now, will have emerged. Clustering for parish strength will have taken place years ago, and one priest with a number of deacons and lay ecclesial ministers will share responsibility for each parish.”
(Parish Life Coordinator – North Central Region)



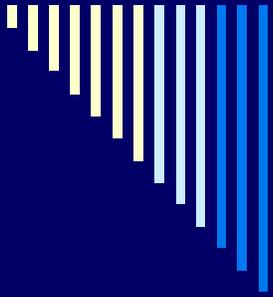
“Many will be larger in size due to geographic consolidations necessitating smaller groups organized by neighborhood, apostolate, and spiritual interests. Parish staffs will be larger, composed mainly of the pastor and a team that will have responsibilities for coordinating and facilitating the work of committees.” (Deacon – South Region)



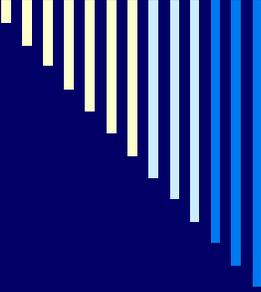
“The pastor will be a shepherd and not an administrator. There will be greater responsibility of laity and they will own responsibility. Adults will be educated (wanting to learn) and live out their faith. There will be a more, Eucharistic center in the spirit. We will be less dependent on clergy and be more involved. Lay staff will be more responsible. There will be more challenge to step to place and a greater need for stewardship and shared ministries.” (Participant – Southwest Region)



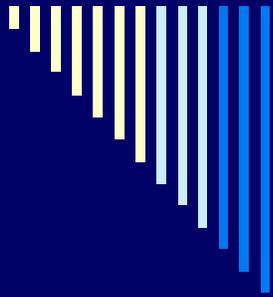
“The parish of the future won’t be territorial or boundary driven. It will be a place for people of faith to gather and celebrate union, communion, support, prayer, and a connection with the transcendent and eminent relationship of Christ, Our Savior. It will be faith-based, small communities that can’t live in this world without it.” (Pastor – Northeast Region)



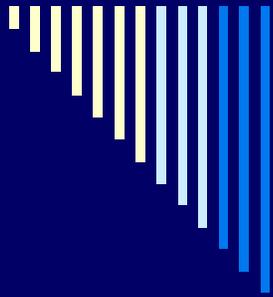
“Servant leadership – depends on how far into the future – in my setting, I suspect in 20 years, our Hispanic community will have greater say/influence in parish life. They are our poor stepsisters now with 90% of their members who are undocumented and unregistered in our parish. A new church building and activity space will bring new life. My vision is for all/most church staff to be bilingual. But, I do expect a similar structure to today with one priest and many parish staff.” (Participant – Southeast Region)



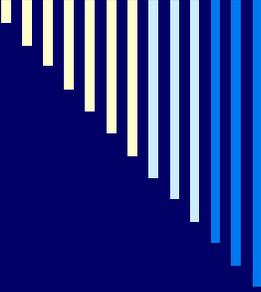
“I think we can expect a greater participation in leadership from the laity and should be preparing them and the community at large for the possibilities. Our church will survive and it will change. The greatest thing we can do is keep reminding people that change is inevitable and pray as a community that the spirit will guide the parish and inspire and call leaders. We also need to help people remember we are part of a world-wide community. As change occurs, it would be beneficial if collaboration extended beyond parish boundaries – within the U.S. and draw upon the wisdom of the church leadership in other countries.” (Parish Council Representative – Northeast Region)



“Community and Mission – The parish should know who they are (Disciples of Jesus) and what they are called to be. ‘If you are what you should be, you will set the world ablaze. – John Paul II’” (Pastoral Associate – Southeast Region)



“Hopefully a place where the leadership and pastoral council will grow sufficiently as genuinely collaborative ministries who enable the mission, message, and ministry of Jesus to flourish to its fullest; where the gifts of all are shared; where the needs of those who are suffering are met; where the hopes and aspirations of all are encouraged and where love permeates our lives.” (Diocesan Representative – Northeast Region)



“I hope the community will be “life now focused” rather than “life hereafter focused”. I hope the community will be much more full “life for all focused” rather than full “life for me and mine focused”. I hope that the pastoral ministers and the parish as a whole will view pastoral ministry as simply carrying out that part of the parish’s activity that must be devoted to parish maintenance so that the rest of the parish can succeed in its work for the larger world. I hope the whole parish, pastoral personnel included, will move beyond the idea that roles in life are gender determined. I hope that the priestly function that is given to each person at baptism will be seen as exercised, but not exhausted by the ministry of the ordained... I hope that the ordained will come to see themselves as part of a work being carried out by the Spirit of God through the entire parish that is much bigger than themselves and their ritual activities. I hope that all the parish will understand the cross not as something that Jesus endured on behalf of people, but something that Jesus endured to free people to accept their own crosses as they become inevitable in the pursuit of God’s Reign.” (Pastoral Associate – Upper Midwest Region)