



Creating Consensus on Vision and Strategy

EMERGING MODELS OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP
UPPER MIDWEST
REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM REPORT

NOVEMBER 18-20, 2004

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I. OVERVIEW:

Six national ministerial organizations within the Catholic community have made an unprecedented commitment to collaborate on a Lilly Foundation Grant for Pastoral Excellence. The grant entitled "Developing and Sustaining the Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership in the Catholic Church and the United States" is intended to be a four-year study completed in three phases between January 2004 and April 2008.

Sponsoring organizations of the Emerging Models Project include:

- **National Association for Lay Ministry (NALM)**
- **Conference for Pastoral Planning and Council Development (CPPCD)**
- **National Association for Church Personnel Administrators (NACPA)**
- **National Association of Deaconate Directors (NADD)**
- **National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association (NCYAMA)**
- **National Federation of Priests Councils (NFPC)**

These organizations have committed to a comprehensive plan, including several mini-projects intended to identify the trends, resources, and priorities needed for pastoral leadership in the 21st century. The following mini-projects will be included as part of the overall Emerging Models effort:

- **Parish Vitality Study**
- **Study of Parish Life Coordinators by CARA**
- **Regional Symposia**
- **Next Generation of Leaders Study**
- **Young Adult Focus Groups**
- **Symposia**
- **Study of Mega-parishes**
- **Diocesan Consultations**
- **Publication of Findings**
- **Concluding Ministry Summit**

Marti Jewell, formerly of the Archdiocese of Louisville, Kentucky, has been named Project Coordinator to lead the entire effort. Strategic Leadership Associates (hereinafter known as SLA) has provided its expertise in symposium development by assisting with the development of a format for the first round of eight regional symposia to be held in total, including:

- **Pacific Northwest**
- **Upper Midwest**
- **Northeast**
- **Southeast**
- **West**
- **Lower Midwest**
- **North Central**
- **Southwest**

David Ramey of SLA assisted Marti Jewell in facilitating the regional symposiums and developing a report on the findings of each symposium. The Upper Midwest Symposium was held on November 18-20, 2004 with 86 participants from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., and Wisconsin.

Symposium participant comments appearing in this report can be identified by the following codes:

- P = Pastor**
- PLC = Parish Life Coordinator**
- D = Deacon**
- PA = Pastoral Associate**
- PC = Parish Council Representative**
- DR = Diocesan Representative**
- O = Other**

The following tables represent a profile of participants who attended the Upper Midwest Leadership Symposium:

Table 1
Upper Midwest Leadership Symposium
(Total Respondents = 53)

Respondents	No.	%
a. Pastors	5	9%
b. Parish Life Coordinators	7	13%
c. Deacons	9	17%
d. Pastoral Associates	22	41%
e. Parish Pastoral Council Representatives	4	8%
f. Diocesan Representatives	2	4%
g. Others	4	8%

Table 2
Gender
(Total Respondents = 53)

Gender	No.	%
a. Male	25	47%
b. Female	28	53%

Table 3
Age Range of Respondents
(Total Respondents = 53)

Respondent Age Range	No.	%
a. Under 29 years of age	0	0%
b. 30 to 39 years of age	2	4%
c. 40 to 49 years of age	8	15%
d. 50 to 59 years of age	25	47%
e. 60 to 69 years of age	15	28%
f. 70 or above	3	6%

Table 4
Size of Parish Households
(Total Respondents = 53)

Size of Parish Households	No.	%
a. Under 500 households	12	23%
b. 501 to 1200 households	15	28%
c. 1201 to 2000 households	11	21%
d. Over 2001 households	15	28%

Table 5
Highest Level of Education
(Total Respondents = 53)

Level of Education	No.	%
a. High School	3	6%
b. Associates Degree	1	2%
c. Bachelor's Degree	2	3%
d. Master's Degree	34	64%
e. Doctoral Degree	10	19%
Left Blank	3	6%

Table 6
Diocese in which you Serve
(Total Respondents = 53)

Diocese	No.	%
a. Chicago	18	34%
b. Belleville	8	15%
c. Joliet	3	6%
d. Milwaukee	3	6%
e. Cincinnati	2	4%
f. Detroit	2	4%
g. Green Bay	2	4%
h. Indianapolis	2	4%
i. Toledo	2	4%
i. Cleveland	1	2%
j. Fort Wayne/South Bend	1	2%
k. Los Angeles	1	2%
l. New U/M	1	2%
m. Rockford	1	2%
n. Saginaw	1	2%
o. Superior	1	2%
q. Youngstown	1	2%
Left Blank	3	6%

The following symposium report captures top level issues and observations of Upper Midwest symposium participants. It is important to note that the findings may not be normative across all eight regional symposiums convened by the Emerging Models Project. In 2007, a concluding report will be published summarizing the themes for all symposiums.

II. PARISH 2025 FUTURING EXERCISE:

Symposium attendees participated in a futuring exercise for ministry in the Year 2025. The purpose of the activity was to consider a number of factors which may evolve over time that defines the future of church ministry.

During the exercise, participants were individually given the opportunity to think about a variety of categories that would define elements of future parish ministry in the Year 2025. These categories included:

- **Best Case**
- **What If?**
- **New Possibilities**
- **Hopes**
- **Worst Case**
- **Fears**

During the exercise, participants generated nearly 460 comments. These comments were further refined or clustered into themes concerning the expectations of the future of the parish in the Year 2025. For the purpose of condensing these comments, the following themes have been captured in two major categories:

- **Hopes and New Possibilities**
- **Threats and Vulnerabilities**

A. Hopes and New Possibilities

About half the comments submitted by participants relate to hopes and new possibilities, illustrating a number of specific aspirations they have for the future.

Development of Vibrant, Spirit-Filled Faith Communities

Among the top aspirations of participants is the desire and belief that parishes will evolve into vibrant, active faith communities. Their characterization of these communities includes parish life that is spirit-centered, collaborative, and welcoming of members, as well as to others in local communities.

Many participants believe these vibrant faith communities will be smaller in size and may have clustered or shared ministries with other parishes. These communities will be defined by a sense of belonging among members and a deep, spirit-driven commitment to evangelization and reaching out to others within and beyond the parish.

In this scenario for the future, some participants characterize leadership as emerging from within the community. In nearly all cases, participants believe these vibrant faith communities are deeply rooted in prayer and spirituality.

Ordination Open to Women and Married Priests

Without a doubt, one of the strongest aspirations expressed during the Upper Midwest Symposium is the desire and conviction among many participants that ordination to the priesthood be expanded to include women and married persons living out their call to ministry. Clearly, this institutional form of empowerment and official acceptance of a wider definition of priesthood is a central theme that expresses both hope and new possibilities for many Upper Midwest pastoral leaders who participated in the symposium.

Empowerment of the Laity to Realize their Baptismal Call

Many participants see empowerment, formation, and development of the laity as critical to their hopes and aspirations for the future. These participants tend to stress the role of faith communities in calling forth the gifts and talents of others. These communities are often characterized by extensive outreach and service within and beyond the community based upon a more full realization of the talents of each person rooted in their baptismal call to ministry.

Commitment to Social Justice

Among the primary hopes and aspirations of participants is that the parish of the future will be committed to the poor and actively reach out to serve their needs within and beyond the parish rooted in a sense of justice. This commitment to social justice is often expressed as inclusive of diverse cultures, a desire to seek the common good, and a commitment of the church to impact global issues in the world, such as the AIDS crisis in other cultures.

Restructuring of the Parish and the Larger Church

Many participants see the future organization of the church as undergoing substantial restructuring. This restructuring often includes defining new models for the local church often rooted in smaller faith communities. In addition, a number of participants reflected on a clustered approach to ministries across churches, sharing leadership for common ministries in a geographic area. As part of the desired restructuring, participants also seek more participative leadership expressed in the form of diocesan and national assemblies and consultations.

B. Threats and Vulnerabilities

Among Upper Midwest Symposium participants, fear or worst case expectations are nearly equal in number to those characterized as hopes and new possibilities. At times, participants offered a sobering and realistic assessment of the suffering and struggling church at hand.

Participants seem equally balanced in expressing concern for the threats and vulnerabilities of the future church, as well as their hopes and possibilities. The following threats and vulnerabilities are most prevalent in their comments.

Nothing Happens and the Church Becomes Irrelevant in the Lives of People

Participants believe that one predominant threat to the future of the church is that nothing happens and it follows a path toward irrelevancy in the lives of people. Some participants describe this scenario as a future of “mega churches” with no real sense of belonging for individual members.

These participants also describe the church as mirroring the social sins of sexism and racism of a dominant culture. In this scenario, participants see the growth and development of Protestant Evangelical churches as capturing the imagination of members often further contributing to the decline of parish life.

Regression to Pre-Vatican II Leadership

Some participants see a future vulnerability as a regression in the church’s leadership to a pre-Vatican II view of the world. Participants characterize this view as being dominated by the clericalism and leadership of the few who serve in their roles as priests or bishops. This view is often described as silencing the opposition and dominating the laity, returning to a more isolationist view of the future of church and parish.

Church Dissolves Financially and Spiritually

Many participants express concern that the financial pressures on the church to maintain viability and the current crises influenced by clergy sexual abuse will leave the church financially and spiritually bankrupt. In this vulnerability, participants see churches, dioceses, schools, and special ministries as continuing to downsize in scope and impact. Ultimately, this view is represented by the belief that people will leave the church out of apathy.

Loss of the Eucharistic Community

Many participants are concerned that the church could lose its identity as a Eucharistic-centered faith community. The fears and concerns expressed are that the sacramental life of the church will be dependent upon a few clergy and that Eucharist and its celebration will be lost as the core and center of the faith community. Many see this potential erosion of the Body of Christ as one of the worst threats to the future vitality of the parish and the church at large in our culture.

III. FUTURE OF PARISH LEADERSHIP ROLES:

Participants in the Upper Midwest Symposium listened to brief case study presentations by their colleagues describing current experiences of parish life and leadership roles. In small group discussions and through written comments in the symposium reflection guides, participants were asked to describe their parish communities based on a number of factors, including:

- **A spiritually alive and healthy community**
- **A visible commitment to building the life of the faith community through word, worship and service**
- **A total ministering community, including the leadership of pastors, staff, and councils working together.**

A. Spiritually Alive and Healthy Community

Many participants indicate that they consider their parishes to be spiritually alive and healthy. Others describe their parishes as spiritually alive in most instances, but striving to improve in specific aspects of parish life. Still others describe their parishes as still struggling to reach a basic level of vitality. Overall, participants tend to view their parishes as:

- **Spiritually alive and healthy through their liturgy, worship, and strong community identity**
- **Spiritually alive and struggling to improve**
- **Still defined by the struggle to become vital**

Participants who describe their parishes as spiritually alive and healthy tend to focus on the vitality of their communities in worship and their sense of community. The following comments reflect the views of those participants who describe their parishes as spiritually alive and healthy:

“This is the basis for a vital and meaningfully committed parish. We have CRHP, several retreats and Lenten and Advent opportunities. Also, our weekend Liturgies are prayerful, welcoming and with good music and homilies.” (P)

“I think it begins with good weekend liturgy – great music, good reflections, does it speak to people. I believe our parish is alive and vibrant. We hit 30% of registered families though – welcoming is very important.” (P)

“The parish in the last 15 years has moved from 2,500 families to 850 families due to ‘white flight’. Those who have stayed embrace a vision that welcomes African-Americans and Latino families. It has become more of a spiritual base and less a social club base. We pride ourselves in hospitality and social outreach/social justice.” (P)

“Powerfully so – evident in welcoming atmosphere, assembly sings and prays (at times surprises visiting celebrants), generous response to needs as they arise.” (PLC)

"I believe we are more alive today as opposed to 5 years ago when we lost our resident priest/pastor and are moving toward a lay-led healthy parish." (PLC)

"To me spiritually alive means praying well together. It also means a personal relationship with God. That results in action alive, enacted faith. Healthy means ownership in the parish and in faith life. The parish is coming along spiritually with the loss of a resident priest as pastor 3 years ago. The community has begun to take more ownership in a healthy way. The parish continues to move forward in faith and action and ownership." (PLC)

"My parish is extremely alive spiritually, although it is such in various small groups and organizations. We are a bilingual community and have learned, through much pain and anxiety, how to work together. We fear the eventful closing of our school. Our current pastor, although a hardworking and very spiritual man, lacks the pastoral leadership ability we need." (D)

"I think we are spiritually alive and healthy due to intentional community of young adults (college students) and others who share in the mission to a university community. People sing, pray, and work fairly well together. Conflict is apparent between those who are liturgically and theologically liberal and conservative, but they still pray together." (PA)

"Liturgy and Eucharist are central to what we are about. The major liturgical seasons are well planned and involve all the main ministries who attempt to celebrate that thematically. Prayer for all meetings is emphasized – not just a routine 'Our Father' – the music, ministries, space – environment are all well done." (PA)

"I think I can honestly say that currently we are a spiritually alive and healthy community, but it was a long, hard struggle. It's something that needs to be constantly nurtured and challenged. Gospel centeredness is critical and an opportunity and environment to develop spirituality and recognize that there will be many 'spiritualities' – to affirm and give language and 'fertile soil' to grow and mature." (PA)

"This describes my parish well – parish leadership shows a commitment to worship, catechesis, service and welcoming. Communication is good. All this having been stated, there are many areas where we can grow." (PA)

"Overall, yes. How it does: A strong faith-based focus/mission; an energized and active parish council; a strong faith formation program with good participation. Where these are challenges: broader participation in youth ministry; inter-group communication" (PC)

Other participants believe their congregations are spiritually alive, but striving to improve in specific areas unique to their parish lives. This more cautious assessment of the spiritual vitality of parishes is reflected in the comments below:

“Our parish is spiritually alive, but has a long way to go to be fully alive. It is healthy, but also has elements of sickness. How do we become more alive? We need to continue the process of transformation through Word, Worship, and Action. Healthy communities need to keep growing. I believe we are in a period of growth.” (P)

“My parish has not had active leadership for about 20-30 years. It was a parish that ‘survived’ but didn’t grow, change, and flourish. Some have ‘always done things this way’ and see no reason to change. It was, in the minds of others, ‘a sleeping giant’ just waiting for a leader. I have been there 2+ years and just now I feel I can begin to lead with a real overview of the parish and of my responsibilities as a leader. I had no administrative experience and the parish had no records or procedures for daily/routine activities. It took me this long to get those in place. The parish is beginning to become more healthy and alive.” (PLC)

“We are a small community with a fairly good percentage attendance on Sundays. Participation as a praying community could be better, but it isn’t bad. We have an abundance of liturgical ministers willing to fill someone else’s place if necessary. In our parish, there are many extended families rather than going out to the needy – although that also happens.” (PLC)

“We have a healthy and vibrant spirituality in our parish – with a change in pastors 2 years ago, our focus has shifted somewhat to more devotions (i.e., novenas, adoration, addition of icons, etc.). I’m not convinced our spirituality as a community is improving since that time. However, it has certainly become more sacramental.” (D)

“We are a very warm, welcoming and inclusive parish. Our parish is 18 years old and in its adolescence stage. The parish has an adolescent spirituality as well. I wouldn’t call it healthy. I would call it spiritually in need of direction and care. 20% of the parish does 80% of the work. 20% of the parish contributes 80% of the monies to support the parish. There is a disappointment, among many, in the leadership of the church. They see church hierarchy in Rome as being ‘out of touch’ with God’s people.” (PA)

“On the outside, it looks as though our parish is spiritually alive, but it can be better. When we offer an evening of reflection, formation, and prayer, very few attend. This year our parish theme is ‘Growing in Prayer’. Each month a different prayer form is offered 1 evening ½ hour prior to pastoral council meetings. Attendance for past two has been poor – limited to 3-5 individuals in addition to pastoral council.” (PLC)

“I would give our parish an ‘A’ for opportunities and maybe a ‘B’ for taking advantage of those opportunities. There are the faithful minority (20%) who participate in liturgies, service and spiritual growth opportunities, but so many more who don’t. We have generous parishioners who give to

our many outreach projects. However, we have far too many who contribute nothing to our Sunday collections. One of our best assets is that we are warm and welcoming. Many new parishioners say that is why they decided to join.” (PA)

“We are stuck and we are satisfied with the status quo. I believe this is true for two reasons. First, as a pastoral team, in recognizing that our families are over-committed to sports, work and the demands of volunteerism from the parish school, we have not challenged their complacency. It can often be heard ‘people are already too busy, we can’t ask more.’ We have met people where they are at – and stayed there with them. If someone came to our parish, they would say a lot is happening: sacramental prep, food pantry, community outreach. A lot is happening by a small percentage of people. We have been able to generate interest in adult faith formation or new avenues of social outreach.” (PA)

“We have multiple prayer experiences for people ranging from charismatic to rosary, etc. (9 groups). There is a real hunger for prayer. Healthy? Depends on what you mean. The parish is vibrant and activity filled, but there are still divisions to be dealt with and hurts to be righted.” (PA)

“Our parish is generally described by its active members as spiritually alive and healthy. However, we think our parish as extending to all Catholics involved with our university community and the majority of this is not active in our parish. We serve between 10% and 15% of the estimated Catholic student population. Another qualification is that we understand being spiritually alive and healthy as being practically active in bringing about the Reign of God in our work, relationships and civil community. This is much harder to gauge than the number of people who find our liturgies ‘meaningful’ and our community ‘welcoming and supportive.’” (PA)

“We’re a spiritually healthy and alive community, but in a struggle to remain that way. In the last four months, we have become a ‘priestless’ parish. In my thought, the struggle is to provide ‘sacramental ministers’ who give homilies that continue to feed the community. The spirituality of the community is foremost in our minds.” (PC)

Still other participants define their parishes as immersed in a struggle for vitality. They indicate this is often due to changing demographic situations or current leadership roles in the congregation. The following comments reflect the struggle of local churches for vitality:

“My parish is spiritually alive and struggling. There is an understanding that we need to know our Catholic faith at a deeper level. However, while the lay leadership talks about it, they do not take the time to put their words into practice.” (D)

“A parish in waiting; anticipating that if not now, in the very near future, we will be closed. There are very few, but the fact remains there are some who work at being spiritually alive.” (D)

“We are struggling for unity as the community changes from small/rural to large/suburban. There is a strong sense of faith among our members. We are about average in terms of hospitality.” (D)

“Touch and go. We are at a crossroads. We have a new pastor with a radically different theological perspective at odds with the parish lay leadership. The community is trying to decide whether to, in the words of one ‘stay and fight for our parish’ at leave in search of another alternative. The community has sent some direct signals of their sense of disenfranchisement; decline in attendance at worship (20%), decline in collection (33%), and resignation from ministries (17%).” (PA)

“I serve two parishes that share a pastor and staff. Neither parish is fully spiritually alive and healthy – one is worse off than the other. It was badly pastored in the past. Both are characterized by a rather top/down, passive laity model of church. The larger one tempers this a bit by having a significant core of ‘doers’, but they are in the ‘worker bee’ mode, not ownership of baptismal call. The smaller one doesn’t even have very many worker bees, and has a high proportion of elderly. However, the smaller one has a real heart for its neighborhood, the poorest in the county, and a real desire to offer people a way out of poverty (just not much in the way of energy and resources to do much). The larger one is more complacent, self-satisfied, and inward-looking.” (PA)

“This statement does not describe my current parish community. The liturgies lack passion. The leadership is not aware of the state of dysfunction that the parish is experiencing.” (PA)

B. Visible Commitment to Building the Life of the Faith Community (word, worship, and service)

Participants were asked to describe the visible commitments of parishes to build the lives of their faith communities through word, worship, and service. Participants tend to define their visible commitments as follows:

- **Prayer, worship, and Eucharistic celebration**
- **Outreach and service within and beyond the parish**
- **Dependence on the preferences of the designated pastor and staff**
- **Intentional about the process of change**

When speaking positively about the commitment of their parishes to build the lives of their faith communities, participants often refer to the strength and vitality of prayer, worship, and Eucharistic celebrations as the heart of parish life. The following comments reflect this worship-centered dimension of building faith communities:

“We are certainly committed to this through our retreat program, committees build, and scripture; liturgical celebrations that feed the community by Word and Eucharist and service programs that reach out to many. A major thrust has been to help people see their family life and work life or the places in which they will achieve holiness.” (P)

“Supervising pastor and parish director work/minister well together. Every effort is made to involve as many trained parishioners as possible in weekend services. We make an honest effort to take the ‘Word’ we hear and put it into service action.” (PLC)

“We have had a worship and spiritual life committee for one year now. We have goals and accomplishments in these areas. We watch as several people grow in confidence and knowledge and assist the leader with worship. We now have an active human concerns committee which formulates ways that parishioners can be involved in care for our people with needs and those in local, state, national and global community. Our staff seeks ways to invite parishioners to share their gifts. It has a good beginning.” (PLC)

“Commitment to word – continue to offer formation series, bible and small Christian groups. Worship – attention given to details for Eucharist – more is needed to address underlying motivation to attend and participate and celebrate. Service – all of our ministries are asked to determine a form of service that their group will offer. Too often the service is limited to our parish.” (PLC)

“Our worship life is pretty good. I think Sunday Eucharist is done well, although we do not give it many financial resources. I really work to make other sacramental moments welcoming events in the community. We have a long way to go in terms of service – reaching beyond ourselves.” (D)

“I think my parish excels in this area. We have good leadership and a leadership that believes the Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith and that we need to express this gift by giving of our time and talent to build the Kingdom of God here on Earth.” (D)

“We have great liturgies (excellent preaching and music) and terrific community and a pretty good social justice and service record.” (PA)

“We have excellent liturgy. It is our strong suit. Although, we struggle to have enough Eucharistic Ministers present. Liturgy is strong because the pastor is truly an excellent homilist and presider.” (O)

Secondly, when referring to the visible commitment to a vital faith community, participants often mention outreach and service within and beyond the parish as notable signs of their commitment to building vital communities. The following examples illustrate this outreach and service dimension of building parishes as faith communities:

“Stewardship program based on 1994 Bishop’s pastoral which integrates gospel values in everyday living. Use of discernment model in choosing pastoral council membership. Outreach through St. Vincent DePaul and Neighborhood Association.” (PLC)

“Again, the parish has increased its involvement and commitment in the life of the faith community as they see they are an integral part of the parish and local community. Involvement has evolved as parishioners have been ‘allowed’ and empowered to participate and be involved...now

the parish has taken ownership and has begun to build the life into the community. In some ways, I see the parish community 1975 or 1980s. They are moving quickly through not having a resident priest.” (PLC)

“Again, I’m not sure if the value is the experience of the faith community. Also, the people are very much involved in doing for others. I’m not sure where their energy comes from or is it seen only as good works as essential.” (PA)

“The most visible commitment is the development of small faith-sharing groups. We have a large elementary school and strong faith formation for children and ongoing service projects for local service agencies.” (PA)

“Yes, again, but only by the 20% - They are very active and involved in everything we have to offer and/or are instrumental in planning word, worship, and service. We have active liturgy and spiritual life commissions, Christ Renews His Parish, and Disciples in Mission. We have women and men’s spirituality groups meeting on a regular basis with annual days of reflection.” (PA)

“We encourage the lectors to proclaim the word. We encourage and support upgrade among the other ministers – communion ministers; ministers of care; bereavement ministers; altar servers; music ministers, CAPS; ecumenical; food pantry; women’s shelter, clusters, international aid, neighborhood parishes, etc. We are working with the neighborhood to do service among the people; sharing worship service with other faith community.” (PA)

“Christian formation ministry has six full-time people plus a 550 student parochial school and staff. The youth are involved in age specific service. Mission trips are planned for grades 7 through adult – age specific. We work with two sister parishes and the civic community is also invited to participate through St. Vincent De Paul. Salvation Army and other service organizations are coordinated by a full-time Human Concerns Director and volunteer committees.” (PA)

“Abundantly present in all areas – if not full blown, then in seed form at the least. Service in the wider community is still a goal in progress – good, but could be better.” (PA)

“Describes it well. Out of 2700 families, several hundred actively involved in ministry efforts. Strong support and encouragement from clergy” (PC)

Some pastoral leaders indicate that the effort and commitment to build the life of their faith communities is largely dependent upon the preferences of the appointed pastor or other formal leaders. This leadership-centered aspect of building the faith community is indicated by some of the following comments:

“Deacons and lay ministers continually build the life of our faith community as does the staff of the school. Our DRE definitely holds the most powerful position in our parish...and is not paid. Although many parishioners aren’t very fond of her, she continues to dedicate her life to

our parish and everyone realizes that if she were to leave, we'd be in trouble as a parish.” (D)

“We build community through word, worship, and service in the traditional ways. We struggle to be more inclusive of laity in our liturgies; allowing them only to be involved if ‘clergy’ is there to observe and make sure all goes as canonically correct. Many have come forward over the years to help build the community, but have been pushed away by clergy and staff that want things done ‘their way’.” (PA)

“Coherence is needed in the daily life of the community – in worship, spoken word (homilies), adult education, parish council, etc., and all printed material – Gospel vision articulated. All share in the responsibility toward authenticity – and calling to each other for spiritual growth and service. Had it for 12 years! Change of pastor torpedoed it!” (PA)

When referring to their visible commitment to building the life of the faith community, a few participants describe this effort as driven by an intentional process of creating change or changes in parish life. This intentional “design” for building the life of the faith community is evident in the following comments:

“Liturgy is done very well. The tension is in adjusting to welcoming African-American and Latino people into the planning and execution of liturgy, an evolving process that involves affirmation and stretching/educating our old timers (loyal faithful) and welcoming new into an already established, but evolving community.” (P)

“We evaluate, critique, and comment on how well we are doing. Steering Council meets monthly, liturgical commission meets monthly, and staff weekly. We have formation evening for Council and days for the staff. We hold a leadership development day for the community which tackles the idea of Christian leadership in church and the world.” (PA)

“We are in the process of revitalizing. We are in the midst of cultural and ethnic change. Change is never easy. We are trying hard to keep a sense of ‘community’ and not ‘us’ and ‘them’.” (PA)

“Our parish is actively pursuing quality activity in these three areas. In general, our parish leadership describes the situation as a ‘good start’. Of the three areas mentioned, ‘Word’, if this means specifically scripture study, would be the least energetic pursuit. Our preference in the past has been to encourage theological reflection that includes, but is not primarily focused on scripture.” (PA)

“There is a commitment that shows up in the activities of the parish. In particular, worship and service.” (PC)

“Yes, within the limitations of hiring a sacramental minister that feeds the community. The PLC is committed to this as are the people of the community. The people have stepped forward and the faith formation and liturgy commissions are visibly more active in the absence of a priest.” (PC)

“Strong commitment to liturgy as foundational to the parish life/community. Follow closely and implement new liturgical guidelines from the Archdiocese. Scripture study and hunger for more. Looking into whole community Catechesis tied to stewardship. Strong sense of presence and availability to helping those in need. That this is a charism of the parish. Is a need for more visible presence in the field of social justice.” (O)

C. Total Ministering Community (including the leadership of pastors, staff, and councils together)

Participants were asked to reflect on the extent to which their parish demonstrates a total ministering approach to community development. This includes a shared sense of leadership and responsibility among pastors, staff, and pastoral council members. Participants often characterize their efforts as:

- **Intentionally developing this model through pastor, staff, and council collaboration**
- **Striving or struggling to realize this reality**
- **Dependent on the wishes of the pastor**
- **Defined by the independent roles of pastoral staff in their various ministries**

Some participants indicate that their commitment to a total ministering community is an intentional part of parish life, including the commitment of pastor, staff, and council members working together to realize this reality. The following comments represent this viewpoint:

“Again, we are ‘already’ and ‘not yet’. Leadership functions are spread throughout the parish community. People are comfortable with this. But, how do we challenge people to see their roles in economic political, community, and family life as ‘holy’?” (P)

“This is a ‘sine quanon’ of parish life. I look at PPC and staff as collaborators with me in coordinating the ministries of the parish. This final step of vitality gives direction and purpose to the parish.” (P)

“Pastor, staff, and council work together. Common and separate retreat days – in-service opportunities, diocesan programs all help in collaboration. Staff and council liaisons keep parish council informed and solicit input for their ministries. Pastors and laity and neighboring parish professional formed committees to hire the staff in the areas they work in.” (P)

“All work together well and interact collaboratively with a smaller community, inviting forth new leadership is a struggle, but we’re working deliberately at it. Council is good, but could be stronger. Formation is a key and becoming a regular part of meetings.” (P)

“I am a half-time PLC with no other staff, but many wonderful volunteers. Our Pastoral Council helps make the decisions for the parish and the Finance Committees make money decisions, as well as keeping buildings and grounds in good shape.” (PLC)

“In my short time as PLC, I see the council working with the PLC (me). The regular sacramental minister (15 minutes away) and I work together well – regular communication and distribution of pastoral needs through his parish (by himself and his staff) and myself and him on an ‘as needed’ basis for the parish I pastor. As needed means anointings, funerals, weddings, Sunday liturgy. I also work with the hospital in rotating on call chaplain needs as does he.” (PLC)

“All come together – on the same page – with the vision and direction set (in our case the Diocesan Plan for Parishes); otherwise you are setting each other up for failure. Each has the ability to sabotage the entire process and when it fails, people will say ‘we’ tried that and it did not work. We’re not going there again! Then, the good is lost.” (PLC)

“Our parish has an active and involved pastoral council, as well as 7 commissions all of which function collaboratively to cover most all areas of parish life, community and service.” (PA)

“Presently participating in Diocesan stewardship program with three phases of time and talent, prayer, and treasure. Also, ‘Into the Future’ is in process throughout the diocese that we are part of as well.” (PA)

“A good balance of responsibilities. Pastor is a participation manager and focuses on faith, liturgy, Eucharistic services, and sacraments while administration and outreach activities are driven by lay ministers.” (PC)

“Definitely. The people, the commissions, the council, and the PLC are committed to being and reaching out to be a ministering community.” (PC)

“Pastor, staff and council moving toward greater collaboration and common vision; in process of developing communities and unifying spirit between/throughout all our parish organizations; pastoral council and pastor. Hold a very positive ½-day retreat for parish leaders for pastoral council and pastor in which areas of high energy were identified and creating a follow-up session to put intentionality into creating and realizing these dreams.” (O)

Other participants indicate that their efforts to build a total ministering community are primarily still struggling or striving to emerge. Consequently, this unrealized dimension of a total ministering community is more prevalent from their perspectives as indicated by the following comments:

“We have a parish council that does not have strong leadership in the recent past so it is still struggling to name who they are, what is their role and then to begin assuming their roles. I also need additional education regarding the proper roles for the councils, committees and trustees before I can lead them through the process of self-discovery. I look forward to greater collaboration with them and my staff.” (PLC)

“The model is in place. However, a lot of times it is giving consent to the pastor’s wishes. Occasionally, debate does occur.” (D)

“Splintered. Staff collaborating with each other, with the exception of the pastor. Parish council working well together trying to work with new pastor – very supportive of other staff and ministry coordinators.” (PA)

“Structures are in place for the parish to be a total ministering community. Staff meets twice a month. PPC and commissions (Catholic education, spiritual life, human concerns and parish life) each meet monthly. The quality of communication and collaboration could improve, as could our interaction with other parishioners.” (PA)

In some instances, participants indicate that their efforts to create a total ministering community are largely dependent upon the wishes of the pastor. In some cases, this enables a total ministering community to emerge, while in other cases, this is blocked due to a pastor’s preferences. The following comments reflect the positive and negative impact of a commitment to a total ministering community which is dependent on the role of the pastor:

“Although the pastor shuns meetings, he tolerates some meetings. The parish council is active in helping the pastor to manage/administer the parish. There is a need to develop leadership skills among the ‘leaders’ of the parish organizations. Because of the pastor’s dedication as to all the parishioners, he is able to invite people to help him. There is a need for more communication among the organizations.” (D)

“The pastor is very laid back, but willing to allow most groups/organizations continuing support. The council is comprised of 10-15 of basically the same folks over the past 15 years. We try...but don’t get much support except in major parish social functions.” (D)

“I think we could use a little more work or effort on communication. Not surprising. Our parish has a top-down management style and I think the parish vision needs to be discerned so more of the parish can take ownership.” (D)

“The pastor is a micro-manager and while his intention is to be collaborative and empowering, the way he actually functions is neither. Most initiatives are top/down, staff driven. The staff tends to function in isolation from each other. Both parish councils are coming out of a long period of being rubber-stamp organizations, and do not have a real sense of ownership about their own leadership roles. At the pastor’s direction, I have worked hard to try to change that, but my work has been to some extent undercut by the pastor’s continuing top-down style.” (PA)

“This is a good description of our parish through our ‘council’, while existing and welcomed, is not strong. It tends to act in typical ‘advisory board’ fashion, accepting staff recommendations and offering support when asked. Participation of parishioners in outreach, youth education, marriage preparation, service activities, and administration is very good.” (PA)

“It depends on the theology the pastor, staff and council speak out of, and the visibility and connectedness of each of them. Does the average parishioner know what types of ministries are available and the people who head those ministries? Do the people in the pews communicate their needs and have a sense of what ministries are needed?” (DR)

“Pastor (hard worker, but micro-manager) tries to minister through presence at meetings and maintains control of other staff and leaders. Pastor and pastoral associate are only ones with direct access to parish council (more control mechanism). Many good things happening” (O)

“Council very rarely has any real decision making ability. Pastor (after he gets there) takes up at least half of the meeting giving his report. Very little time or energy left to do anything of substance with the rest of the meeting. It is no surprise that we struggle to find parishioners to be on the council.” (O)

Finally, a number of participants indicate that their efforts to build a total ministering community are largely dependent upon the independent roles of pastoral staff. In these instances, which may be in very large parishes, different pastoral staff members have different approaches to ministering with their constituents and key parishes. In these instances, pastoral staff is largely described as isolated and independent with varying degrees of commitment to a total ministering community. This independent role definition of pastoral staff is prevalent in the following comments:

“Since we don’t have a parish council it is difficult to know. The administrator gets together once in a while with staff on how the administration and sacramental programs are doing.” (D)

“We have lots of people ministering, but with no vision, goals or objectives. The staff and pastoral council never meet with each other or communicate with each other. Pastor is only link between the two. All are ministering as separate entities.” (PA)

“Most all leadership still comes from staff. Current pastor is absent a lot with activities outside parish and personal needs; basically, absent until Sunday Liturgy. Laity doesn’t feel empowered to lead.” (PA)

“We have a pastor (1 priest parish), staff and active council. All are terrific people, but especially with the staff, it’s still ‘lone ranger’ ministry. Not only do some staff members only concern themselves with their area, they don’t really see any reason to collaborate or inform the council. This is a weakness in my opinion.” (PA)

“Definitely not in my situation. I see more attempts of individuals working in their particular areas and not seeing how everything fits together as a whole.” (PA)

“I’m not sure there is a sense of ministering together as much as collection of individual ministers.” (PA)

“At one level, this is accuracy. We have parish commissions where parish leaders coordinate a specific aspect of parish life (i.e., Christian Action Commission, Liturgy Commission, social life, stewardship. A member of the parish council and the pastoral team actively participate and serve as a liaison. There is no interdependency between the parish council and the pastoral team.” (PA)

“Leadership is departmentalized. A parish pastoral council is in the process of being resurrected. I believe our new pastor does have a vision for a total ministering community.” (PA)

“Pastor and staff are primary leaders; the role and leadership of parish council and commissions need to be better defined and organized.” (PA)

D. Current Parish Leadership Models

Participants were asked to describe their current parish leadership models. This open-ended question prompted a range of themes for defining the leadership model of many Upper Midwest parishes. The predominant themes used to describe parish leadership models include:

- **Intentionally collaborative with a shared ministry**
- **Centered on a core team of professional staff**
- **Traditional and priest centered**
- **A model in change or transition**

A number of participants indicate their parish leadership model is intentionally collaborative toward building a shared ministry among the staff and members of the congregation. This intentionality for ministry is defined by individual parish leaders in the following ways:

“On the top level, we have pastor and staff (implementers) and PPC (visionary) and Finance Council (obvious). The PPC has communication (liaisons) link between 5 ministry commissions and finance.” (P)

“Collaboration between PLC and Pastoral Council, as well as with others who contribute to music, art environment, PSR catechists, grounds people, cemetery crew, youth ministry, RCIA, etc. As PLC, I make very few decisions without consulting at least a few members of the council.” (PLC)

“Great efforts on collaboration using Sofield’s book and participation in his workshop offered in the diocese. His book was given to each member of pastoral council and used for one year as monthly formation segment of council meetings” (PLC)

“Parish leaders, as commission facilitators, coordinate volunteers and provide opportunities of service for parish and to the wider community. We have an appointed parish council that communicates solely with the pastor. The pastoral team functions primarily as a staff with specific responsibilities which they are held accountable for and pastor oversees.” (PA)

“Selected by discernment pastoral council and commission; decision-making based on consensus; pastoral team – modeling small Christian communities and collaborative ministries” (PA)

“A shared leadership model that empowers lay ministers. There is a strong parish pastoral council that sets vision, mission, and overall goals. Commissions set own mission, goals, and action plans, driven by the parish mission. Parish council ensures alignment of goals and monitors results.” (PC)

“Strong, committed pastor and pastoral council; strong leaders of organizations; tendency is for operation in own individual areas. Pastor collaborates with staff and council. He is reaching out to create collaboration between all these elements. Do need a general reaching out to assembly at large.” (O)

Other pastoral leaders indicate their model of ministry is largely centered in the professional staff that functions as a core team. This staff-centered approach to parish ministry places staff at the center of parish life, eliciting the support of parishioners to help in their efforts. The following comments reflect a core team approach to parish leadership:

“Tag team – PA takes calls about marriage; pastor does first appointment. PA and Marriage Prep Team meet with couples for preparation; pastor does paperwork. Pastor and Prep Couple share the joy of wedding rehearsal and wedding.” (P)

“Four priests work as a team and two deacons and professional staff full and part-time; clergy and department supervisors meet weekly together and separately. All staff meetings quarterly; various staff committees meet regularly, as well.” (P)

“There is shared power with the pastoral and finance councils. We have a professional staff of five. There is little collaboration – sometimes barely cooperation between ministries.” (D)

“I would describe our predominant model as the ‘protecting your turf’ model. We have a parish high school and elementary school which were the predominant focus when the current pastor arrived 5 years ago. He and the two associates spent the majority of their time in school-related ministry. We are down to pastor and one associate now and a pastoral staff consisting of them, pastoral associate (lay, married woman), music director, elementary school principal, high school principal, schools development director, business manager, and parish secretary/bookkeeper. The pastor hired me as a pastoral associate four years ago, the first position of this kind in our area. The people wondered what I would do, since I was not being hired to serve the schools in any way.” (PA)

“It seems top-down management and individual can self-start their own projects.” (PA)

“We have worked hard to develop a collaborative team model. Pastoral staff – pastor, pastoral associate, pastoral minister faith formation, principal, music minister, parish staff – inclusive of secretary, maintenance, bookkeeper, lay leadership – all council/commission meet jointly. Pastoral staff present within all. We work from the four-fold mission of church.” (PA)

“Strong emphasis on pastor with staff leading in own individual ministries, areas of specialty” (PA)

“Pastor, 2 associates, 1 principal, 1 PA/DRE, 3 deacons – one of whom is the business manager and full-time. We also have a part-time music director who is staff on paper.” (PA)

Some parish leaders indicate their leadership model is still very traditional and priest-centered. In these instances, the wishes and preferences of the presiding pastor seem to determine the model of leadership adopted by the parish community:

“For the most part, the pastor runs the show. He assigns tasks to staff, but tends to micro-manage in areas of personal interest. On areas outside his interest or radar, he allows laity to assume almost complete control.” (D)

“Hierarchical at best; laity has leadership positions in name only and has never been empowered.” (PA)

“Charismatic pastor and good collaborative staff – sometimes too dependent on personality of pastor. Small faith communities – leadership changes as new people move in and out or work/family commitments change” (PA)

“Parish A (the larger one), in the minds of the parishioners (worker bees) to the tasks we’ve always done. Parish B (the smaller one), in the minds of the parishioners (worker bees) do whatever tasks we need to do to keep going (less rigid and tradition-bound, but still now ownership). Pastor wants to be empowering, but style fluctuates between micro-management and passive aggression. Pastoral associate (me) is collaborative and empowering with the laity and deeply frustrated with the pastor.” (PA)

“There is still a good amount of clericalism with priests and deacons seen as authority figures and decision-makers. Still, there are many active ministries led by parishioners, usually in an administrative role. We encourage parish leaders to take advantage of ministry training and continuing education opportunities. Among those who have done this, some provide ministry leadership.” (PA)

“Pastor – tight control; his vision is a well-structured organization that is directly linked to each other with lip service to subsidiarity, but closely controlled by him. We have heavily staff-driven initiatives. Fairly accountable pastor who allows pastoral associate to preach at all masses one weekend per month.” (O)

Finally, some pastoral leaders indicate their models of pastoral leadership are in change or transition. These leaders often indicate that their current state of transition defines how leadership functions:

“We went from a resident pastor who did all the decision making to an elected council under the leadership of a parish director. Now we are working to get the council to take responsibility.” (PLC)

“Pastor, associate pastors, pastoral life coordinators, pastoral associate, pastoral council, deacons; lack of understanding as to what these roles are – what they do – transitory session” (PLC)

“Our leadership models were developed in the ‘60s. We are in the process of change.” (D)

“Right now, we don’t have leadership, so how can we say we have any models. The leaders get together with their groups, but there is no connection with the parish.” (D)

“There are about 10 real ‘leaders’, all with a small ‘army’ of ministers. I feel that we all must learn to bring others in...although it is difficult in a parish with only 400 to 450 families in a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood.” (D)

E. Leadership of the Pastor

Participants were asked to discuss the various roles pastors play in exercising their leadership. Many parish life coordinators reflected on their role as de facto on-site pastors of the parish community and see themselves inside this question. The most frequently mentioned roles of pastors are:

- **Consultative, collaborative, and empowering, calling forth the gifts of others**
- **Gatekeeper and change agent for new roles, structures, and programs**
- **Central authority who delegates tasks**

A number of participants define the role of pastor they experience as one of consultative, collaborative, and empowering. The emphasis on this leadership style is calling forth the gifts of others, enabling parish communities to realize and exercise their call to ministry. The following comments reflect the commitment of pastors to an empowering form of leadership:

“I believe I am collaborative. I encourage the use of gifts and talents. I stand by my leadership. I give credit to the leaders. I ask for help. I am not heavy-handed.” (P)

“Four pastors share the role. Pastor moderator makes sure all are focused and communicating and praying together. Each pastor assumes areas of ministerial responsibility, yet all are encouraged to participate as time and interest allow. The pastors serve the staff.” (P)

“Cheerleader, facilitator, ‘empowerer’; actively involved in evangelizing efforts; try to model stewardship within and beyond” (P)

“We are failing to be collaborative and having a common vision of when we need to lead us to grow not only as a parish, but as area faith community” (PLC)

“I prefer a collaborative style of leadership – parish director (me) seeking advice from councils, staff, and committees – trying not to ‘overrule’ unless absolutely necessary.” (PLC)

“Inclusive; collaborative; empowerment of others; calling forth giftedness; recognizing the baptismal call to ministry; bringing broader vision” (PLC)

“If you mean PLC, then I try to lead in a collaborative way, helping each group within the parish move in the same direction. If you mean the Canon Law Pastor, then our Canon Law Pastor has never visited the parish over the past 5 years.” (PLC)

“The pastor tried to be collaborative and has a shared responsibility vision of leadership, but is having trouble bringing leadership groups and persons on board with that. He is trying to move the parish to a more balanced vision of parish and the schools as ministries of the parish, not vice versa.” (PA)

“Pastor is director/empowerment person. Has general oversight, but encourages those immediately in charge of areas to take care of those areas and empower laity. Helps set vision and works on development.” (PA)

“I would characterize the pastor as ‘shepherd’ in that he gathers his staff together and sends us out again. I function relatively independently and seek collaboration with him. The pastor trusts the staff members to do that job.” (PA)

“The pastor is a gentle, genuine and prayerful model for all. His sense of humor and his constant stress on forgiveness as the mark of a Christian community have had a tremendous effect on the nature of the community.” (PA)

“He is very consultative and goes to great lengths to listen to all viewpoints when planning. He does not like conflict at all, and admits that he will avoid it. This can cause some problems as we move from ‘information gathering’ to ‘implementation’. As far as day-to-day management, he allows staff to do their jobs with little interference, keeping his distance, but available when approached by others.” (PA)

“Fosters development of lay people to become involved in parish leadership” (PC)

Other pastoral leaders define the role of their pastors as one of gatekeeper and change agent, bringing forth new roles, structures, and programs within the parish. These leaders often focus on organizational skills and priorities of pastors as they give birth to and call forth new structures and programs. The following comments reflect this dimension of the leadership of pastors:

“I see my role as PLC as one of keeping leaders informed of information from the diocese and to take information back to the diocese when needed. I introduce new concepts – some they accept – some are rejected. They know I’m there when they need me, but they are free to do what needs to be done. I do like to know what they do.” (PLC)

“He keeps people on their tasks, e.g., pastoral associate, food pantry (social justice) director, and a deacon who is employed full time. Leadership of the pastor is shown by his active role in all the facets of the parish. He is a paranoid ‘cleaning lady’ and wants to see things in order and clean.” (D)

“Basically, to make sure the groups/organizations get along, don’t step on each others toes, etc. The ‘calendar’ is the most important thing. He is not afraid to do physical labor and conducts Mass his own way.” (D)

“Pastor has worked to introduce Art Baranowski’s model of restructuring the parishes into communities where ordinary people help each other connect faith and life regularly. This has been one of my major responsibilities and most actual implementation I have done. My efforts have been hampered by having the time to implement their fundamental bottom-up model in the rather top-down style of the pastor.” (PA)

“Primarily, the pastor provides leadership through the feel of liturgical celebration. In our parish, this both leads and reflects the spirit of the parish. Though all members of the pastoral team rotate preaching responsibilities weekly, the priest definitely sets the tone for the celebration. His ability to do this well is pivotal. Beyond the liturgy, the pastor has the last word in hiring team members. Even though there is an interview process involving council and others and there is a ‘preaching audition’, the rest of the parish ‘recommends’. The pastor’s good decisions on team members and office staff are crucial. Important as well is the pastor’s role in the administration committee. Though his participation on that committee is not mandated anywhere, custom has dictated that he be the team member working with administration. His abilities to keep the ship’s innards running smoothly and the bills and salaries paid promptly makes a huge difference to the general stability of the whole operation. In addition to the above, the pastor’s ability to use the near absolute canonical authority that he has in a way that gives real authority to others based on their abilities and their role in meeting the parish’s needs is basic. There are no rules for this and precious few guidelines. Our parish has been very fortunate in having a bishop who has assigned us men who have this ability.” (PA)

“Oversees all parish activities by participation in the parish pastoral council and various boards (e.g., school, RE); relies on staff and lay leadership to ‘manage’ the parish” (PC)

“He is good people and works hard. He is present at meetings. He teaches with homilies; pushes for long and short-term planning throughout the organization. He sees the need and future for collaboration and is reliably present.” (O)

There are pastoral leaders who define the primary role of pastor as the central authority who delegates tasks to others based on their personal preferences and priorities. The following more centralized approach to authority as the role of the pastor is illustrated in the following comments:

“Pastor does everything. Pastor is sacramental leader. Green Bay co-pastor – arranges functions as parish life – jointly running parish. Our pastor empowers staff and parishioners – he is not a mentor, but allows others to fulfill and follow perceived needs.” (PLC)

“He is the captain at the helm. People, especially those in his inner circle, get jobs of responsibility and he provides good leadership and acceptable communication with them. However, if you’re not in this inner circle, it becomes increasingly difficult to get guidance. He has become so busy that he is frequently booked for multiple meetings at the same time on the same day.” (D)

“Pastor ‘talks the talk’ of collaborative ministry, but doesn’t ‘walk the walk’. The staff is constantly living/working under the premise that they could be dismissed. He most definitely has his own way of control which restricts people using their gifts.” (PA)

“Ultimate decision-maker, his style is to present his vision and let people add, change, or delete. Unfortunately, too often parishioners think ‘that’s what Father wants’ and shy away from being honest and open with their own vision.” (PA)

F. Staff Leadership

Participants were asked to define the leadership roles provided by staff in those parishes with multiple staff members. When discussing and commenting on the roles of staff, participants often characterize staff roles as:

- **Organizational leaders**
- **Empowering and facilitating the gifts of others to emerge**

A number of participants stress the importance of organizational leadership roles of staff for their functional areas. This program management approach to viewing staff emphasizes their independence in planning, executing, and organizing various programs and activities. The following comments reflect this organizational dimension of staff leadership:

“The staff is the principle movers and organizers. They also are the church professionals who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience. It is essential that the staff have a healthy working relationship with each other, pastor, and the folks in their commissions.” (P)

“The two school principals think the schools are the most important entity and that the parish would die without them. The music director is excellent, but not very collaborative. The business manager has a good sense with money and personnel, but doesn’t see the ‘ministry’ aspect of the parish’s use of finances.” (PA)

“All new ministries (e.g., bereavement, pastoral visiting) have been staff-initiated and staff-led (i.e., by me). I am now, after 3 years, working to turn them over to other folks.” (PA)

“Again, each person is working in an isolated manner. Little or no communication is provided, so parishioners sometimes don’t recognize what staff leadership there is.” (PA)

“We anchor the parish. We collaborate with the parishioners. We offer guidance in their projects. We are the liaison between the Archdiocese and the parish. We encourage ongoing faith formation. We bring in speakers to enhance our world view. We inform the parish about activities going on in the diocese that they can become a part of.” (PA)

“This varies per staff member. I have intentionally chosen to ‘pastor’ parish leaders to encourage leadership, promote formation, and affirm and celebrate the parish ministries. Other staff members dole out tasks to others. It is ‘their’ ministry and others ‘help’ them.” (PA)

“Strong in own areas of interest or assignment, not able to come together to support/lead as a group” (PA)

“I was appointed 2+ years ago and began staff meetings right way. They had not had this before. I have asked staff to bring concerns to me or to the group. Meetings consist of 4 people – principal, R.E. Coordinator, bookkeeper, and parish director. Principal and R.E. Coordinator lead their staff/volunteer catechists. We plan some things together.”

“The staff provides the results...work with volunteers to get things done. We have an excellent and professional staff that works hard to execute the pastor’s vision. I wish, however, that more of the staff would participate in adult evangelization programs that are conducted in the parish.” (D)

“The school principal (for the past 10 years) is a vibrant, well-liked, indeed beloved woman. Without her, I feel our school would have closed long ago. The DRE is into everything...I admire her energy and commitment, but she has to learn to let go.” (D)

“To some extent, it is a ‘fiefdom’ system – each protecting their turf. The exception is in formation – both members are wonderful about drawing people forth to share these ministries.” (D)

“The staff provides educational, youth ministry, stewardship, Christian service, communication/information, and some parish life leadership to groups/organizations within the commission structure of parish council.” (PA)

“There are various leadership styles among staff members. We have an authoritarian, but good-hearted business manager who has been around since the beginning and is at the center of many daily management decisions. Another parishioner/staff person also tends to direct her ministry in an authoritarian way. A number of staff members have more theological education and professional training, and encourage more collaboration and lay leadership.” (PA)

“Staff focuses primarily on the school (principal), religious education, faith formation (director), and parish operations (business manager)” (PC)

“They are often the ‘doers’ rather than the steward of talents and wisdom in the parish.” (DR)

“Very good staff – all capable in own areas. Visionaries; strong staff leadership and competence” (O)

“Most staff does most of the work – it’s ‘easier’ than working with parishioners.” (O)

In addition, pastoral leaders often define the role of staff as empowering and facilitating the gifts of others to emerge. This enabling and convening staff role is reflected in the following comments:

“Empowering laity to come forth and develop and share their gifts; challenging each other to collaborate and excel.” (P)

“The staff serves and empowers the people to use their gifts in the various areas of ministry. New ministries are developed depending on need and gifts to be shared.” (P)

“They use their talents independently to move forward a ministry or outreach. They collaborate, they evaluate, and they support one another.” (P)

“More collaborative. Affirming of new ideas, effort expended, as well as results produced. Doesn’t have to be in charge. Willing to resource. Uses consensus to arrive at decisions” (PA)

“Staff liaisons to each commission and many ministries. We have over 100 ministries that parishioners can become involved in. Our responsibility is ‘to educate, encourage and invite those around us to develop, utilize, and share their God-given talents and abilities. My personal mission statement” (PLC)

“No staff. Parish director and great volunteers, affirmation, and appreciation and recognition encourages them and invites others to get involved.” (PLC)

“We support one another and call forth gifts in the community. We challenge the lay leadership with mission, accountability and creating community.” (PA)

“Provides oversight in particular areas for lay (congregational) leaders; helps members discern gifts and invites their use (empowering).” (PA)

“Staff takes more leadership – good leadership. They try to work and train volunteers. Some of them have some training and are competent individuals with skills in collaboration.” (DR)

G. Leadership of the Community

Participants were asked to reflect on the leadership provided by their parish communities. For the most part, participants define very traditional roles played by their parish communities. They often define the leadership roles of parishioners as:

- **Actively engaged in ministries of the parish**
- **Discerning and developing the pastoral vision**
- **Passive and not well engaged**

A number of participants indicate that their parish members are actively engaged in the vital ministries of the parish. These are often defined as service ministries to the entire congregation, as well as liturgical ministries. The following comments reflect this level of engagement in parish ministry among parishioners:

“When the community gathers, they are a powerful group. They need to be respected and treated with care. Through the PPC, there is a real link to the whole community. They are the liaisons to the community.” (P)

“They are the hidden resources. They are the underground well we tap if we are doing ministry correctly. They encourage, they direct, they give vision, and they evaluate often times with their feet.” (P)

“Sharing their gifts within the community, but more importantly, sharing beyond. Stepping forth as council, commissions, finance committee, etc. to share the mission of Jesus in the parish; leaders in the greater community in the world inviting people to know Jesus and of the importance of working for him and worship” (P)

“Community offers leadership by bringing forth their desires and willingness to assist in development of additional ministries service and outreach. Much of what is initiated is from a grassroots effort.” (PLC)

“Since our community has never had a full-time resident pastor, they have learned to take ownership of the parish – they do things without being asked – just know what needs to be done. The first time we had a funeral in the parish, I was going to everyone to make sure they knew what to do. One of the elderly men looked at me and said, ‘Sister, just relax. We know what to do – we’ve been doing it here for years.’” (PLC)

“We have an increasing number of parishioners attending formal ministry formation programs and they are becoming very effective. We have over 50 ministries in our church, most with staff and volunteers as leaders.” (D)

“Some ministries are staffed and run by members of the community; members for the various councils and boards; leadership by voicing their opinions, especially when they are unhappy.” (D)

“We have many ministry teams and volunteers. Coordinating and training them is haphazard. I try to focus on the formation of the ministry teams I am responsible for, enabling people to use their gifts for ministry.” (PA)

“The pastoral council tries to model leadership. They struggle with resisting being the ‘worker bees’. They are modeling doing faith sharing as part of their work.” (PA)

“The parish community provides leadership as coordination of parish activities (i.e., ministers of care, lectors, and Eucharistic ministers are coordinated by parish leaders).” (PA)

“Long history of ownership of major parish fundraisers and ministries, such as religious education; less on supporting a vision or model of parish life/ministry” (PA)

“The community members bring many gifts to parish life. Some contribute skills we wouldn’t have without them – from computer to electric to management. Others feel called to areas of ministry – calling them to greater leadership is often a challenge. The parish has been a leader in the community in service and social outreach because of strong leadership at all levels here.” (PA)

“Parish A: Lots of ownership of liturgical ministries and certain traditional activities (e.g., fish fries, men’s group, women’s group, food pantry). Little to no sense of ownership of the overall life and direction of the parish. Parish B: Similar, except somewhat more ownership of overall life and direction – but small, elderly, energy and resource poor.” (PA)

“There are many good volunteers – many people who understand the concept of stewardship. They provide help and hope to our parish community and to the pastoral staff.” (PA)

Other pastoral leaders tend to focus on the leadership roles their parishioners play in discerning and evolving the vision of parish life. In these settings, parishioners are not only engaged in implementing the ministries of the parish, but are active in discerning and developing the vision for these ministries. The following comments reflect this dimension of leadership in the parish community:

“It is very important to listen to the community – find out the views – concerns, dreams, and problems. I’ve done town hall meetings for our local area parish planning groups and annual meetings each year.” (PLC)

“...As I mentioned above, our parish council tends to be of an ‘advisory board’ nature. Maybe our parish set-up would be termed a ‘strong team’ system. With a handful of exceptions over the past two decades, there has been satisfaction with team leadership. In those exceptions, parishioners’ objections were specific, firm and, at least to the majority’s satisfaction, dealt with promptly. Over the years, parishioners have reported general satisfaction with their level of input into the decision-making process. On another level, that of what I’d call intra-parish leadership, I think we have very strong community leadership. Several times within the course of the year, parishioners speak at Eucharist regarding the way that they live out their faith commitment to the Reign of God by means of their professional lives and relationships. This is very powerful leadership. We have informal groups of parishioners who get together for lunch regularly sometimes, though not usually, with a team member showing up. At these gatherings, real parish support for living the faith goes on. There is a student peer ministry group that provides many forms of leadership in social, service, prayer and outreach situations...” (PA)

“We have many gifted, talented and skilled members. They bring ideas for greater involvement in the world. They are living examples of faith in action. They have brought new ministries into the church (for example health and wellness has expanded. Now we have wellness ministry with doctors and nurses providing screenings and workshops). Other projects are developing. It takes time to develop and get training before being presented to the whole parish. But, the joy is in knowing people are working on their own with enthusiasm. It is not pastor driven, but people driven. Collaboration includes other parish partnerships, staff and parishioners.” (PA)

“Parish pastoral council – vision, mission, overall goals; commissions – their mission, goals, and work plans (annual); recruiting of volunteers; ministry coordination. Ministries – lead for each ministry” (PC)

“Through parish organizations – address many areas of need. Not recognition of parishioners who are leaders outside of the parish community.” (O)

In defining the leadership of the parish community as a whole, some participants focus on the fact that their members are still passive and not engaged in the ministry of parish life. The following comments reflect this reality:

“Except for 10-15 people, the community is true ‘sheep’ following directions of the 10-15. Those who come to church are truly spiritual, although the overhanging fear of our parish being ‘squeezed out’ by gentrification and nearby wealthier parishes is taking its toll.” (D)

“I am not sure to what degree the community is aware that it is their role to provide leadership, since they are still indoctrinated in a Vatican I model, where the pastor does everything.” (DR)

“The community plays little or no role in leadership!” (DR)

“At the present time, community leadership is minimal. I have come to know and recognize many who I think will be very willing to step forward as we change in the next 6-8 months.” (O)

“I think the community has been very frustrated in their attempts to take initiative.” (O)

“Work toward organizational goals, energy, resources, service in leadership of ministries, ownership of activities, welcoming, hospitality, expertise and gifts in a wide variety of skills and talents, hunger for the church to grow.” (O)

H. Intentionality of their Parish Leadership Model

Participants were asked to reflect on why their parish leadership models function as they do. Three predominant reasons surfaced:

- **The model functions out of necessity based on local needs.**
- **The model is nurtured by a vision for an intentional faith community.**
- **The model is derived from the style or leadership of a pastor, past or present.**

Participants indicate various reasons why their parish leadership models function out of necessity. Many of these reasons have to do with changing demographics, changing leadership structures, resources available to the parish, the economic realities of the parish community, and an emerging demand for greater cultural diversity. The following comments reflect an intentional parish leadership model derived from necessity:

“The parish has endured a lot of hardship. Removal of pastor who sexually abused; closing of school; ‘white flight’; people stepped forward at these times of crisis and claimed their role as leaders. Staff supported this in a collaborative and empowering way.” (P)

“Each person is seen as a gift – if elderly and unable, they have their ministry of prayer. The others, if they choose and they do to have a viable church community, they all have and cooperate and do their part. When there is no paid staff other than the director, volunteers come forth.” (PLC)

“Because of the history of the parish, lay-oriented due to the fact that the last 2 pastors (25 years) lead full-time diocesan responsibilities” (PLC)

“We have 100 plus ministries – although I believe the need for inclusivity. I think sometimes church is a reflection of culture rather than counter-cultural. For instance, our society/culture embraces individualism and everyone expressing what they want instead of a tolerance for joining in what someone else may be interested in.” (PLC)

“Unfortunately, it has been this way for a long time and, except for a short hiatus with a more ‘pastoral’ pastor and an energetic associate pastor, it seems to function well, considering everything.” (D)

“Because we don’t have a pastor and when we had him, he was more concerned about how to maintain the parish than the ministerial part.” (D)

“Hierarchical structure of church and diocese and the attitude of clergy (pastor). Laity is so busy living their lives that they stopped challenging and gave up trying to be heard.” (PA)

“There was a need because we have been without a pastor so long. We had several total parish meetings. We looked at our mission statement. With brainstorming and collaboration, we have not just survived, but are beginning to have a kind of rebirth. Success breeds success.” (PA)

“Basically, because this is the way it has been in the past. Trying to educate on roles of pastoral council members and importance of taking leadership of the parish – not just the pastor and sister. Also, trying to empower parishioners to become involved in parish. Has been a struggle – have core group of aging parishioners/parents of school children who don’t always support or participate in parish activities – seem to expect parish financial support and that school is the only priority of parish.” (PA)

“The parish is known to be a ‘doing’ parish – from the beginning (in 1978), if there was a need, the parish tried to respond. When hungry people started knocking at the door, the parish helped them...then organized a board, hired a staff person, opened a food pantry, etc. Five years ago, the parish discerned a need for adult education and evangelization and decided to hire a pastoral associate to work on these. Now, I work with an adult faith formation team, welcoming team, etc.” (PA)

Some pastoral leaders define their model of ministry as being nurtured by a vision for an intentional model of parish life. This high level of intentionality in parish leadership is reflected in the following comments:

“The basis for it is stewardship. We (staff and pastor) recognize the role and commitment of the parishioners. We have a structure which enables involvement and coordinates it.” (P)

“We are a merged parish of six parishes that include 16,000 people. It developed from a strategic planning process of the parish leadership. It was their idea – their parish. Good parish leadership is available.” (P)

“I believe this model works because the people want their parish to continue and are willing to work to make it happen. They do need someone in a leadership role – not necessarily me – because most are not highly educated, especially in ‘church’ matters. They are willing to learn new, but many hold on to ‘we’ve always...’” (PLC)

“Simply, it’s what’s needed right now. I hope it works because the community must take ownership. Parishes cannot be viable and vibrant without involvement. Authoritarian has been the past pre-Vatican II pray, pay, obey. That model does not work for today. I hope the current collaborative models of leadership that energize, educate, and empower are also ones of the spirit. I hope the model is working because it’s

organic and of the spirit. The people are ready. Let's put some wind in their sails that they may sail!" (PLC)

In some instances, participants indicate that their model of parish leadership is derived from the styles and preferences of their current or former pastors. This includes positive, as well as negative impacts on the model of parish leadership. The following comments reflect the pastor-centered dominance of a parish leadership model:

"Parish leadership in my parish is the pastor's. The people seem to 'allow' him to function this way. No one seems to question him about his leadership style because he won't listen to anybody." (D)

"They have been under the thumb of a pastor that did it all himself and never allowed the people to take hold of the reins. I think that they are over reacting to their new found freedom!" (D)

"The leadership model works in the top-down way because that's what we perceive the pastor to want. We have a pastoral council and finance council, but these are strictly advisory. Most new ideas come from the pastor and get discussed and approved by the councils. Many times in the 'rubber stamp' mode because most all council members have been reappointed since our pastor's arrival 3 years ago." (D)

"Basically, because some of the leadership are too tired to respond in another way. If the pastor is not comfortable with delegating or collaboration, staff tends to do things in a very isolated way." (PA)

"The people of both parishes are deeply rooted in an old style: 'Father knows best', passive and minimalist model of church. They are waking up to a call to take on more responsibility as they face the very real possibility of merger to closure. The pastor wants to encourage their sense of ownership, but his own personality and clerical conditioning undercuts both his intention and my role." (PA)

"Our parish leadership model 'gets things done' because the leadership is committed to serve the Lord and His Church, but at the present time, it lacks a shepherd that exemplifies his vested time and care for this particular flock he has been given – that trickles down and out." (PA)

"The pastor lacks competent skills in leadership. He does not provide vision nor any possibility on how to address the issues and concerns of the parish community. Pastoral staff and pastoral council have not nor do they know how to challenge the status quo." (DR)

"Pastor's model of working with others; does not micro-manage and has strong sense of vision for the parish" (O)

"The pastor likes to be in control while giving the appearance of collaboration. Yet, he is rarely on the premises and often not available." (O)

I. Future Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership

To conclude the reflection on models of pastoral leadership, participants were asked to identify future models of parish leadership they see emerging. A wide range of viewpoints are reflected in their comments. However, the following themes and issues surfaced most frequently:

- **Baptismal call to leadership of parishioners**
- **Lay-led faith communities**
- **Clustered or shared ministry with other parishes**
- **Frustration with the effort to create or implement new models of parish leadership**
- **Intentional in their parish development process**

A number of participants indicate their emerging models of pastoral leadership are characterized by the call to leadership of all parishioners. This community-centered approach to leadership is dominant among parish leaders who view their roles as primarily formational in the ministry process. The following comments reflect this commitment and intentionality to a formational approach to parish leadership:

“By inviting and pointing out people’s gifts and talents; encouraging people to take leadership roles; giving facilities to people for their ministries; putting parish money behind the programs people initiate.” (P)

“Invitation – particularly with parishioners. With over 100 ministries to choose from, it can be overwhelming to someone who wants to get involved for the first time. Everything begins with invitation – follow-up with training, education and sharing your story of faith which in turn helps them to develop and share their stories.” (PLC)

“Each member has something – some gift or talent to share – leadership role is to create that environment where these gifts can be shared so we will be faithful to the mission statement we have accepted.” (PLC)

“I am working to become an agent for positive change by reminding people that their creation in their mother’s womb signals their empowerment by God. One does not receive empowerment from another human being.” (D)

“I work with the liturgical ministers as a volunteer and we have formation twice a month – we pray that they get trained in their ministries or services they offer to the parish to build or try to build the community among them through prayer and scripture reflections.” (D)

“We are intentional in involving students in leadership positions, in collaborating with area churches, and empowering people to make a difference.” (PA)

“In trying to get parishioners to lead various ministries; growth area – we set goals or structures as staff or pastoral council and then don’t stick to them” (PA)

“By inviting new parishioners to be part of some projects that are my responsibility, affirming what is done by various people; challenging and/or asking questions about possibilities for parish leadership; seeing prayer as integral to what we do as staff.” (PA)

“We begin with prayer. We are trying to be Bible-based in all activities. All activities must be in line with our Tomorrow’s Parish profile. Our annual meeting targets the aims for the year. We try to pool resources to reach the goals. We pray every step of the way.” (PA)

“We are striving to become a more vibrant parish in calling forth our parishioners to take greater ownership in the parish. It has been a struggle since it is an aging community as far as participation in various organizations and ministries in general.” (PA)

“This was a parish that prided itself on argumentativeness. Its focus was on turf wars and stuff. What was needed most was healing; forgiveness and prayer. By modeling these in our style and words, we have attempted to change the nature of the community. It has been a success, but not easily achieved.” (PA)

“Our understanding of parish ministry is that we are the encouragers of people to whom God has given faith. We do that through the sacraments – especially the Eucharist, teaching the Tradition which includes Scripture as its touchstone and promoting a community that is supportive of each member’s work for the Reign of God in his or her own situation...” (PA)

“We have committees that are beginning to come to life and bring new life to the parish and local community.” (PLC)

“Empowerment of individuals and families; education; RENEW was a program prior to my presence that seemed to emerge action and ownership.” (PLC)

“More and more ownership of responsibility for the future of the parish. Clustering continues with sacramental ministries with greater understanding and acceptance all the part of parishioners.” (PLC)

“The laity are struggling, suffering, and some are taking action – feeling more and more empowered. The underground group – with prayer and reflection – have come forth into the light of day – inserting themselves into key areas – meeting with other groups to take ownership again of the parish.” (PA)

“I believe with the help of God we are headed in the direction of better collaborative ministry once transformation takes place within the core leadership.” (PA)

Other parish leaders indicate a model of leadership based on lay-led professional staff that have primary responsibility for parish direction and ministry:

“Our pastoral associate does prayer services. She does Ash Wednesday noon services (the largest) and always is complimented on ‘her’ Mass and why she doesn’t do more on Sundays. We have a development director who ironically is leading us to stewardship (all about people, not money). A choir and liturgy director who encourages everyone, young and old, so we have 5 choirs, vibrant liturgy, and kids who want to come to Mass.” (P)

“Since the parish director has been assigned, many more people have become involved in different roles of service in the parish. Several with encouragement have taken academic courses and helped them in their specific ministry. I see the model of ‘ownership’ becomes more of a reality each year.” (PLC)

“Increasing number of laity being formed by diocesan lay formation course. This will equip more adults to effectively pass on their faith.” (PLC)

“One in which the laity is becoming increasingly more responsible. We went without a pastor for about 6 months and, by God’s grace, things continue to run fairly smoothly. Everyone knows their jobs...their place. I only wish more would get involved.” (D)

“I have been working to develop ministry teams based on the concept of everyone being called and gifted for ministry by reason of baptism. Gifted leadership on the teams is emerging. I’m inviting people who are not the ‘regulars’ who do everything to participate on the teams. I work with the new parishioners and have access to the ‘new blood’ of the parish.” (PA)

Still other parish leaders speak of their efforts to cluster parish efforts or share specific ministries with other parishes:

“We are beginning dialogue with two neighboring parishes on how we might better serve our parishioners in the coming years, i.e., combined schools, shared staffs, and pastors. We are beginning intentional small faith communities as a way to preserve faith and enhance spirituality.” (PA)

“The two parishes, because of the experience of shared staff and the fact that all ministries I have initiated have been joint, are learning to look beyond ‘parish as university unto itself’, to a broader vision of church and of parishes cooperating in collaborative ministries and outreach. This is also being promoted through their participation in a multi-parish joint planning process spearheaded by our pastor (to give him the credit he is due).” (PA)

“Area faith community (made up of 2 or more parishes); no individual parish councils – these are now ‘Administrative Councils’ taking care of temporal needs of individual parishes; an area Faith Pastoral Council represented by 2 – 3 people from each parish and pastoral leaders – to develop plans and ways to meet the needs of an ‘area’ not just individual parishes.” (PLC)

Other pastoral leaders are unable to specifically define the model of parish leadership they see developing. However, they indicate a commitment to developing an intentional model for the parish based upon the needs and priorities of local communities. This intentional approach to forming a model of parish leadership is reflected in the following comments:

“This was no accident. The design I use came from my eight years of presenting the ‘New Pastors Program’ for the Archdiocese of Chicago.” (P)

“Collaboration is encouraged – staff and council formation is done. We keep focused on our mission statement.” (P)

“I’m just forging ahead with a ‘ministry team’ model, inviting parishioners to form ministry teams, training and forming them, grounding their understanding of their ministry in Catholic teaching, developing goals and objectives, planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and efforts. So far, I have started a Baptism Ministry Team, Youth Ministry Team, Welcoming Ministry Team, and Adult Education Ministry Team. The teams are beginning to collaborate with one another to plan and implement events. I am learning more myself (attended Call & Gifted Workshop) about how to help people discern their Baptismal call and gifts, so ministries can be formed around the gifts present in the community.” (PA)

“Pastor uses consultation and reminds groups of their advisory status. Pushes groups toward results he favors by persuasion. Staff is not as intentional as they should be. Tries to affirm others consistently, says thank you, models consensus. Parish initiates ideas, streamlines processes and sets clear goals, focuses on timely results.” (PA)

“We work hard at doing ministry by the commission model. The pastoral team puts in many hours and much energy into decision-making which considers all elements of parish life.” (PA)

“On a parish level, the council has set goals for the parish to work on spiritual formation. They have set aside ½ hour per meeting for this and have asked all other commissions and ministries to do so also. We have developed a guide of about 25 questions (ranging from very basic to more complex) for formation and faith sharing. The parish also publishes each Advent and Lent a booklet on the daily readings with daily reflections written by parishioners to help build community and intentionally link life and faith and show that we are all involved in this – not just staff or priest.” (PA)

“Our measures are Gospel, four-fold mission, and tenets of CST; conscious, deliberate prayer and study (i.e., Vatican II documents, social teaching). Evaluation – against our measures, looking at programs, individuals, constructive comments, gifts” (PA)

“The parish is currently working on our next five-year plan. We are surveying, interviewing and holding a town hall meeting. When all this is gathered, the PPC, staff and other leadership will set goals in all areas of parish life. We are being connected with our faith tradition as we transition into the next five years. The process has been very energizing for the lay leaders and me. Moving intentionally from ‘information gathering’ to ‘implementation’ will be a key to success.” (PA)

“The Parish Pastoral Council, through prayerful discernment, settled on a process of a parish-driven mission, and commission/ministry empowerment to institutionalize what has been a very successful approach.” (PC)

“Especially from our parish council there is a question of structure change so as to meet the parish needs. Currently, some PPC members are seeing the need for prayer and formation. Hopefully, the future will provide opportunities for listening, reflecting, and visioning.” (PA)

“Discernment; bringing parish pastoral council and staff together for prayer and reflection; staff is questioning pastor more who is responding by re-thinking certain actions and will introduce consensus process to PPC in the New Year; parish council is expanding membership and restoring commissions, enlarging leadership base.” (PA)

Unfortunately, a number of participants also indicate frustration with their efforts to create new models of parish leadership. The frustration is often due to difficulty in dealing with the current challenges of parish life, particularly economic and demographic challenges. Others indicate frustration with authority and leaders who block the ability for new models to emerge. The following comments reflect a certain degree of frustration among pastoral leaders who seek to create new models of parish leadership:

“It’s hard to be intentional in anything at present because our diocese is in the process of clustering parishes. We are with 5 other larger parishes. By 2008, we’re scheduled for 2 pastors and one associate for the 6 parishes. At present, we have a Sacramental Minister who comes from St. Louis, but that could change in June. Any planning can change from meeting to meeting, but in the parish, there is much hope.” (PLC)

“This is the area we need to address. We flounder – not a firm/specific list of goals, so no coordinated direction. We need to begin with exploring organizational models and reviewing our constitution and mission statement before discussing the future. It is frustrating to attempt to do all this in the midst of severe financial/revenue shortfall. It is difficult to focus on the dream/new life that you want to encourage while you have to worry so much about how to pay for this year’s budget items and wonder if we will have to make major cuts next year and where.” (PLC)

“Absolutely not. This gets talked about a lot and never acted on. Big issue is lack of plan; lack of word; lack of leadership” (PA)

“... There are a larger number of young people of both genders who do not desire to be priests but who are confused by the choices between very authoritarian models and communal models of church leadership. Though they may tend to the more traditional “Father decides” approach to parish life, they primarily want the church to settle on one model and they don’t much care which as long as it’s stable. There are many who get to know the communal model of parish leadership that our parish follows and come to like it. They are very frustrated, even to the point of ceasing to be active parish members, when they cannot find the model they have experienced here after graduating and moving on. These young adults know what they want but they are unsure of how to bring it about if there is not parish leadership that shares their views. I would like to say that our parish’s model will emerge as the standard, and in the long run, I believe it will. In the short run, however, I am not sure.” (PA)

“Few are coming forward. We need more people to invest in their parish – to make it their parish. Many are still testing the water, unsure if they want to jump in. We’re trying to be the lifeguards.” (PA)

IV. PARISH BEST PRACTICES:

Upper Midwest Symposium participants discussed parish best practices beginning with a series of case studies offered by individual participants outlining pastoral practices that contribute to the development of their parishes. Following the case study presentations, pastoral leaders participated in table discussions and completed written reflection questions to evaluate a number of factors concerning parish best practices for the future.

A. Relationship of Total Ministering Community to Healthy Parishes

Participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which healthy parishes of the future will depend upon a total ministering community of pastors, staff, and parishioners working together. Participants strongly enforce the idea that a total ministering community is a preferred model for giving birth to the parish of the future. The following comments reflect this viewpoint:

“Although there are other models, I do not think they are as effective in the USA. I think this model also gives a depth of ownership to the people. This is their involvement – compared to European church.” (P)

“It is essential. None of us can do it alone.” (P)

“Absolutely, but the key is training – confronting difficulties, working hard to make this happen. Defining roles – following through on decided actions – if one continues to change the action plan decided by the group without consultation, it will sabotage the entire process.” (PLC)

“It’s the only way there will be growth of any kind.” (PLC)

“It will probably be totally dependent upon that.” (PLC)

“Complete dependence; communication; unified vision and goals; collaboration” (PLC)

“Healthy parishes will require the total submission of ego and will to do the work of God, the mission of Jesus and the guidance of the Holy Spirit by everyone. We must give up thoughts of privilege or rank to help parishes grow as family. Those who lead must serve God’s people, not their ideas or personal agendas.” (D)

“I think in order to have a healthy parish community, there must be a leader who unifies and collaborates with the entire community. There is a need to ‘re-train’ pastors at pastoring his parish, especially in leadership skills, such as communication, interaction skills, visioning, etc.” (D)

“It will definitely be dependent on all those working together in communion. Each must accept the responsibility and be willing to communicate with each other without being afraid that they’re stepping on each other’s toes. Must realize that there is no one group that is more important than another.” (D)

“Totally dependent – without this, it will be a real struggle.” (D)

“Collaborating; worship well; respectful dialogue; appreciation of gifts of community; accountability; hospitality; sense of humor; connection with larger church; constant development of new leaders – all these are critical.” (PA)

“This is vital. One difference that I hope for is that parishioners come to see this interdependence as both their right and responsibility as baptized Christians. I hope to see this model as an image of our triune God. Where our Catholic presence is recreated and made present in our community and poured into our neighborhoods.” (PA)

“I believe the success of future parishes will depend greatly on the ability of all to know they are working for the same goal with all voices being heard in decision. I believe the future parish will be more outer directed in its goals and the responsibility of the pastoral personnel will be seen as supportive rather than directive. I believe that the whole parish will become more sophisticated in its ability to see what necessary pastoral services are and pastoral work will become more focused.” (PA)

“Absolute necessity if church is to flourish. Without this, parishes will diminish and even cease to exist.” (PA)

“This will be the way to go. It will look differently depending on regional locations. But listening and honoring the people will guide how the interdependence will function: affirmation; empowerment; collaboration; good communication; solicitation of talents, time and treasure of all members; ongoing formation for all members” (PA)

“Shared ministry and collaboration is essential for healthy parishes. Parishioners are as educated, and often more so, than pastors or lay ministers. They will not be dictated to. They are CEOs and executives in business and they want to have ownership in their parish, and they should have.” (PA)

“More important than ever that ministering community work together collaboratively and recognizing the giftedness of each other. Empowering others and trust responsibilities will be carried out.” (PA)

“Healthy parishes will be characterized by a total ministering community of pastors, staff, and parishioners working together. What will change is the roles of each.” (PC)

“Doing the work of the church together at all levels is the most critical aspect of ecclesiology.” (DR)

B. Best Practices of Leadership

Participants were asked to identify the best practices that are evident to them for leadership of a vibrant faith community. Primary themes include:

- **Commitment to collaboration and shared ministry**
- **Active listening and sharing of information throughout the parish**
- **Emphasis on prayer and spirituality**

A number of participants focus on the importance of a commitment to collaboration and shared ministry as a fundamental principle of leadership. The following comments reflect this viewpoint:

“Collaboration; shared ministry and space; shared goals and vision (everyone agrees); laughter; invitation; gratitude; trust and respect; constant personal reflection and discernment; raise up new leaders; find best in present structures and laugh at the rest; always see good in each other.” (P)

“Collaboration; information shared; welcoming; solicitation of input; affirmation of staff; clarity of relationship; faith values versus cultural values; open to a new way of looking at things; knowing what is really important; sense of humor; connection to the greater church; formation and continuing education; resisting cynicism; constant development of new leaders; faithfulness; praying well at all gatherings; resisting to do it yourself; stepping back” (P)

“Collaboration, respect, affirmation, prayerful, flexible, positive” (PLC)

“Modeling of collaboration and inclusiveness; respectful dialoging model of operation; awareness of boundaries” (PLC)

“Collaboration-collaboration-collaboration!!” Be very welcoming; affirmation of gifts in the community; empower others; be authentic and humble; accountability; nurture new leaders” (D)

“Collaboration, faith-sharing, affirmation, respect” (PA)

“Collaboration; listening and letting what you hear shape your action; letting things die and grieving; genuine delegation; always saying yes rather than no if at all possible (building a sense of ownership); prayer, especially faith-sharing built on the scriptures for the coming Sunday at every meeting or gathering; communication and sharing information freely and widely; affirmation – personal and public; the shared pastor and shared staff, so they can pastor others; accountability – regular formal evaluation; offer people training and formation; authenticity and humility; hospitality and welcoming and letting go” (PA)

“Collaboration; share information; welcoming atmosphere; solicit input for consensus making and honest dialogue; positive affirmation in the way a person understands; clarity of relationship and roles; appreciative inquiry; sense of humor; prayer” (PA)

“Collaboration, open mindedness, flexible/accepting attitudes; ability and desire to discern people’s gifts for leadership and involvement; gratitude for individual and organizational gifts shared with community; celebrating individual and community accomplishments; incorporating good methods of parish-wide consultation and process for follow-up.” (PA)

“Collaboration, openness, flexibility, global-minded, ability to let go, being a team member, willingness to listen, sharing one’s truth for the common good, willingness to change as needed, forming relationships” (PA)

“Two most important aspects of a vibrant faith community = ownership and collaboration all around.” (PA)

“Collaboration; shared information; encourage, empower the community members for leadership; listen to the needs of the people; leadership should be personally present; importance of prayer; importance of focusing on the pastoral aspect” (PA)

“A common vision and mission; collaboration, teamwork and sharing mentality; seeking put from the parish at large (regularly); empowerment of lay ministries with accountability (stepping back); feedback and affirmation through formalized processes; conscious discernment of gifts and appropriate application to ministry; targeting of programs to identified parish segments; a formalized planning, goal setting, and measurement process.” (PC)

“Collaboration with a common vision and strategy; commitment to the suffering and the poor; authenticity of leadership; commitment to embracing diversity (cultural, gender, generational, etc.)” (DR)

Other participants stress the importance of a leadership posture devoted to listening and the comprehensive sharing of information with the parish as a community, involving them in the decision-making processes. The following comments reflect this perspective:

“Listening; trust; enabling; invite and re-invite; affirm” (P)

“Listener; caring for all, not select few; direct contact of leaders with parishioners; collaboration with all councils, committees, staff; leaders who genuinely like each other, have fun; leaders who initiate expressions of care; leaders who clearly define roles, responsibilities; group interviewing and hiring practices” (PLC)

“Open-minded people in positions of leadership” (D)

“Listening, total involvement with entire faith community” (D)

“We must listen better to all the needs (hurts). This frequently can smooth many ills. We must identify what we, as local church, want to emphasize through discernment and study and dialogue. Then we must act to affect these goals and monitor our progress.” (D)

“Shared information is vital; prayer; gather input; affirmation; appreciative inquiry; positive attitude; clarity around relationships and roles; see the good; keeping your focus on what’s really important; formation – continuing education for leadership staff and parish community” (PA)

“Prayer; listening to another’s story, to the good news, and the bad news; helping people/believers allow things to die so new things can rise. Step back to create leadership opportunity for others. Leadership creates climate where success is ‘working together’. Empowering others” (PA)

“Listening; walking with; collaboration; team; evaluation; think outside the box; discernment of gifts; sharing information; prayer/faith reflection; dreaming together; laughing together” (PA)

“Listening; healing; forgiving; respect; collaboration; sincerity; follow through; trust” (PA)

“Attentive listening and respectful response to the opinion of the parish-at-large; collaborative ministering style in the pastoral team.” (PA)

“Respect; collaboration and communication; hospitable/welcoming/caring; sense of humor; awareness of mission; encouragement of spiritual growth of staff and individuals of community” (PC)

A number of participants identify a commitment to prayer and the spiritual development of the parish as a foundational best practice of leadership. Those concentrating on prayer, discernment, and spirituality as a leadership best practice offer the following comments:

“Pray together; communicate with each other; trust one another; share responsibility” (PLC)

“The most important practice I learned came from another priest. The idea of transformation – If all people accept to be transformed, all the activities/ministries will be ‘lived’ by the spirit.” (D)

“Good communal prayer, both the larger community and small groups; communications – sharing information; working together/assisting each other when possible; all work to one single goal – be intentional!” (D)

“Intergenerational ministries – bringing diverse groups together for wisdom circles, sharing of tradition, telling story and listening attentively. Staffs that minister to each other, including the pastor – a genuine interest and caring in each other’s lives. Collaboration – openness to critique – celebration and prayer at the center.” (PA)

“Welcoming atmosphere; connecting to greater church; clarify relationships; formation continuing education; understand what rewards others need; expect open to new ways of doing things; what’s really important; prayer” (PA)

“Seek first the kingdom of God. Find the ways to enliven the faith lives of all the members. Identify the various subgroups, be it singles, no children or with children; elders (long-time members); teens; young adults; whatever and provide for their spiritual growth. Teach the people and empower them to take care of their church; ecumenical endeavors; never say no when you can say yes; listen to the people; staff offices together; collaborate; tithe.” (PA)

“Faith in one another – faith in the call and presence of the spirit. Look for and expect the unexpected. Be a people ready to be surprised by the spirit. Deep sense of listening and prayer. Courage – trust” (O)

C. Challenges for Leadership in Building a Vibrant Faith Community

Participants were asked to identify those challenges which are most prominent to leadership in building vibrant faith communities. The following challenges are most prevalent in their broad range of concerns:

- **Systemic and structural issues in church leadership**
- **Trends in the dominant culture**
- **Need for pastoral imagination which connects with people on a personal level**

A number of participants express concern about the depth and level of change in the systemic and structural issues of church leadership. Clearly, these pastoral leaders see the larger process of structural change in the church as unsettling to their communities. The following comments reflect the view that building a vibrant faith community is challenged by systemic and structural church leadership issues:

“The atmosphere of the wider culture is overwhelming. Also, people are much busier and have many more opportunities to do good.” (P)

“This parish has had 2 parish directors – one for 10 months and me for 1-1/2 years. They were served by the same sacramental minister – the parish of a neighboring parish. Due to mass schedules and needing to cut the number of masses from 6 to 4, both parishes had to lose a Sunday morning Mass. This has resulted in 2 challenges. 1) People easily go to either parish so they get the mass time they want, but this makes it much more difficult to foster a parish identity that is parish A or parish B because always we have a mix of people while; 2) the parishes remain entirely separate with no formal relationship other than neighbors, but people are confused and believe that we are linked, linking, merged or merging. It makes it less clear as to the specifics of my role and authority as parish director. It will help if they ever have to merge or cooperate on programs, however.” (PLC)

“Chasm between hierarchy and pastoral vision and experience; need for ongoing deepening of spirituality – primary challenge” (PLC)

“Our creative responses today may diminish without resident priest/pastor; change concept of Eucharist/Communion and confuse them, blurring lines of Sunday Liturgy in the absence of a priest. Increased community involvement may need education and formation that is not always available or even perceived as a need or priority.” (PLC)

“The removal of old, in place, ideas concerning the implementation of structure. Humanity requires structure. How you implement that structure is the true showing of faith.” (D)

“Letting go of old models of top-down authority; appreciating gifts of pastor, but respecting and realizing his limitations. Allowing all ministers to work out of their gifts” (PA)

“Moving out of old models; defensiveness and fear; letting some things die and grieving” (PA)

“A rising conservatism based on absolutes – fear – and intolerance. Pastors who so fear the loss of their roles that they can’t be supportive, even if good sense and feeling tells them the opposite.” (PA)

“Collaboration is a key challenge, as well as a best practice; how to ‘grow up’ adults who are still childish in their faith; how to stay Eucharist-centered when increasingly meaningful experiences of community will be non-Eucharistic and Eucharist will happen in huge impersonal settings; clericalism; widespread distrust of the hierarchy; socially/psychologically underdeveloped priest-pastors; dealing with youth and young adults whose baseline is not literacy culture, but electronic culture” (PA)

“Unwillingness to change or be open to new ideas; holding on to the past; hierarchical structure (only answer); letting go of power, different views of what church is and developing common vision, self-care and ability to say no; healthy boundaries. Helping people to prioritize lives, to be in touch with values and making choices accordingly.” (PA)

“Hanging on to the vision of a “democratic church” when many mistakenly see such a church as simply one where majority rule decides morality and content of the Tradition instead of a Church where each person is acknowledged as a locus of the Spirit’s activity is a basic challenge. We are each a person whose understanding of who we are as a church and where we are going needs to be listened to by all, taken into account and put to the service of the Reign of God.

The question is not who guides the Church, it is God. The question is how God exercises God’s rule. And it seems ever more obvious that God does so through all the baptized, not a few select ones. We are in need of leaders who can enunciate that rule of God found throughout the entire community in an effective and respectful way. There is another challenge, not as germane to the present conversation but important nonetheless. Many Catholics are losing courage in the face of the insecurity and confusion arising from the changes that the Church is attempting to make as it adapts its vision and encouragement to the current times. There are a significant number of very good people who

simply want to return to a time when the destination and the path seemed sure. They are willing to pay a high ticket price for that return.” (PA)

“Clericalism; control; lack of trust; lack of zeal; having a shepherd that does not show he cares – who is not very pastoral; having the faith to work around the obstacles that prevent having a vibrant faith community” (PA)

Other participants believe that the challenges for leadership in building a vibrant faith community are complicated by trends in the dominant culture, including demands on people’s time and the cultural, racial, and economic diversity of local communities. The following comments allude to this leadership challenge:

“Look of time – necessity of prioritizing tasks; ‘dysfunctional’ personalities on councils, committees, in parish and limited opportunity to address/assist in their growing awareness of the problem. Amount of time needed to accomplish administrative tasks with insufficient staff.”

“The busy lives of parishioners; letting go of power; relationship building; take care of yourself; mutual respect; listen to the youth of the parish” (D)

“Being open to the youth as the church of today; attention to one’s spiritual, relational, and physical self; being the prophetic voice of the poor, marginalized in affluent communities; asking the question to all decisions, ‘How will this effect all people of all economic and social levels?’ Welcoming diversity” (PA)

“Resisting cynicism; rotating and developing new leadership; variety of other opportunities/requirements in greater cultures; time constraints and volume of work and need out there; people’s need for control” (PA)

“Very, very busy people – clergy, staff, and parishioners. A Catholic hierarchy that can be aloof and unresponsive, not to mention out of touch with the realities of people’s lives.” (PA)

“Business of life and culture...prioritizing values; collaboration/mutual respect, letting go of power; respecting diverse views so to create common visions; self-care for leaders, healthy boundaries” (PA)

“Merging and accommodation of diverse personalities and styles; rapidly changing demographics (number of priests, consolidation, etc.); anachronistic top-down view that the church clings to; achieving agreement on a parish model; clergy who are unmovable ‘rocks in the river’” (PC)

“Diversity; competency in leadership and seeking the needed training; participation of all people; a view beyond the parish walls” (DR)

Finally, some pastoral leaders identify the challenges for building vibrant faith communities as a need to adopt a pastoral imagination that connects with people on a personal level. This challenge requires a commitment to surface disagreements and to work through complicated and frustrating processes, inviting people to share a vision of the church in which they are personally engaged. The following comments reflect this challenge of connecting with people on a personal level:

“Education of all involved; getting to know Jesus personally; enthusiasm and commitment in that relationship; take time for yourself and your personal faith life; provide ample retreat and formational opportunities for staff, council, and parish members.” (P)

“Put disagreements on the table; listen to the bad news; don’t be afraid of failure; if there are priorities, there will be posteriori ties.” (P)

“Follow through on group decisions – no change of course unless all have had input; trust; listening to one another; often ability to get through lots of stuff to the ‘real’ issues; hope that together we can and will make a difference.” (PLC)

“To listen, trust; to embrace, inviting all of God’s people to ministry and participation” (D)

“We must listen to one another and trust in others’ capabilities to accomplish a task. Put disagreements on the table. Be willing to change. People have diverse needs; leadership needs to be sensitive to those needs.” (D)

“Competency; discerning their gifts and helping those in the community discern theirs. Re-think a more inclusive concept of vocation.” (PA)

“Pastoral imagination, presence; all are known by name – no judgments, especially with the marginalized. Designing and implementing structures so that the vision is kept. Staff can move on and all remains good.” (PA)

“To put disagreements on the table; listen, listen, listen – even to the bad news; continual invitation – inviting despite rejection; fear of failure – risking change; need to evaluate non-inclusive practices; betrayal of trust due to lack of accountability” (PA)

“Know what’s really important; clear direction. Do we connect people to greater community of church and the world? Moving outside comfort zone/formation and continuing education; individualism; resisting becoming cynical; identifying and developing new leaders; letting go of control; modeling balance” (PA)

“Identifying and empowering other leaders, balancing listening with teachable moments for formation, sharing leadership, sharing resources, fewer quality male priests, fighting off dissolution with clericalism and our hierarchy.” (O)

D. Opportunities for Leadership in Building Vibrant Faith Communities

Participants identify a number of opportunities for leadership which will build vibrant faith communities in the future. First and foremost in their thoughts is:

- **Empowering and awakening people to their baptismal call and gifts**
- **Demonstrating the relevance of faith to the lives of people**

Clearly, people see the greatest opportunities for leadership in the future in awakening and empowering faith communities to realize their individual and collective baptismal call and gifts for ministry. The following comments reflect this viewpoint:

“Empowering people to use their gifts (also installing in them confidence that what they do does make a difference; leading groups in prayer – the source of all grace that gives us the ability to ‘hang in there’ together despite difficult times; strong faith and belief in the goodness and giftedness of all people.” (PLC)

“New models not seen; gifts realized; energized community; empowered individuals that lead to leaders; more sense of belonging/community; several leaders = specialized work, more focused” (PLC)

“Helping people waken to own goodness/awareness and growth in faith and relationship with God; bringing people together who do not know each other and watch relationships form; helping people come to understand all are called by Baptism – to be involved in helping to create the reign of God here and now.” (PLC)

“Get ideas from community – then allow them leadership roles to carry out their ideas.” (PLC)

“We can empower people by our leading them to believe that they are essential by reason of their baptism. If we show them that we believe in them, they will come forward.” (D)

“Encourage people to live out their baptismal promise; belonging to and participating with the community at large” (D)

“Listen to parishioners’ gifts and passions and invite them to get involved; taking time to get to know people; introduce people to each other” (PA)

“A vision – recognizing that all are called based on a baptismal call. Identify needs – including spiritual gifts – and matching those needs with gifts – leading to competency and credibility. Accountability – both ordained and laity.” (PA)

“Develop new leaders through ‘letting go’ and allowing; mentor others to take on new roles in the church; new ministries will develop within the parish; new ministries will develop outside the parish; parish will come into communion with one another.” (PA)

“Nurturing people in congregation to assume ministries; invitations made personally; ask people what they’ve done in previous parishes or what their skills are.” (PA)

“Focus on making parish relevant to all parishioners. Leverage of the myriad skills/gifts of the lay community (experts in many fields; management and people interface skills); empowerment of lay leaders; inclusion of women to the maximum extent possible, and for alternate perspective.” (PC)

Other participants emphasize the need for leadership to focus on the relevance of faith in the lives of individual people. These leaders present the greatest opportunities as those which arise from a personal commitment to faith among parish members. Consequently, the relevance of faith in parish life to the lives of people beyond the parish is a key priority.

Many see small faith communities as a means to accomplish this end. The following comments reflect opportunities for building vibrant faith communities that are rooted in a personal connection of faith to the lives of people:

“The need for Christian-Catholic values is even more apparent. People long for a meaningful connection to community and a spiritually meaningful life.” (P)

“The opportunity for leadership is to engage the people in the pew. To do this, I feel it imperative to allow them the opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit. The retreat experience, in my opinion does this the best (Cursillo, Light of the World, CRHP, etc.). From this, parishioners become engaged in their faith and take on responsibilities in ministry.” (D)

“Developing a good relationship with Jesus and others; listening to the pastoral needs of the community; create small faith groups to create relationships” (D)

“Limitless; small faith communities; ‘New Beginning Program’; talent assessment profile” (PA)

“Introduce people to each other; modeling balance; clear direction; forming relationships with others; enabling others to use skills; passions they might not have other outlets for” (PA)

“An increasingly educated laity that is ready to take responsibility for the powers they have and use them for the Reign of God in the best way they can discover. They are especially interested in viewing their work lives as a contribution to God’s Reign. In the area of pastoral ministry, my work with university people assures me that there are enough young people willing to do professional pastoring in its various forms if they are simply given a welcome into the profession, a reasonable wage, a path for advancement as their ability and experience grow and reasonable job security.” (PA)

“Endless for both the community and leadership; emphasize the positive; engage more people in the mission; go and meet and engage at the workplace; support them in these away from church ministry” (PC)

“Diversity; meeting people at points of transition in their lives; promoting the reality of declining numbers of priests and raising the awareness among people that it is their parish.” (DR)

“Everywhere. Everything is a call to leadership which is a call to discipleship, living out the Gospel today. Every act of trust in God, in self, in others is an exercise in leadership.” (O)

“In spite of the general decline in attendance and the lack of participation of many young people, I think many people today are very hungry to know more about their faith. They do not want it handed down to them from the top as in the past.” (O)

“Small faith communities; engaging competent laypeople; inter-parish collaboration and clustering” (O)

E. The Parish of the Future

Participants were asked to identify what they believe the parish of the future will look like. While their responses are very diverse, many participants believe the parish of the future will be characterized by the following:

- **Smaller faith-based communities**
- **Rooted in the gifts exercised by its members**
- **Mission-focused communities for the church and in the world**

Many participants believe the parish of the future will be centered in small churches with intimate gatherings of members. The following comments reflect this perspective for the future:

“I suspect that leadership will not be focused on the ordained. Small faith communities will be encouraged. There will be small ‘churches’ which will come together as an ‘ecclesia’ periodically.” (P)

“I am not sure there will be parishes in the future. The gatherings of the church will be more diverse. They will probably continue to get smaller (family churches), and I believe the faith will grow stronger though.” (P)

“Look like early church; more small based faith communities; rethink what ‘priest’ is; rethink meaning of Eucharist; more educated laity” (PLC)

“Many priestless Sundays; vibrant Liturgies of the Word with communion; small faith communities” (PLC)

“I think there is some wisdom to the idea of intentional communities – gathered around a facet of church that excites a group of people (i.e., social justice/outreach). I also think the exciting place to look for signs will be the parishes farthest from the chancery. There will need to be experimentation and creativity. The parish will be much more inclusive.” (D)

“If we want to continue to be a Eucharistic church, we will see the leaders of the parish doing the Eucharist and leading the assemblies be they ordained or lay. More ecumenical and working for the community the parish is in; small Christian communities.” (D)

“Freer. Less bound by old models of church. Acceptance of pastoring from lay ministers. Small faith communities that encourage, support, and sustain individual’s spirituality. More outreach to poor and oppressed as an outgrowth of deepening spirituality” (PA)

“Much smaller, intentional communities focused around the Word and the breaking of the bread. More open to diversity. Less hung up on sacraments...more in tune with sacramentality; deeply immersed in metaphor and symbol; committed to Gospel values of hospitality, justice, forgiveness and peace.” (PA)

“More lay leadership will emerge and be affirmed by the gathered community. The parish will become the resource for small faith communities. A gathering of people who recognize their interdependence as a means of survival. We will increasingly become globally aware and responsible.” (PA)

Many pastoral leaders believe that the future of the parish will be grounded and rooted in the expressed gifts of its members. These gifts will be the major active ministry of the parish as defined by members’ gifts and talents expressed through service:

“I think it will be more collaborative in priesthood and well involve the community in ministry more deeply.” (P)

“Who knows? My question is whether there will be a shortage of laity willing to take on leadership roles or not. If there is, we can have vibrant communities. It can be a community that gathers to be fed by Word and Sacrament – to enter one another’s lives in prayer and support and to reach out beyond parish boundaries to the larger world which we are a part of – in which we are called to transform. A community that believes we can make a difference because of our close relationship with Jesus and one another.” (PLC)

“Gifts called forward and used to build the Kingdom; collaborative ‘circle’ model rather than hierarchy ‘pyramid’ model; clustering parishes, sharing resources; less parochialism” (PA)

“Collaborative ministries – a parish that recognizes the importance and need of God in their lives and the need and desire to come together for worship and Eucharist. The parish also understand and recognizes that

they must in turn give what they have received – a way to help build the Kingdom of God. A parish that has experienced transformation” (PA)

“The whole church has possibility of disintegrating even more before it can be rebuilt. Ordination according to gifts, not gender; parish community collaborates with bishop on hiring, firing, and placing pastors; pastor has a term she/he serves; ordination for various things: sacraments, preaching, administration, general leadership; very inclusive” (DR)

“The faithful will be exercising their priesthood in the profession they have chosen or had no other choice but to work at what they do, but they believe their faith impacts what they do. The pastor, the pastoral staff with the help of the pastoral council, are continually looking for new ways of providing support for the faithful in the world. And, they in turn are looking for new ways of competent leadership.” (DR)

“People’s gifts called forward. Perhaps more like the early church – calls for small faith communities coming together for celebrating Eucharist, community and being sent forth to live the Gospel in everyday life, share the Good News and be prophets in our time. Much less formal structure and buildings. A missionary church” (O)

“I think there may be fewer of them; however, they will be much more flexible and will be almost self-sufficient. They will be able to carry on with or without a priest. The people (parishioners) will be much more knowledgeable about their religion.” (O)

“There will be a sharing of parish resources and talents. If Parish A is better at Bible Study and Parish B is better at marriage prep, then folks would be invited to go there, etc. If one trusts the Gospel, the future parish will be more oriented to ‘preferential option of the power’ and the breaking of the boundaries – where ministers and folks are called to service, compassion and forgiveness.” (O)

A third trend mentioned by pastoral leaders in defining the parish of the future is a belief that parishes will be more mission-focused, extending their outreach and service to the world and to the larger culture. The following comments reflect this viewpoint:

“Mission geared outward; always inviting; inclusive, multi-cultural, anti-racist; ecumenical; engagement of the world – true, respectful dialogue; nourishing small faith communities; focused on faithfulness rather than success; multiple symbols respected” (P)

“I like to say that I’m in one – It’s large with the taste of creating small (groups where people meet God). Uses resources wisely. In touch with the parish, the community and the world; the diocese will be in service to the parish. The parish will be in service to the parishioners, community and the world.” (P)

“Definitely more leaders who are not ordained leading the people as parish, as praying community. Sadly, fewer Eucharistic liturgies and/or led by priest who has less contact/connection with the community. Happily, more parishioners involved in many ways; wider variety of backgrounds in each parish (ethnicity, cultures, etc.).” (PLC)

“More people prepare and enable to serve the community as leaders; a clear sense of a community of disciples; an institution focus more on people and not in finance or activities” (D)

“Multiple symbols; focus out – mission-based; marketplace ministry; immigrant church; appreciation of religious diversity; resource for understanding the world; forum for engaging the world” (PA)

“Forum for engaging the world; groups of small faith communities; mission-based – reaching out to others; marketplace ministry – fluid, no boundaries; appreciation of ecumenical diversity; cultural diversity; provide continuity in the midst of diversity and transition; an immigrant church within or combined with a stable church” (PA)

“Open to engaging the world and open to the world transforming them” (PA)

“Outwardly focused, but also stable as a community; promoting of marketplace ministry primarily and not just ministry in parish; multi-cultural; appreciative of religious diversity; understanding our world; forum for engagement with the world; small faith communities where people support each other” (PA)

“Different in different areas; perhaps clustered – working together. We are church, but parish is important for community. We shouldn’t be part of a self-fulfilling prophecy of doom. We must be positive. Very few people embrace change unless it is their idea.” (PA)

“I hope the parish of the future will be smaller with its emphasis on supporting the work of its members in the world beyond the parish plant. I hope that it is a community of people who feel a common task with God and with one another to bring the world to the promise God has filled it with from the beginning.” (PA)

“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 whole parish will come to experience the ordained as someone they have chosen to publicly lead them in the exercise their priesthood. 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." (PA)

"Involvement by a larger community; increased role for lay ministers; more focus on meeting needs of parish segments; increased focus on social justice issues" (PC)

"Mission-based; more fluent – less structure; appreciation of diversity; outward focus – community view; engage a world view" (PC)

F. How Close or How Far from your Parish Vision of the Future

To conclude their discussion on parish best practices, participants were asked to identify how close or how far their parishes are from their vision of the future. Their views tend to fall along the following two paths:

- **Optimistic in the steps taken to build a parish vision for the future**
- **Well aware that they are very far from their vision in reality**

A number of participants express some level of confidence that their parishes have at least begun their journey to create a vision for the future. Those participants who tend to assign some level of optimism to their early steps in building the future of parish life express their views in the following ways:

"We're on the way." (P)

"I believe our parish is thriving as a parish of 2004. I believe the family aspect is strong as is the diversity. I believe the parish will be alive in 25 years in some shape or form." (P)

"We are well on the way." (PLC)

"We have some small groups, but only about 80 parishioners of 3200 families participate. Currently, our pastor delegates just about everything, but sacraments. Pastor and staff continue to encourage and invite other parishioners to formation opportunities." (PLC)

"We hopefully are becoming our vision to the extent we can today." (PLC)

"We've taken a first step – ownership with the responsibility that comes with it. We still need to see ourselves a part of a larger whole – diocese." (PLC)

"Let's just say we're on the way, but there is still much to be done." (PLC)

"We are at step 2 if it was a 20-step process – just beginning, but oh, how exciting to watch the seeds begin to grow!" (PLC)

“We have envisioned it, but through a glass darkly – it is a dream that lies at our horizon.” (PA)

“We’re close in that we have great preaching on our outward community and also promote an atmosphere of parish family. We tend to focus on ministry within the parish instead of in the world. Our small faith communities are a good combination of mutual support, prayer, education and action.” (PA)

“As close as the carrot in front of them; as far as the carrot in front of them” (PA)

“We are doing okay, better some days than others, and always looking for and learning ways to grow.” (PA)

“Like the kingdom – here and not yet” (PA)

“We are small faith community – to some extent, intentionally trying to be mission-based.” (PA)

“My parish is in the beginning stages of clustering with three other parishes. We are involved in outreach projects throughout the year – could do more. We have made attempts to include the Hispanics in our community on a limited basis. First year of stewardship program of time and talent, prayer and treasure. Staff more of a collaborative model than hierarchical – always room for improvement. Participate in ministerial alliance (pastor and myself) and activities of community (staff and parishioners).” (PA)

“Our parish is all over the block. Those who have been part of the parish longer are generally more close to it than those who joined us as incoming students or faculty three months ago. As a rule, the intellectual understanding of this vision is deeper than the emotional commitment to it. As for the pastoral team: on our good days, we approach living this vision; on the bad days we get as defensive and self-protective as anyone else. There are a lot of in between days. We pray a lot to live up to what we believe.” (PA)

“Making steady progress on most fronts, with some leadership strides in 1 and 2. Progress of women is less dramatic because needs haven’t driven more rapid progress (i.e., shortage of priests and deacons).” (PC)

“Moving in direction of small faith communities; strong Eucharistic presence; challenge to live the Gospel every day; perhaps we need to refocus on encumbrances – what buildings and structures are freeing us for Gospel living.” (O)

“My little home parish has a very good start toward reaching a model, such as this. I am keenly aware how important a few key leaders are in fostering this model.” (O)

Other pastoral leaders tend to identify their parishes as still struggling to claim the vision for the future and are slow or resistant to realize their potential. The following comments focus more on this stagnant or frustrated level of creating a pastoral vision for the future:

“My parish is still in the process of denial. I don’t know if we have yet decided that we, in fact, ‘need to develop a vision or goal for the future’.” (D)

“Very far – we need a pastor or a leader who can bring this vision and enthusiasm to the community to begin to prepare them with formation and prayer opportunities to bring awareness about the Kingdom.” (D)

“Our parish is very inclusive and anti-racist; however, it lacks focus because only a handful of people are responsible for everything and they are running out of energy; the leadership is far more conservative than those in the pews.” (D)

“Long, long way to go” (D)

“We are quite away from this vision. We have to first overcome divisions and hurts before we can move on.” (PA)

“Our two parishes are in a very messy, very real transitional phase. People know it will look different. It will be different, but there is still alternated fighting and grieving specific losses or anticipated losses. And they still have a long way to go toward a genuine sense of ownership of the church by the baptized.” (PA)

“Not very close with our present pastor who is willing to sacrifice all parish ministries to save the school. With a visionary pastor, I think we could be there in 10 years.” (PA)

“We are a long way from all these and the sad fact is that our pastor and our bishop do not see it. They are in denial. It is time for change. We must look at the early Church of Christ. We must embrace Vatican II. We must act now.” (PA)

Other pastoral leaders perhaps have poignantly reflected on the fact that their parishes have made progress in some areas, but are still struggling to achieve the long-term vision:

“We are Neanderthal – and happily people have four wheels and two feet. Those with strong convictions are struggling to challenge the status quo – and groups, like Voice of the Faithful, are a source of support. The chancery people are ‘protecting the institution’ and their jobs. Token changes are being initiated in the Archdiocese with a top-down point of view, for example cluster of parishes – with education and governance designed, approved, etc. from Archbishop and official people with token efforts of collaboration.” (PA)

“Our parish fosters lay leadership at both the pastoral staff and parish leader level. We have begun small faith-sharing communities. I would say that we have yet to understand ourselves as part of the wider church and have yet to look outside ourselves on how we can impact the good of the neighboring community.” (PA)

“Pastor micro-manages. Intellectually uses organizational systems and words that describe team and collegiality and empowerment, but is our worst enemy to achieving it. Although we have deficiencies, we are making progress. I believe the theology and biblical and current understanding of stewardship is a key to the future.” (O)

V. MARKS OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP:

The sponsoring partners of the Emerging Models for Pastoral Leadership Project identified a number of marks of pastoral leadership to be discussed during various phases of the Emerging Models Project. These marks of pastoral leadership are intended to consider the behavioral practices of leaders in creating the church of the future.

At the Upper Midwest Symposium, participants were asked how they believe these marks of pastoral leadership are evident or best expressed in pastoral life. The following section summarizes participant reflections on each of these marks of pastoral leadership.

A. Ethical Behaviors of Leadership

Participants tend to describe the ethical behaviors of leadership in faith communities as focusing on:

- **Living and modeling an ethical and balanced life**
- **Establishing pastoral practices based on accountability and transparent organizational standards**

The majority of participants focus on ethical behaviors of leadership at the personal level. These participants tend to focus on living and modeling an ethical and balanced life as the critical marks of ethical behavior in their pastoral leadership roles. The following comments reflect this viewpoint:

“Called to model it – keep lives holy. Word and worship are primary. Prayer days and retreats. All make us perceptive to the proper ethical behavior.” (P)

“Not gossipy, sees each person as a child of God and loves each person, no matter the difference. First loves self – sees unique qualities and as a contribution member.” (PLC)

“Recognize the dignity of each person and recognize the gifts each has to offer the whole. Be a good listener. Hear where each person is coming from and then lead them to a closer relationship with the Lord. Take the risk to call the people to take a stand when principles of the Gospel are threatened. Be accountable for the time, talent, and treasure of the parish.” (PLC)

“Confidentiality; authenticity of Christian living; openness and willingness to change the methods and means of leadership, ministry to meet needs of contemporary families, singles, and the aged; respected boundaries in relationships within community; welcome every opportunity to listen to another’s story; welcome interruptions. Minister first to the person, then to whatever organizational strategies/duties.” (PA)

“Call others forth to live their baptismal call helping them to recognize their gifts and talents; learning boundaries as staff members; united front” (PA)

“They exhibit the same behavior in their personal and professional life; model for everyone. Present to church community, as well as the bigger community; challenge and remind” (PA)

“Model Gospel vision – including how to handle parish and individual failures – ‘forgiveness’; speak up – and listen to minority voices – who knows where the spirit is?” (PA)

“Confidentiality; ability to admit you’re wrong; being countercultural in a individualistic and materialistic society; modeling what we teach, including my lifestyle; be present to our families the way we need to be.” (PA)

“Leadership models respect and commitment to personal development; Catholic social values are part of the fabric of daily life. We hold one another accountable.” (PA)

“They are aware that they are ‘public’ ministers; and with that respect boundaries that public roles entail. They take care of themselves physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually. They should be serious about ongoing spiritual direction, annual retreats, counseling if needed, and be lifelong learners. Through those practices, they are ‘accountable’ to the community.” (DR)

“Affirmation of human life and respect for human dignity” (DR)

“Integrity; speaking the truth; just treatment; time for prayer and discernment; respect” (O)

Still other pastoral leaders describe ethical behaviors as their institutional leadership based on accountability and transparency in their organizational policies and management practices. The following comments reflect this standard for ethical behaviors in leadership:

“Modeling ethical systems in our personnel at parish-school; calling people to ethical lives; being a person of integrity” (P)

“Transparent – in finance; model accountability to parishioners and community; continue to raise carefully the issue of being involved in Diocesan meetings that focus on issues we need to be involved in – but do so as not to be perceived as ‘pushy’.” (PLC)

“Demonstrating; encouraging consistent ethical life experience; openness regarding financial statements and practices; model ethical behavior in parish business and transactions; monitor money counting and accounting; check all parish procedures; use scripture as basis” (PLC)

“Confidentiality; employee handbook/job descriptions so that roles are defined and understood” (PLC)

“That all decisions have a basis in prayer; that parish leaders solicit the views of all groups represented in the parish and reflect their opinions and needs in parish ministry; that respect the skills and contributions of others; that utilize consensus and prayerful discernment to reach agreement” (PC)

“Confidentiality; computer license; financial integrity; transparency; accountability; Catholic social teaching; balance – church work versus family responsibility and integrity; being a united front – authentically – challenging pastor appropriately” (O)

B. Pastoral Behaviors of Leadership

Participants were asked to identify pastoral behaviors of leadership in a vibrant faith community. Three specific expressions of pastoral behaviors of leadership that seem most prevalent in the written comments of participants include:

- **Enabling the gifts of others to emerge and develop**
- **Establishing a clear vision and direction**
- **Supporting people at a personal level**

The majority of participants identify enabling the gifts of others to emerge and develop as the most prominent pastoral behavior of leadership they exercise. The following comments reflect their priorities for this pastoral practice:

“Empower parishioners to meet the needs of the community.” (P)

“Do discernment of gifts with pastoral councils when needing to fill in committees. People do not respond to bulletin pleas – need to be called forth and reason why we want them to be part of the Gospel.” (PLC)

“All leaders of ministries are trained. Our pastoral staff all has Masters in religious education or pastoral ministry. Variety of ministries which include all – ensure that all are welcome.” (PLC)

“Help people recognize their gifts. Ask personally for use of that gift. People respond to such invitations. Call to Baptismal commitment.” (PLC)

“Being humble and transparent; insisting on critique; discernment process in choosing pastoral council; constantly building relationships; offering of continuing education opportunities in lay ministry; responding to individual needs of persons” (PLC)

“Resist – as leaders – the temptation to own programs, successes – emphasize the WE; empower/chaplain the people and staff – as all are baptized. Availability; work toward a coherent message and behaviors.” (PA)

“We can be accountability factor for parish. Often we hear concerns and pain of parishioners rather than pastor. Challenging pastors, pastoral staffs, and pastoral councils to respect and consider all parishioners even

if they are not the most influential. Speaking up for marginalized in our parishes. Resist impulse to 'do for' parishioners. Rather follow advice to enable the empowered (already empowered by baptism). Let them make mistakes by experience rather than always telling them what to do." (PA)

"Meet people where they are and walk with them on the journey. Recognize gifts and call forth discernment. Keep focus on big picture." (PA)

"Allows the people to fulfill their baptismal promises – their church; train and enable ministry teams" (PA)

"Enabling people to share their faith; being present to people and listening to their unique needs; avoiding the one size fits all mentality; pushing people a little farther" (PA)

"Resist the impulse to 'do for' – allow, encourage, and support people to do it themselves. Never say no if there is any possible way to say yes. Let people do it their way and make their own mistakes. Help them process their experience and learn from it. Give people the information and training they need both to imagine and to do. Focus on the person(s), not the task. Nothing is more important than the person right in front of you." (PA)

In addition, several participants describe their pastoral behaviors of leadership as establishing the vision and direction of the parish in guiding the parish toward consensus and collaboration to achieve that vision. The following comments reflect this perspective:

"Making the connections between people and needs, between vision and programs and within parish ministries and organization" (P)

"To be a pastoral leader in our parish means to somehow get all of the people to respect all those who are marginal. The poor, the not so gifted, those who are hard to love, etc. A pastor must see the value of everyone and try to make others see the value of everyone." (D)

"Leadership sets a vision and tone. Leadership invites consultation, information and listens. Leadership asks for help and offers training and formation for leadership roles." (PA)

"Parish leaders exhibit pastoral behaviors by ensuring that the parish mission and goals are consistent with the mission of the church and incorporate the needs of the parish. An example of this behavior is the needs assessment. Parish leaders also exhibit pastoral behavior by setting an example for the parish at large." (PC)

Finally, a number of participants express their pastoral leadership from a very personal level as supporting people and being present to them in the day-to-day concerns of life and details and practical levels of parish ministry. The following comments illustrate this personal engagement of people and presence in the day-to-day circumstances of life and working in a parish:

“First loves self; prayerful person, discerning of own direction/call and movement of spirit; sets boundaries; empowers and teaches others how to care.” (PLC)

“To treat each person with respect and dignity. To recognize the presence of God in all people, especially those who are different or with whom we disagree.” (D)

“Ministries of care formation; bereavement ministry; development of council or boards that regularly assess and evaluate parish needs; never say no; listen to the crisis of the sick and poor; be present to the dying and families in crisis; take initiative and contact or follow up with persons in crisis; be willing to be ministered to in your time of need; compassionate listening, proactive behavior” (PA)

“People listen. We are present to one another at times of need, transition and loss. We love, challenge, pray, forgive and reconcile. We hold one another with God’s mercy.” (PA)

“Pastoral leadership offers to all the support for living for the Reign of God that Jesus offered to those whose lives he touched. Pastoral leadership properly presides at the religious rituals of its community, teaches the faith tradition of its community, and coordinates the parish’s faith support of one another’s work for the Reign of God; beyond those proper to it, pastoral ministry may be called on to assume other responsibilities as the situation of its community demands, e.g., in a community where there is abuse by a major employer with no worker qualified to organize a union movement, a pastoral leader may be called on to lead such a movement; pastoral leadership acknowledges its strength as well as its weakness, its competency as well as its incompetence; pastoral leadership knows its own responsibilities and makes those its primary focus; pastoral leadership possesses a well-developed sense of humor about life, human beings, religion and itself professionally as well as personally; pastoral leadership possesses a profound sense of oneness with all people, not just people who share the same faith. This oneness extends of oneness of potential, promise, purpose and destiny; pastoral leadership prays.” (PA)

“Compassionate; let others do ministry; be aware of people and their needs; be present; sensitive; relationship” (PC)

“They are curious and compassionate. They are good listeners and are patient. They have a sense of justice and inclusivity and model the skill of theological reflection in order to help creating a reflective and active community. They model hope and faith and a life of prayer.” (DR)

“Inclusiveness; self-care; spiritual discernment – prayer; helping others identify and support, nourish their gifts; visioning – keeping focus on vision; balance” (O)

C. Prophetic Behaviors of Leadership

Symposium participants express a variety of means to exercise their prophetic role in leadership. Primary among these are two major directions, including:

- **Raising awareness on issues of justice and inclusion**
- **Forming a prophetic awareness in others through prayer and scripture**

A number of pastoral leaders express the view that their roles often involve raising awareness of issues of justice and inclusion within and beyond the parish. These leaders express an active role of prophetic leadership in the following ways:

“We have to celebrate diversity and condemn racism. We have to encourage people to live their faith in the workplace and home. We must encourage justice in our economic systems.” (P)

“Recognize that we need to be more intentional about being more ecumenical in those areas where we can work together. Have as a principle: Don’t do alone what you can do together with ecumenical partners!” (P)

“Compassion and compassionate challenge; constantly pushing people to enlarge their circles of influence and circle of concern” (P)

“Our voice needs to call forth in our individualistic American cultures that we are part of the world community. Our choices affect every person in our world.” (PLC)

“Raise awareness of the needy and marginalized in parish; listening is critical to being prophetic ministers; being sensitive to all groups, individuals, and situations in parish. Practicing, modeling, and teaching discernment is important. Create a spirit of service using RCIA as model.” (PA)

“Keep an awareness and a call to look beyond the immediate community. Challenge the community to go outside of itself.” (PA)

“Consistently give your attention to and thereby direct the community’s attention to whoever in your community tends to be left out of the loop, discounted or overlooked. Create ways for people to have first-hand experiences of the ‘other’ preferably in a context where they are being taught or gifted by the ‘other’ and then help them process that experience. Insist on just treatment for oneself as a church employee and speak up for just treatment of community members. Practice, model, and teach discernment.” (PA)

“Parish leaders exhibit prophetic behaviors by orchestrating a parish mission, parish goals and plans that embody the above. The specific behaviors are in articulating a direction, coaching commissions and ministries on their plans, and continuing to monitor results.” (PC)

“They are engaged in the world, i.e., local community. They bridge or reach into the civic community. They transform from the inside out. They respect life on all levels, throughout the life span. They live what they preach. They are active. The mission is service-oriented rather than self-oriented. They are prayerful. Mentor young adults; develop a culture of imagination.” (DR)

In addition, pastoral leaders often speak of the need for formation of prophetic awareness in people through deepening their understanding of prayer and scripture. A number of pastoral leaders reference a faith formation approach to nurturing justice and prophetic leadership in their parishes:

“Reads scripture; reflects; chooses words carefully; speaks to injustice, challenges; knows self as prophet in many ways; knows when to stay silent; knows when to act; seeks wisdom/counsel” (PLC)

“Please add imagination to the Marks of Excellence – calling people to imagine a different path that is faithful to tradition and open it to new ways of being. This is the real task of formation in universities and dioceses. Mentoring is also an important way of calling these out (helping find mentors for new ministers and new parishioners).” (PA)

“Actively engaging the theology that supports ecumenism, evangelization, social justice and mission through SS; church documents – formation for the spiritual and corporate works. Development of the spiritual component of kingdom-building – theological reflection, prayer; working with the poor, encouraging them to name their needs and participate in the planning of services; inviting the marginalized to the parish, welcoming them, and listening to their story” (PA)

“Encourage spiritual growth; gently provide opportunities to expand thinking in various areas in line with the beatitudes” (PC)

D. Collaborative Behaviors of Leadership

Participants were asked to illustrate the collaborative behaviors of leadership that are most evident in their faith communities. They tend to describe their collaborative behaviors of leadership as:

- **Modeling collaboration, delegation, and shared decision-making**
- **Facilitating opportunities for parishioners to shape the vision and share their gifts in ministry**

A number of participants spoke directly about collaboration as being evident in their leadership practices which involve delegation, decision-making, and inviting others to serve in various pastoral roles in the parish. These leaders often express this collaboration, delegation, and shared decision-making dimension of their pastoral leadership in the following ways:

“Trust people to do their jobs; recognizing gifts of people and plug them into structure; use triadic system – pastor as enabler who trains mediator to effect target (community)” (P)

“Work with all parish leadership to help them understand collaboration; collaboration with the diocese, especially the priests and what pertains to our parish.” (PLC)

“The word of the day ‘collaboration’...the parish leadership absolutely must communicate and collaborate with each other and with the community at large.”(D)

“Trust and respect in each other and the ability of others to be successful in doing the task. Humility to recognize we are not the only thinking and feeling beings in the parish.” (PA)

“Model collaboration in any way we can – if not possible in parish staff situation, then in teams we work with, i.e., welcoming, liturgy, fellowship” (PA)

“Articulation of the shared mission; visioning all parish activities for its interrelatedness into its communal, sacramental, pastoral and prophetic – asking ‘how does this decision impact the whole community, how can we celebrate liturgically, how does the decision make visible the presence of God among us. How does this decision meet the needs of the parish? Whose voice are we not hearing? How does this decision make us accountable to the Gospel values and the Beatitudes?” (PA)

“Aim to model collaboration in all areas, including, for example, different ministerial groups. ‘Welcoming Committee’ and ‘Baptismal Teams” (PA)

“Pray together, discern together, play together – develop real, full-round human relationships with each other (within a staff and with parishioners we minister with); model collaborative planning and ministry in our own ministry areas whether or not the pastor sets a collaborative tune; be willing to speak up and hold the pastor accountable. We pastoral associates are the ones who are present and see how he functions day to day, more than any others.” (PA)

“A key behavior to successful parish operations, parish leaders need to ensure teaming and collaboration among parish staff, lay leaders, and parish organizations (e.g., school staff). This is effected by cross organization representation, group leadership meetings, and an atmosphere of sharing.” (PC)

“Consultative; listening; open-minded/open-hearted; respect differences on all levels and in all aspects; are willing to change and work on themselves; we all assume responsibility.” (DR)

In addition, a number of pastoral leaders speak of collaborative behaviors as those which facilitate opportunities for others to share in developing the vision and to share their gifts for ministry. The following comments illustrate this collaborative dimension of pastoral leadership:

“Gifts of leaders are surfaced and utilized.” (P)

“Visualize the priesthood of the faithful and recognize that no one has all the gifts, but that all gifts exist within community.” (P)

“Seeking out views, hopes of parishioners; practice of collaboration model; welcoming tone; seeking expertise in others and empowering them; avoiding ‘doing it all’ at times” (PLC)

“Sees parish as a whole within the town and within the larger diocesan church; unites parish (departments, programs, etc.) into the vision and direction; acts as conductor of symphony.” (PLC)

“All realize they are called by God -- that power comes from God and goes back to God. This allows everyone to hear the others with hearts and minds that are open and not clouded by personal agendas of power.” (D)

“Everyone has gifts, but many are too bashful to share their gifts unless personally invited. It has been my experience that it does no good to announce from the pulpit that there are certain jobs that need to be done, but if you personally ask, usually you will get more than enough people to do the job.” (D)

“Leadership should help define the vision of the faith community, but not be the sole source of input. The entire faith community needs to be part of this process. I also feel the diocesan bishop also needs to set out a clear vision as a guideline as he is the shepherd of the flock with the local pastor as his representative.” (D)

“Open to any and all input; able to facilitate discussion; strong foundation of church’s teachings” (PA)

“Empower the Gifts – Develop and implement an ongoing and comprehensive call to stewardship; Fullness of the Catholic tradition – Keep referring back to mission statement, providing vision and tone; fullness as opposed to minimalism; Spirit that is present – leaders model prayer, invite others to pray in public, leaders open to new ideas.” (PA)

“Listening to others’ and sharing one’s own observations openly and honestly, discussing individuals’ observations until a consensus of what is going on is reached; rooting one’s worth and identity in one’s God-given creaturehood, not in a task or role; making it one’s responsibility to know each person’s strengths so that responsibilities can be shared according

to them; supporting others and taking joy in their success; having a sense of humor and humility.” (PA)

E. Inclusive Behaviors of Leadership

Symposium participants often define their inclusive behaviors of leadership in building vibrant faith communities as focusing primarily on:

- **Including diverse people, cultures, and life circumstances in parish life**
- **Recognizing and calling forth the leadership of others**

The majority of participants define inclusive behaviors of leadership as focusing on an active role of inviting and engaging people of diverse cultures, life experiences, and life styles to be engaged in a parish. This awareness-building role of encouraging and inviting people to be involved in the parish is reflected in the following participant observations:

“Invite cultures to be active and involved.” (P)

“Is everyone included? Is each generation, gender, or race seen in leadership? Do we foster all groups rather than just our favorites?” (P)

“Invite people of different ethnic backgrounds to gather their ethnic group for welcoming and invitation to ministry.” (P)

“All groups (culture, ethnicity, gender) are seen as holy and sacred. This means we do not set aside parts of the mass or the parish for ‘that’ group. Instead, we see all as a seamless fabric of our church.” (D)

“I am fortunate in that, as an ‘Anglo’ married to a ‘Hispanic’, and being a deacon couple, we truly believe in being all inclusive – do bilingual rather than separate services, ministries, councils, etc.” (D)

“We must be aware of entire culture, not just language. Honor similarities and celebrate. Be more aware of needs of all.” (PA)

“Open and welcoming spirit; inclusive and non-judgmental; able to speak multiple languages” (PA)

“Always inviting new folks to become involved and then supporting them so they are not intimidated by ‘old guard’. Reverence the diversity so that parish begins to appreciate the beauty of diversity. Diversity includes not just ethnic, racial, but elderly and handicapped.” (PA)

“Making sure parish functions are family-friendly (babysitting, etc.); keep awareness of diversity in community and the world in preaching and activities; inclusive of alternative models of families (single parents, grandparents raising grandchildren, etc.); sensitivity to diverse lifestyles (married, single, gay, etc.).” (PA)

“Representation of diverse group in leadership, intergenerational leadership opportunities; celebrate your diversity; invite diverse group to speak about their culture and introduce ways to pray.” (PA)

“Involve new people (new parish); involve faithful unknown people; be very conscious of people with disabilities, marginalized (faith, ethnicity), mixed faith couples” (PA)

“Reach out to all and find ways to make the diversity of the community visible to the community as a whole (e.g., in whom you encourage to perform visible ministries and roles). Listen respectfully to all stories and create ways for people to hear each other’s stories. Pay attention to barriers to full incorporation into parish life (physical, but also cultural, social, and psychological) and work to overcome them. Communication! Prioritize free and wide sharing of information – information empowers and shared information paves the way for inclusive participation.” (PA)

“Parishes offer education in diversity, and advocate tolerance for people who are different. Opportunities exist for interacting with people from different faith traditions, cultures, and generations.” (PA)

*“Welcoming all parishioners when they come to the parish’s communal functions
Searching out and responding to the positive values in opinions that differ from the leader’s; publicly welcoming those who do not accept the community’s political bent or measure up to the community’s moral standards as long as they are committed to the Reign of God; engaging in and encouraging ecumenical activity whenever possible; refusing to promote theological opinions that portray God as acting in an exclusive manner.” (PA)*

“Encourage differences; welcome the stranger; be hospitable; shared leadership between laity and clergy, men and women, young and old, independent of race, economics; live an ‘option for the poor’; show ethical behavior; get rid of the ‘isms’.” (DR)

In addition, some participants express their inclusive behaviors of leadership as recognizing and calling forth the gifts and leadership of others to serve the entire community. This approach to inclusion by calling forth the talents and gifts of others is reflected in the following comments:

“Trusting is baptismal call and priesthood of all” (P)

“When parishioners voice a need, we strive to fill it with their participation and training – establish new ministries” (PLC)

“We do discover and invite others to be part of the building of the kingdom which is what the Gospel calls us for.” (D)

“Invite new parishioners to involvement – invite youth and Hispanics to be part of welcoming ministry team and liturgy team; make sanctuary accessible” (PA)

“Invite those others than the ones who do everything and support them. Conscious effort to be sensitive to diverse cultures and languages.” (PA)

“Inviting and empowering ministries and connections. Listening and enabling dreams to materialize looking for bridge building opportunities and creative ways to integrate ideas, models, music, etc.” (PA)

“Inclusive behaviors are: ensure all segments of the parish are included in needs assessment and that programs address all of these segments; fostering stewardship and encouraging participation by all parish segments; communicating regularly to the parish the plans, actions, and results of parish ministries, and regularly seeking parish input.” (PC)

F. Welcoming Behaviors of Leadership

Participants concluded their discussion of the marks of pastoral leadership by illustrating welcoming behaviors that are present in their faith communities. They often express the welcoming behaviors of leadership as:

- **An intentional ministry of welcome and hospitality**
- **Personal efforts to create a welcoming environment**

A few participants indicate that their parishes have intentional, welcoming, and/or hospitality ministries that work intentionally to build a sense of welcoming and inclusion in parish life. The following comments reflect this more formal approach to engaging new parishioners and establishing a welcoming ministry in the parish:

“New parishioners are interviewed one-on-one; introduced to different organizations and ministries of the church; SCC; parish renewal; RCIA; all staff – maintenance – pastor are welcoming” (PLC)

“This is one area in which we excel as a parish community. We have a welcoming ministry and new parishioners welcome coffee regularly. We regularly get compliments from visitors and new parishioners that we have a welcoming community. We have expended much effort in this area. We need to find new ways of keeping ‘old’ parishioners plugged in.” (D)

“Intentional welcoming ministries (e.g., greeters at liturgy, ministries with/for new parishioners); affirmation and celebration in private, public, individually, small group and as a whole; be willing to change ‘our way of doing things’ to try the ways new people bring with them. For all these, small church communities/small faith sharing groups equal a powerful tool.” (PA)

The majority of participants speak of their welcoming behaviors of leadership from a personal level indicating their individual efforts to create a welcoming environment in their parishes. The following comments reflect this perspective on a welcoming ministry:

“Create welcoming environment, especially at liturgies; closely connected to inclusivity; being open to the new and kids” (P)

“Model at liturgy; affirming the talent and treasure shared within and beyond the community; welcoming and personally recognizing the visitors and those searching” (P)

“Be present to all who cross one’s path. For all the above, the leader must model these behaviors if they choose to be a leader; a vital church community.” (PLC)

“Foster a spirit of hospitality and presence to the people” (PA)

“Being present with each person we encounter; going out of our way to talk with the shy, quiet, and ‘stand-offish’ of the parish” (PA)

“Making it a point to welcome people as they come to parish functions; making it a point to talk to and listen to all parishioners at gatherings, not simply to those active in various parish capacities; caring for the welfare of parish children; allowing others to be the center of attention and assume leadership roles when possible; stressing that the parish is the home and responsibility of all the members of the parish.” (PA)

“Warm welcomes – aim to know people by name; availability of leadership; using funerals, weddings, volunteer appreciation dinners, ecumenical endeavors to role model practicing; comfort those who have been hurt in any church experiences. I feel sorry for the priests – and morale is low.” (PA)

“Creating an atmosphere where the welcomed can become the welcomers. Engaging the new versus head patting and false sincerity.” (PA)

“Be sure all are invited and welcome. Tend to needs of all. Provide opportunities for formation and allow for opportunities to deepen relationships with God and others.” (PA)

“Leadership does not assume or is not content with its welcoming nature. Leadership needs to be intentional and constant about hospitality!” (PA)

“Welcoming behaviors are: promoting a genuine sense of community in the parish; constantly encouraging participation; be vigilant to avoid and eliminate fences or barriers created around parish organizations and ministries; creating opportunities for participation that respond to the schedules and demands of parishioners; providing coaching and mentoring in desired behaviors.” (PC)

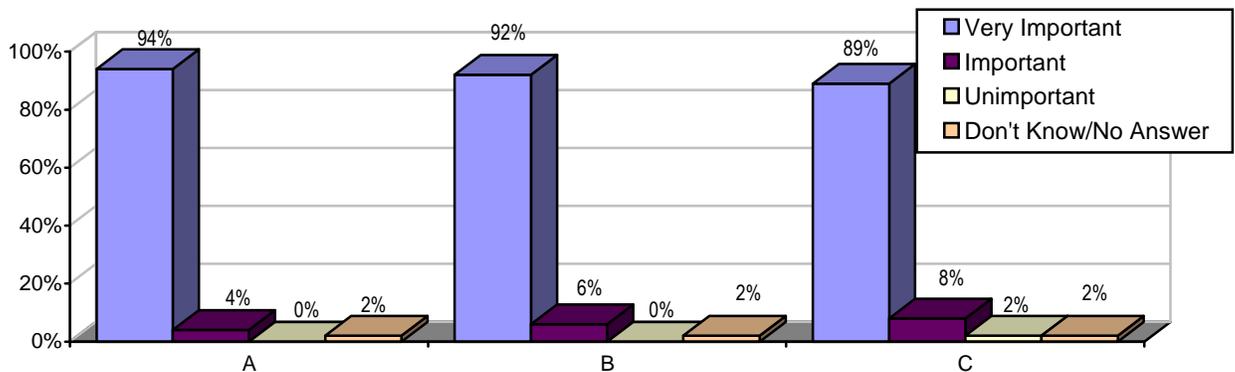
VI. CONCLUDING ASSESSMENT:

To conclude the symposium, participants were asked to privately evaluate their parish ministries on a number of factors. At the conclusion of the eight regional symposiums across the United States, data from the following quantitative questions will be aggregated across all regional gatherings for a more detailed analysis by region, cohort group, and demographic factors. For this particular symposium, however, the following top level summary captures an initial assessment of participant viewpoints on these quantitative questions.

In Figure 1 below, participants were asked to indicate the current importance of the three major elements of pastoral leadership discussed during the symposium. It is interesting to note that the overwhelming majority of participants define all these elements as very important to their pastoral leadership:

- **Spiritually alive and healthy community**
- **Visible commitment to building the life of the faith community**
- **Total ministering community**

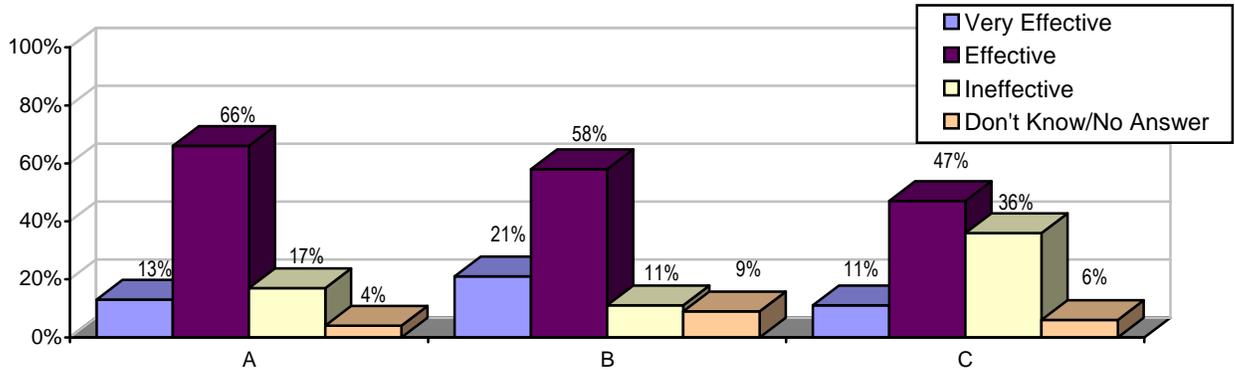
Figure 1
Importance of Pastoral Leadership Elements
(All Respondents)



- A. A spiritually alive, healthy community
B. A visible commitment to building the life of the faith community
C. A total ministering community (including the leadership or pastors, staff, and council together)

In Figure 2 below, participants were asked to indicate their current levels of effectiveness in realizing these same three critical dimensions of pastoral leadership. The majority of participants believe that their parishes are currently effective to very effective in creating a spiritually alive and healthy community and in demonstrating a visible commitment to building the life of their faith communities. Participants are less confident in their effectiveness in building a total ministering community with 36% indicating their parishes are ineffective on this factor of pastoral leadership.

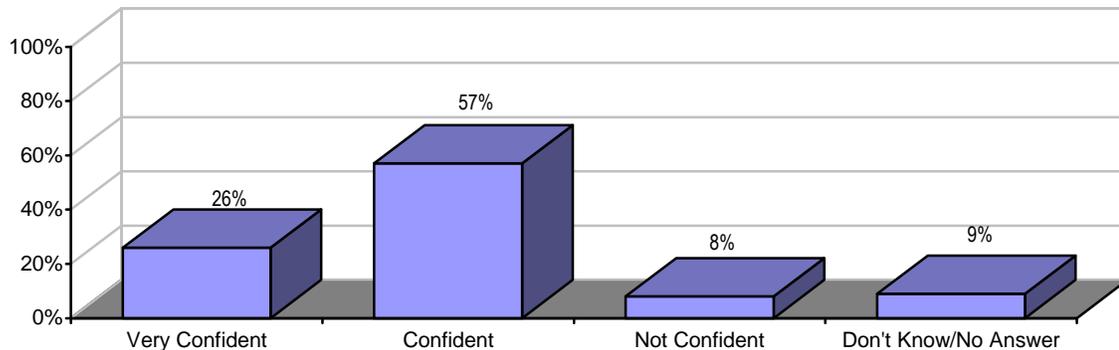
Figure 2
Effectiveness of Parish in Pastoral Leadership
(All Respondents)



- A. A spiritually alive, healthy community
- B. A visible commitment to building the life of the faith community
- C. A total ministering community (including the leadership or pastors, staff, and council together)

Participants were asked to define their level of confidence in their parishes becoming vibrant faith communities. The majority of participants are confident to very confident that their parishes will eventually evolve into vibrant faith communities, engaging pastors, staff, and parishioners in working together. Only 8% of participants indicate they are not confident their parishes are moving along this path.

Figure 3
Confidence in Parish becoming a Vibrant Faith Community
(All Respondents)



Participants commented on their confidence level in becoming vibrant faith communities in the following ways:

“I believe as a pastor and staff we are committed to this. In many ways, I believe we are part of a vibrant faith community that will go on in spite of what we do.” (P)

“I am concerned that only about a third of the total community is involved. My hope is that we will model a community of faith to those who are not involved.” (P)

“We have great diocesan support for the parish of the future. A laity you dream about. The spirit is alive and well.” (PLC)

“I say this because it depends on the bishop of the diocese. Currently I am confident with the current situation. However, priests are stretched, their morale is low. The bishop is still present. Changes could affect the climate as we all know and wait with abated breath on new bishops or pope.” (PLC)

“We are visionary – we do recognize need for change – are in the process of ‘Vibrant Parish Study’. From that commissions will develop goals for 5-year plan.” (PLC)

“Would hope we continue in the direction we are going, but cannot predict what will happen when parish gets a new supervising pastor or may or may not get a parish director.” (PLC)

“We are a faith-filled community that is lead by the Holy Spirit. This gives me confidence that we as a church community will continue to grow and serve God and one another.” (D)

“This hasn’t happened yet, but I think the community will prevail given enough time – leadership (including pastors) come and go...parishioners will be there forever.” (D)

“We’re in ‘seed planting’ stage now. Kernels of life are there, disintegration of some parts is taking place as new life begins to emerge. We are watering and tilling and helping the seeds of this vision take root. I have learned to be more patient and look for small signs of growth leading toward this renewed vision of parish.” (PA)

“Part of our mission is involving college students and young adults in leadership and developing their leadership for church and the world. People sing, participate, and reach out to others. We are developing a more intensive social justice and service component.” (PA)

“We are moving toward better communication and openness about parish issues. We have started to invite and support young members to partner with current parish organizational leaders. We are encouraging members to participate in ongoing formation sessions.” (PA)

“The clerical leadership doesn’t understand what pastoral leadership means. Part of this occurs because the priests are not trained to work in parishes. Their charism puts their efforts in retreat centers and mission-preaching. I’m not sure what the possibilities are for a new pastor – slim pickings from the available priests.” (PA)

“I am confident that pastors and staff can model the kind of collaboration that is necessary to begin to bring the parishioners into areas of accountability and leadership.” (PA)

“Pastor wants to do this, but his actual style is pretty top-down (my way or the highway). It undercuts his stated goal. And the people are pretty deeply entrenched in a passive, sheep-like model of church. The parishes may well be merged into some new realty before this model can be brought into being and many may simply leave when that looms.” (PA)

“I trust that the groundwork which has been laid by pastors and pastoral teams for the last 20 years has had a good effect on our parish so that we will emerge as a parish for the 21st century.” (PA)

“While I have felt a great deal of despair with the leadership, I can see that there is effort on the part of our pastor. I believe this symposium has empowered me to be more trusting and supportive of my pastor and has relit the fire within me.” (PA)

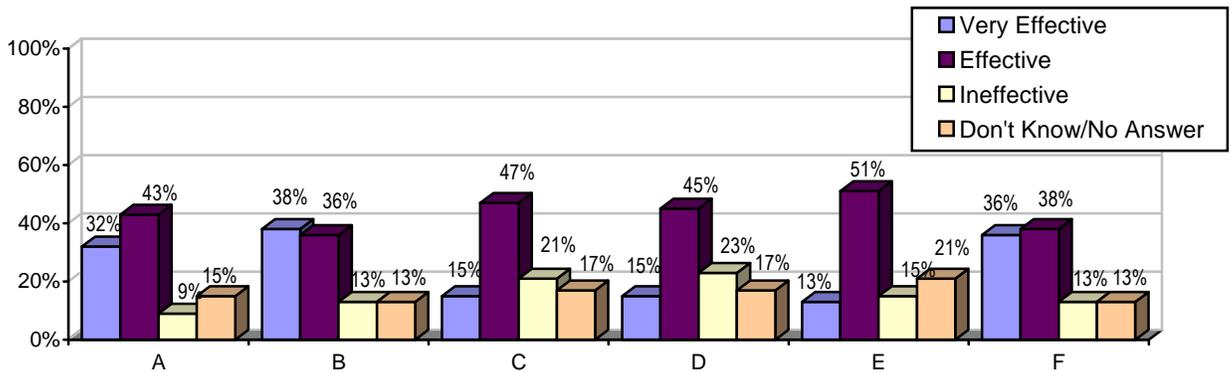
“From a diocesan perspective, every answer and option is represented and possible in the diocese.” (DR)

In concluding the symposium, participants were asked to indicate the effectiveness of their parishes in demonstrating concrete behaviors of pastoral excellence as described by the project. In Figure 4 below, participants indicate they are effective to very effective in demonstrating the following concrete behaviors of pastoral excellence:

- **Ethical behaviors**
- **Pastoral behaviors**
- **Welcoming behaviors**
- **Inclusive behaviors**

While the majority of participants believe they are effective or very effective in prophetic and collaborative behaviors of leadership, nearly one out of four indicate their parishes are ineffective on these two dimensions of pastoral leadership.

Figure 4
Effectiveness of Parish Leadership in
Demonstrating Concrete Behaviors of Excellence
(All Respondents)



- A. Ethical behaviors
- B. Pastoral behaviors
- C. Prophetic behaviors
- D. Collaborative behaviors
- E. Inclusive behaviors
- F. Welcoming behaviors

VII. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On November 18-20, 2004, 86 pastoral leaders from the Upper Midwest participated in a regional symposium on the Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership. The regional symposiums are one part of a multi-year effort sponsored by six leading national organizations of the Roman Catholic Church and funded by a Lily Foundation Grant for Pastoral Excellence.

The following topics were explored at this symposium:

- **Future of Parish Leadership Roles**
- **Emerging Parish Best Practices**
- **Marks of Pastoral Leadership**
- **Future Model for Pastoral Ministry**

In the Upper Midwest Symposium, participants worked individually and together to create a future scenario for the parish in 2025. Their primary hopes and new possibilities for the future of the parish in 2025 include the following aspirations:

- **The development of vibrant, spirit-filled faith communities**
- **Ordination open to women and married priests**
- **Empowering the laity to realize their baptismal call**
- **Commitment to social justice**
- **Restructuring of the parish and the larger church**

In a futuring exercise, participants defined the following threats and vulnerabilities to the future of the parish by 2025:

- **Nothing happens and the church becomes irrelevant in the lives of people**
- **Regression to pre-Vatican II leadership**
- **Church dissolves financially and spiritually**
- **Loss of the Eucharistic community**

When discussing the current vitality of their parishes, participants primarily define their parishes as:

- **Spiritually alive and healthy primarily through liturgy, worship, and strong community identity**
- **Spiritually alive and struggling to improve**
- **Still defined by the struggle to become vital**

Participants were asked to define how their parishes express a visible commitment to building the life of the faith community. These visible commitments include:

- **Prayer, worship, and Eucharistic celebrations**
- **Outreach and service within and beyond the parish**
- **Dependence on the preferences of the designated pastoral leader**
- **Intentional in their process of change**

Participants evaluated the extent to which their parishes reflect a total ministering community, including the roles of pastors, staff, and pastoral councils working together. Participants characterize these efforts as:

- **Intentionally developing this model through pastor, staff, and council collaboration**
- **Striving or struggling to realize this reality**
- **Dependent on the wishes of the pastor**
- **Defined by the independent roles of pastoral staff in their various ministries**

When asked to describe their current parish leadership models, participants often referred to them as:

- **Intentionally collaborative with shared ministry**
- **Centered on a core team of professional staff**
- **Traditional and priest-centered**
- **Model in change or transition**

In written comments and group discussions, participants most frequently describe the role of pastors as:

- **Consultative, collaborative, and empowering leadership calling forth the gifts of others**
- **Gatekeeper and change agent for new roles, structures, and programs to emerge**
- **A central authority who delegates tasks**

Participants were asked to discuss the emerging roles of staff in leading their parish communities. Participants primarily define staff leadership roles as:

- **Organizational leaders**
- **Empower and facilitating the gifts of others to emerge**

Participants further reflected on the leadership provided by lay parishioners. They often characterize the leadership of laity as:

- **Actively engaged in service and liturgical ministries of the parish**
- **Discerning and developing the pastoral vision**
- **Passive and not well-engaged**

When asked to define the emerging models of pastoral leadership, participants most frequently define emerging models as:

- **A baptismal call to the leadership of parishioners**
- **Lay-led faith communities**
- **Clustered or shared ministry with other parishes**
- **Frustrated in creating or implementing new models of parish leadership**
- **Intentional in their parish development process**

When asked to reflect on why their parish leadership models function as they do, participants identified the following reasons:

- **The model functions out of necessity based on local needs.**
- **The model is nurtured by a vision or an intentional faith community.**
- **The model is derived from the style or leadership of a pastor.**

Participants clearly see a direct relationship between healthy parishes and the shared participation of pastors, staff, and council members together as a total ministering community. They see this as an essential element in building an intentional model for a vibrant faith community.

Participants were asked to identify the challenges to building an intentional model for a vibrant faith community. They indicate the most prevalent challenges are:

- **Systemic and structural issues in church leadership**
- **Trends in the dominant culture**
- **Need for pastoral imagination which connects with people on a personal level**

Participants identified a number of opportunities in building vibrant faith communities. First and foremost is the:

- **Empowering and awakening people to their baptismal call and gifts**
- **Demonstrating the relevance of faith to the lives of people**

When asked to describe how they believe the parish of the future will look, participants see their parishes as becoming:

- **Smaller faith-based communities**
- **Rooted in the gifts exercised by its members**
- **Mission-focused communities for the church and in the world**

Most participants believe they are on the road to becoming more intentional faith communities, but still have a significant distance to go to achieve their vision and goals.

When asked to identify ethical behaviors of leadership, participants focused primarily on:

- **Living and modeling an ethical and balanced life**
- **Establishing pastoral practices based on accountability and transparent organizational standards**

When asked to further define pastoral behaviors of leadership, participant reflections included:

- **Enabling the gifts of others to emerge and develop**
- **Establishing a clear vision and direction**
- **Supporting people on a personal level**

When defining prophetic behaviors of leadership, participants tend to focus on:

- **Raising awareness on issues of justice and inclusion**
- **Forming a prophetic awareness in others through prayer and scripture**

When defining and describing collaborative behaviors of leadership in the faith community, participants most frequently mentioned:

- **Modeling collaboration through delegation and shared decision-making**
- **Facilitating opportunities for parishioners to shape the vision and share their gifts of ministry**

When observing the most prevalent forms of inclusive behaviors of leadership, participants frequently indicate:

- **Including diverse people, cultures, and life circumstances in parish life**
- **Recognizing and calling forth the leadership of others**

Participants defined welcoming behaviors of leadership as primarily consisting of:

- **Creating an intentional welcoming and hospitality ministry**
- **Personal efforts to create a welcoming environment**

The following regional symposium report presents a thorough and detailed analysis of these findings and themes. Its findings should be understood as representing one of eight different regional symposiums scheduled throughout the United States between 2004 and 2006.