

From surviving to thriving
in pastoral ministry:

The Challenge and the Blessing!

LA Congress
2018

Bob McCarty
bobmccarty@verizon.net
@DrBobMcCarty

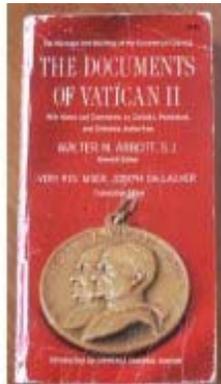
Objectives

- Anchor leadership in a theology of ministry
- Identify the tensions and challenges in ministry and leadership
- Provide a “Thriving Kit”
- Propose three new images for leadership

Ministry

For by its very nature the Christian vocation is also a vocation to the apostolate. (ministerial activity)

Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (#2)



Ministry

The laity share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own role to play in the mission of the whole People of God in the Church and in the world.

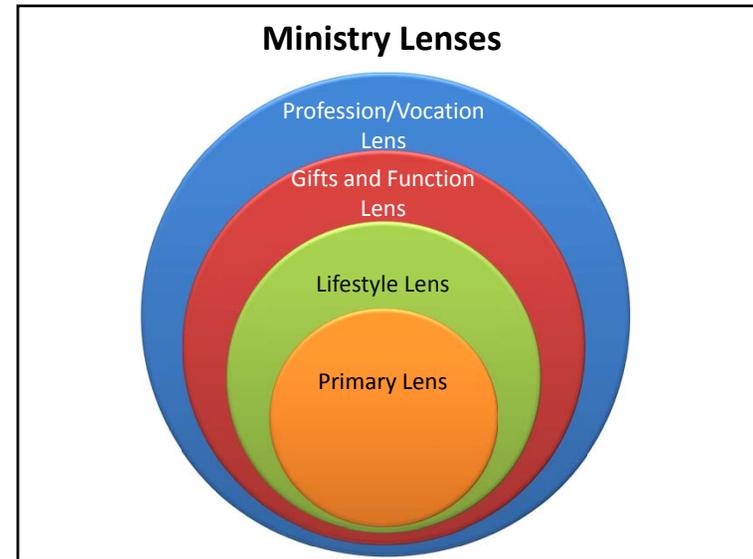
Decree on the Laity and Dogmatic Constitution on the Church



Leadership as Ministry

Ministry is a public activity performed by a person, flowing from grace, and using one's gifts on behalf of the Church in service to the kingdom.

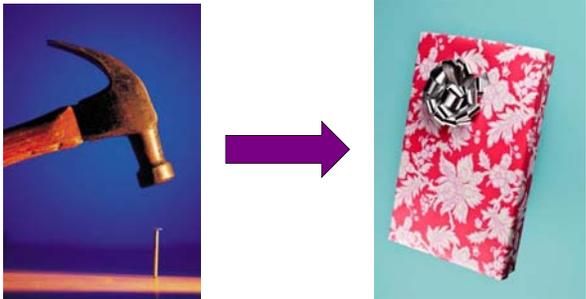
Thomas O'Meara

Ministry is grounded in the primary reality of Baptism (#1). This reality happens in the context of lifestyle and marketplace (#2). We can live out our baptismal commitment more directly to the community through a functional ministry based on the needs and gifts (#3) or even in a full time, professional position (#4).

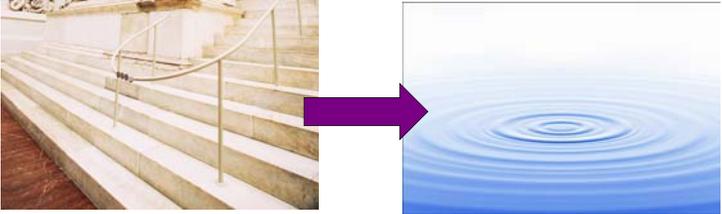
Trends and Shifts

From functional approach to ministry to one that is based on the giftedness of the individual Christians.



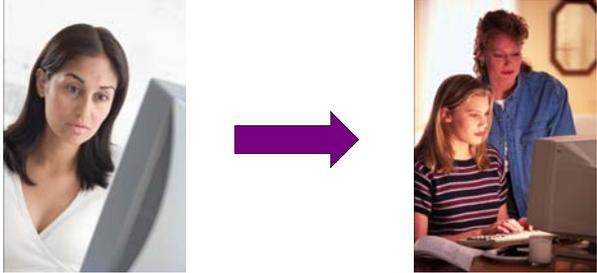
Trends and Shifts

From a well established, hierarchical model to an unstructured, parochial approach to shared ministries.



Trends and Shifts

From the perception of full time ministers as “doers” of ministry to a vision of such persons as “enablers” of ministry.



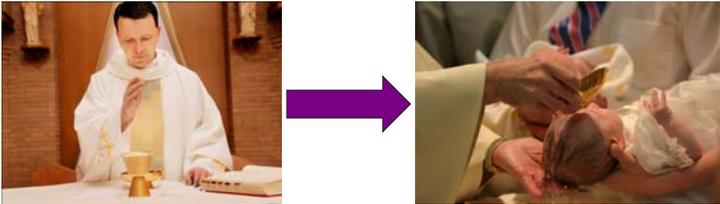
Trends and Shifts

From a clarity of understanding of the nature and purpose of ministry to a sense of ambiguity.



Trends and Shifts

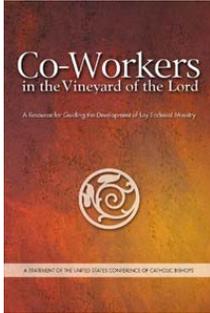
From an understanding of ministry as flowing from Holy Orders to an understanding of ministry flowing from Baptism.



Lay Ecclesial Minister

Their ecclesial service is characterized by:

- Authorization of the hierarchy to serve publicly in the local Church
- Leadership in a particular area of ministry
- Close mutual collaboration with the pastoral ministry of bishops, priests and deacons
- Preparation and formation appropriate to responsibilities



Co-Workers in The Vineyard of the Lord (2005)

The Pastoral Challenge

“To prepare for the challenges of tomorrow, leaders today must enroll people in an exciting, insanely significant vision”

Warren Bennis

It's about mission! It is about the Reign!

- **To proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ**
- **To be a community of peace, joy, and love**
- **To transform the world through justice and service**

**Is Church a means or an end?
Is our ministry a means or an end?**



Key Tasks

- To nurture commitment (thrives on shared vision and shared identity)
- To foster collaboration (mobilizes the groups' gifts, strengths and resources)



James and Evelyn Whitehead

Challenge

Ministry leaders in all settings are challenged to *create opportunities* for people to *use their gifts* in appropriate *service to the community* and to foster their *commissioning* by the community.

A Warning!

We are victims of our own theology of ministry!

- Ministry as a commitment to the Lord's wholeness - balance doing and being
- Ministry as service focusing on results, action, and doing

A Warning!

We are victims of our own professionalism

Five basic health behaviors:

- maintaining a sensible weight
- getting enough sleep
- getting enough exercise
- not smoking
- moderating alcohol intake

Professionalism:

Prone to chronic stress!

- idealism and over-commitment
- high drive for achievement
- high need for approval from others
- vulnerable to excessive demands of others
- guilt about meeting one's own needs
- sense of hurry and impatience



**Professionalism:
Prone to chronic stress!**

- Omnipotence: responsible for everything
- Omniscience: competent in everything
- Omnipresence: available for everything



Reflection:

The sources of tension or frustration
in my ministry are:



Myths

- The Church is fair
- The company owns my soul
- It's not a job, it's a vocation
- Democracy versus monarchy
- Everyone thinks pastoral ministry is important



Sources of Tension

- Staff conflicts
- Confusing expectations
- Lack of support
- Difference of vision
- Lone ranger approach
- Our image as pastoral minister
- My work is my primary ministry (I am my work!)

An Examination of Conscience

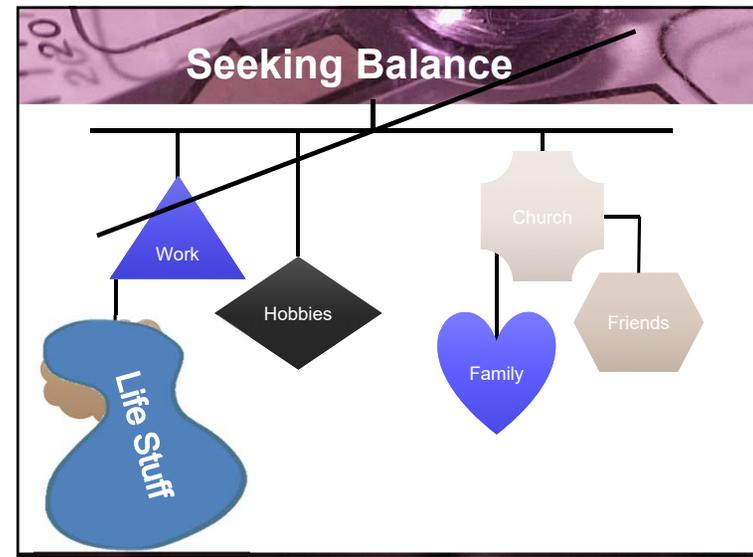
- When was my last full day off? When did I last have two full days off in a row?
- Do I ever miss an important family event because of my work?
- Do I ever take a full week off for vacation? How about two weeks?
- When did I last go on retreat?
- Do I take my work home with me? Do I take work phone calls and texts at home?

An Examination of Conscience

- Have I gained weight in the past year? Do I drink more alcohol?
- When was the last time I did one of my favorite activities? Went to a favorite place? Hung around with favorite people?
- Do I pray daily?
- Do I have a support group? (formal, informal, fun)
- Am I at peace?

In table groups.

What practical strategies, compromises and practices have you learned that enable you to thrive in ministry?



The Thriving Kit

- **Personal balance is a decision**
 - Prioritize your spheres
 - Attend to family and friends
 - Regular days off ... weekends off ... vacations
 - Have a hobby ... exercise ... be healthy
 - Develop a positive attitude towards life and change – foreseen and unforeseen

The Thriving Kit

- **Develop good habits**
 - Get physical exercise/develop good nutrition and eating habits
 - Be good to yourself, make time for fun
 - Be with people who make you happy
- **Develop a support group**
 - Colleague group, friend groups, prayer group – and schedule regular gatherings

The Thriving Kit

- **Develop a healthy perspective**
 - “Reality doesn’t change, only our perception of reality can change”
 - “Compared to nuclear war, this is no big deal!”
 - Maintain a sense of humor ... laughter is internal jogging and massages the organs!
 - Are you happy? Does your joy come through?

The Thriving Kit

- **Have a comprehensive vision**
 - Catechesis
 - Pastoral care
 - Justice and service
 - Develop leadership
 - Retreats, prayer, and worship
- Your constituents include children, young people, young adults, adults, and families!

The Thriving Kit

- Develop good skills
 - theological competence
 - ministerial competence
 - volunteer management
 - Planning and program administration
 - Empowering people for leadership
- Commit to professional development

The Thriving Kit

- Use quality resources
 - Web/internet
 - Print
 - Activities and programs
 - take advantage of (arch)diocesan events and training

What do you use?

The Thriving Kit

- Develop relationships with staff, especially the pastor
 - Partners and collaborators, not obstacles
- Develop a team
 - Provide them with training, personal support, and spiritual support
- Be an advocate for your ministry

The Thriving Kit

- Assess your vision of pastoral leadership
 - Am I a Lone Ranger?
 - What image do I project? How do I sound? How do I look? How do I act?
 - Is my work my primary ministry? Is ministry about “doing” or “being”?
- Know when to ‘shake the dust from your sandals’

The Thriving Kit

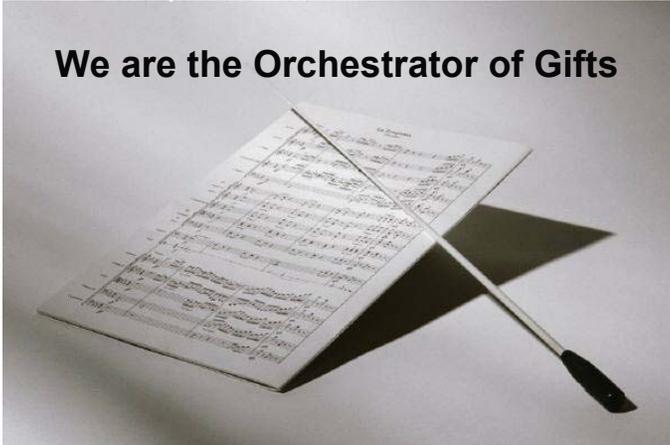
- Take care of your relationship with God
 - Daily prayer pattern
 - Eucharist (communal worship)
 - Regular retreat
 - Live with an attitude of gratitude
 - Be a person of reconciliation
 - Practice Sabbath

New images for the pastoral leader



We are the Keeper of the Vision

New images for the pastoral leader



We are the Orchestrator of Gifts

New images for the pastoral leader



We are the Mobilizer of the Village

In table groups.

What blessings does ministry involvement bring to me, my relationships, and my family?

Blessings

- Days off in purgatory!
- Provides a purpose and meaning
- Fosters one's gifts
- Enhances our search for God, deepens our faith (pray together with our spouse)
- We can be the "church people" for our extended family
- Connects us to the community

Blessings

- Hang out with great people
- Boredom is rare - ministry is exciting
- Our children relate to quality adults
- Connects our children with the faith community (the village!)
- Models faith in action (for our children)
- True ministry duplicates itself

So ...

What do I do now?

What one practical strategy can I utilize to foster genuine balance in my ministry and in my life?

How do I move from surviving to thriving?

Remember to be ...



- People of competence
- People of holiness
- People of vision

- Are you just doing a job?
- Are you working for a living?
- Are you building a cathedral?



From surviving to thriving
in pastoral ministry:

The Challenge and the Blessing!



Bob McCarty
bobmccarty@verizon.net
@DrBobMcCarty