

**Building Our Parish Together:
An Exploration in Participatory Leadership**

By: Enrique Esteban Delgado, M.A.

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Miami Gardens, Florida**

Approved:



Bryan Froehle, St. Thomas University

Committee Chair



Theodore Whapham, University of Dallas

Committee Member



Ray Webb, University of St. Mary of the Lake

Committee Member

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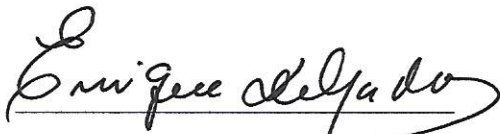
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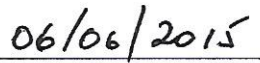
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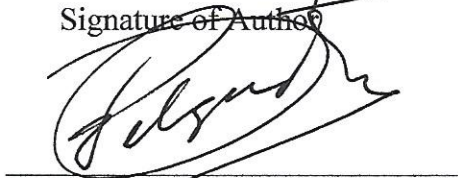
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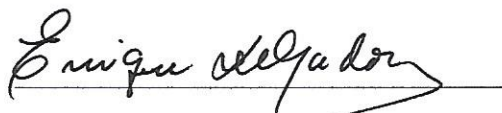
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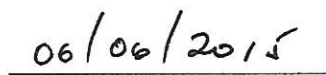
Building Our Parish Together: An Exploration in Participatory Leadership

Enrique Esteban Delgado

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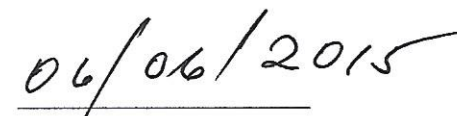
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Abstract

This dissertation engages parishioners to examine the way they experience their parish's life when a new leadership model is applied to the running of the parish. This expands understanding of practical theological dimensions and implications of Participatory Leadership in the light of the Second Vatican Council. Participatory Leadership in a parish under its pastor's leadership empowers the laity. Such sharing deepens ecclesiological insights on decision-making processes. Practices that positively affect the flourishing of parish life not only promote parish excellence, they advance the understanding and insights of the Post Vatican Council II Church. The effects of Participatory Leadership make it clear that they promote excellence in parish life precisely along the lines of the contemporary Catholic theological understanding of the role of the pastor and the nature of the parish. These practices foster a sense of commitment and involvement as well as an increased sense of identity among its parishioners. The research built an expanded practical theological understanding through an analysis of three major areas in the parish: the work of the parish, the participation of parishioners in parish life and the sense of identity generated by Participatory Leadership. The use of Participatory Action Research and the Pastoral Circle, was conducted in two phases, both Intensive (Quantitative) and Extensive (Qualitative) research. The research developed theological, ecclesiological, and experiential based drivers/predictors to clarify the road map so as to foster a vibrant and committed community whose parish's life is excellent. Working together with their pastor, this new model, based firmly on Catholic theology of the parish, allows parishioners to experience the life of the parish in a new level that enables them to take ownership of the parish.

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Finally, I want to thank all parishioners from St. Katharine Drexel Catholic Church for their continue support and inspiration during the elaboration of the dissertation.

Dedication

I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my parents. To my mother who is in heaven and forever she will be remembered as a “Woman of Faith” and to my father, who in his old age is my constant source of inspiration. Thank you.

Ours is the spirit of the Eucharist – The Total Gift of Self

St. Katharine Drexel

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This dissertation proposes a new way of reversing vertical relations in the parish between the pastor and the parishioners into new mix horizontal/vertical relationship. The transformation that is proposed implies a new set of rules where pastors in the Catholic Church no longer are the sole voice in the decision making in the pastoral work of the parish. This transformation is in accord with the Roman *Code of Canon Law* (CCL, 1983) and in the spirit of the Vatican II Ecumenical Council. Participatory Leadership is a new concept in the line of shared responsibilities between lay people and ordained ministers. This term will be used extensively in this work because it is the principle proposed to establish this new set of rules.

Pastors and parishioners, based on this new set of rules, will develop a new relationship with the single goal of the fulfillment of the role of a parish and, in this process, the achievement of excellence in parish life. This dissertation offers a practical theological exploration of the effects of Participatory Leadership when it is applied to a parish.

Participatory Leadership allows the parishioners to make decisions that affect their lives, improve their participation in parish life, and develop a sense of belonging and ownership. All of these concepts have become extremely important for the future of parishes. Participatory Leadership gives the regular parishioner sitting in the pews a voice in the decision making process of parish life and moves them from listeners to participants and creating the sense of belonging and ownership of their parish.

This dissertation engages parishioners to examine the way they experienced parish's life when a new leadership model is applied to the effective running of the parish. To what

degree are their commitment and sense of ownership that they experience being fulfilled? How is the running of a parish affecting their decisions to worship in a particular parish? This dissertation will develop drivers/predictors to clarify the road map to foster a vibrant and committed community whose parish' life is excellent. An analysis through Participatory Action Research (PAR) and the application of the pastoral circle will attempt to create a road map for pastoral planning, which would lead a parish to be categorized as excellent. In this process, a new way of leadership is developed through the empowerment of the laity in the decision making process, enabling a set of practices that positively affect flourishing parish life, thus creating a mutually reinforcing dynamic that promotes parish excellence. This process is defined as "Participatory Leadership." This new concept of Participatory Leadership will be tested analyzing the "work of the parish," "the participation of people in parish life," and "the feelings of belongings" generated by the application of Participatory Leadership.

An Overview of Catholic Parishes in the USA

Over the past decades parishes have experienced financial pressures, demographic changes, a decline in the number of priests and a nationwide decline in Mass attendance (Jewell and Ramey 2010, 3-4) although the number of Catholics continues to rise. These numbers seem contradictory, but they are best explained by immigration - major growth in Hispanic population (Hoge and Jewell 2010, 2). In this context some Catholic parishes flourish by promoting ownership identity among their parishioners, while still other parishes struggle for survival. In other words, considerable disparity exists among parishes even though all Catholic parishes have a common mission and function set by the *Code of Canon Law*.

Practical theologians Jewell and Ramey (2010) research leadership standards for Catholic parishes. Rather than setting forth certain structures as definitive for effective leadership, they indicate a set of practices most likely to give birth to the parish of the future (Jewell and Ramey 2010, ix-x). One of the practices that they observed for effective leadership is the work of the pastoral staff as a leadership team that calls forth the ministry of the community. This team works as a collaborative leadership team. They facilitate and oversee the formation of key leaders rather than administer their own projects and priorities. These practices are facilitated by pastors who call forth the gifts of the laity (117). They work in a collaborative manner with the laity, sustaining vibrant parishes in the celebration of the Eucharist (114). The pastor becomes an agent of change “fully engaged in leading the vision processes of parishes” (118). The pastoral staff becomes facilitators of ministries (119). Another set of practices observed is the emergent multiculturalism. Some parishes take this as a grace that benefits the growth of a new sense of identity. This could represent a challenge, integrating a multicultural parish into a single community. Nevertheless, according to some, the effort to integrate multicultural communities outweighs the benefit of multiculturalism, “which brings their parishes to a new sense of identity and vitality and is therefore a grace to be celebrated” (120). Further, best practices include a strong focus on social justice as a “structural and formal commitment to justice as a presence of the local Church in the world” (127).

The paradigm that pastors currently face in the United States presents a greater challenge than prior decades. According to Gray, Gautier, and Cidade (2011), over the past forty years in the United States, the number of diocesan priests has declined by 11 percent, and the number of parishes has diminished 7.1 percent. Over the last 40 years the total

number of Catholics has increased by 75 percent. Pre-assuming that the growth trend continues (considering the rate of Hispanics/Latinos immigration), the projection is that the Catholic population will grow by 65 percent between 2010 and 2050, reaching a total Catholic population of 128 million in 40 years. Therefore, bigger parishes,¹ more Masses per parish, and ministries in other languages than English will have become typical. Today, although ten percent of Catholic parishes in the United States celebrate one weekend Mass only, the average number of the weekend Masses per parish celebrated is 3.8 Masses. The estimated total number of lay ecclesial ministers is approximately 38,000 (2.1 per parish) and about 790 additional lay ecclesial ministers are added to parish staffs each year. There will be far greater numbers of parishioners in each U.S. parish over the coming years, given the overall decline in the total number of U.S. parishes while the number of Catholics continues to grow. Further, according to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) there has not been a recent decline or increase in Mass attendance in national surveys during the past decade, suggesting that demands on Catholic parishes will increase as the result of an increase in the Catholic population attending church and in need of the sacraments (Gray, Gautier, and Cidade 2011, 1-10).

The Role of Lay People in Parishes

Since Vatican Council II, the Catholic Church has redefined the roles of lay people and clergy, moving the lay people from spectators to the people of God, and significantly shifting the model of priesthood from a primarily cultic to a more communal oriented vision²

¹Wittberg (2012) notes that more than 23 percent of Catholic parishes “have more than twelve hundred registered households and more than three thousands parishioners, which puts them on a level with some of the larger Protestant megachurches” (Wittberg 2012, 47).

² Rossetti (2005) notes that according to National Federation of Priests’ Councils there are two basic types of priests. The newly ordained priest that hold to a more sacramental and cultic model of priesthood, as a man set apart. The other type of priest is the older priests ordained at the time of Vatican Council II. They see the priesthood as servant leaders (Rossetti 2005, 128).

(Carroll 2006, 14). Furthermore, parish leadership has increasingly been understood more as an activity than simply a position or set of characteristic leadership styles to fit different situations. According to Carroll, excellent pastoral leadership refers “to the work of pastors who lead congregations in such a way that the congregations and their members exhibit excellence in their life and practices” (189). Excellence in ministry involves community changes and even personal life transformation or continuing conversion that affects the parish and the larger local community and culture of which is part as well as the persons involved, including the pastor. Parish life and leaders, therefore, must respond to such critical realities as context, size, location, ethnicity, and resources (201).

The lack of sufficient numbers of parish priests has created a tension that in part is largely responsible for the generation of new models of leadership in pastoral ministry. Jewell and Ramey (2010) observe this in their research of *Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership Project*, compiling the experiences of new emergent models of leadership in parishes around the dioceses of the United States. They are adopting these new models of leadership in response to the shortage of parish priests. The research made inquiry regarding how parishes are coping and adapting to this situation, and, in the adapting process creating a new way of pastoral leadership for parishes. The priest shortage has led Catholic parishes to adapt and create new ministerial roles. Under this “emergent model” the church provides “pastoral care of souls,” a ministry ordinarily defined as specifically for the ordained, with the help of non-ordained people.³ Most of these ministers are women, some of them vowed

³ The role of the pastor could also be exercised in some very particular cases, as determined by the local bishop, by a duly appointed parish life coordinator. Canon 517, §2 of the Code of Canon Law authorizes bishops to appoint some other than a priest to the pastoral care of a parish. “This person could be a deacon, a vowed religious, or a lay person” (Zech and Gautier 2004, 143). A priest is designated by the bishop to administer the sacraments and oversee the pastoral care of the parish. This canon is implemented only by bishops and under a shortage of priests in the diocese (Zech and Gautier 2004, 143).

religious; all are “lay ecclesial ministers”⁴ in the sense this term is commonly used in Catholic circles in the United States today (Jewell and Ramey 2010, 93). Ganim (2008) identified five marks of excellence to categorize and group the parishes interviewed in her study. The first mark of excellence identified is “Welcoming,” where the group of parishes confront issues of diversity and difference; pastoral leaders create an environment of warmth where differences are accepted and celebrated. The second mark of excellence is “Collaborative,” where lay and clerical ministers work in collaboration in large parishes or cluster parishes or groups of parishes. The third mark of excellence is “Ethical,” where parish’s-focus is on the ethical aspects of ministry, how ministry influences community life and personal relationships. The fourth mark of excellence is “Pastoral,” where the focus is on parishes located in rural areas that are rooted in specific cultures. The fifth mark of excellence is “Prophetic,” where the focus is on the way of solving “unique situations that call for inspired leadership” (Ganim 2008, xv).

For Wilkes (2001) the problem in parishes is different. Regardless of the lack of priests and financial problems, great parishes do exist. In these parishes, the vision to see the evident spiritual hunger and the energy to serve the spiritual needs of the souls regularly exist. Despite problems, some parishes excel, when Catholics go to them for sustenance,

⁴ Fox (2010) affirms that the emergence of the lay ecclesial ministers is a change in the system of the Catholic Church in the United States. This change has created new relationships with ministers, which need to be refined (Fox 2010, 198). She remarks the need of a study on the implications of lay ecclesial ministers’ authority exercised in parish system of lay staff (Fox 2010, 200). O’Meara (1999) shares this insight, he writes “the entry of those not ordained to the priesthood into public ministry is a remarkable phenomenon and has largely escaped the analysis of religious sociologist” (O’Meara 1999, 9). According to the United State Conference of Catholic Bishops’ document “Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord” (2005) the pastor promotes “the exercise of the common priesthood of the entire people of God” (USCCB 2005, 24). Fox (2011) comments that this document places the sacrament of baptism at the center, making the laity to participate as the body of Christ “The role of the laity is grounded in Baptism” (Fox 2011, 14). While Hahnenberg states that this document set the framework to a new approach to ministry and the theological agenda based on the new paradigm to reflect upon the lay ecclesial ministry and their call as a vocation, the service that they provide to our community of believers, and the recognition of the new role and the implications for the ministerial structures of the church (Hahnenberg 2010, 81-82).

searching for a transcendent connection to God, and guidance in their life's journey (Wilkes 2001, x-xii). Further, he argues that the parish's problems reside not in the lack of priests or resources, but "vision, energy and hope" (151). Wilkes, remarks that unless a miraculous increase in the number of priests take place in the near future, the outlook of Catholicism and the parish structure "rest with lay people" (152). He warns that young people and an increased number of immigrants are not reaching out. They will cease to be Catholics unless parishes expose them to the transforming power of Catholicism (153).

The shortage of ordained ministers in the Catholic Church has created a situation whereby the traditional model of absolute power exercised by the pastor⁵ is no longer viable, particularly in light of theologies of church following from the Second Vatican Council where the participation of the lay people is promoted.⁶ More and more new emerging models of leadership are developing to address this limitation; these models need to be attuned to the work of the Holy Spirit and the Sacramental life of the Church.⁷

⁵ "Parochus" is the Latin term used in the Code of Canon Law; which is the priest who is validly and licitly head of a parish (c.519). The term "pastor" is used in English, but the notion of shepherd or pastor is more typically applied in Catholic ecclesiology to the diocesan bishop (c. 383, § 1), and the "pastoring" of the parochus is really as an extension of the bishop's pastoring of the entire (diocesan) church (c.384).

⁶ In Vatican Council II, According to Lumen Gentium (1964) the holy people of God shares the prophetic office of Christ; receiving through the Holy Spirit special gifts among the faithful of every rank, "He makes them fit and ready to undertake the various task and offices which contributes toward the renewal and building up of the Church" (Vatican Council II – Lumen Gentium 1964, §12).

⁷ Congar (1983) states that the emphasis given to authority in the Catholic Church has been excessive. The cost of maintain orthodoxy and unity in the Church, has been marginalization of individuals who has been reduced to silence and inactivity. Is the Spirit of God who is needed to bring about unity, and by doing so, even stimulating diversity. Moreover, He affirms that is the Spirit that "supports the pastoral hierarchy of the Church and through it guides Christian communities" (17). The Spirit brings unity to the Church through the way of communion. The Spirit is the one who further God's plan expressed as communion; acting as the one who animates many "without doing violence to the inner experience of anyone" (17). This interior communication is a state of indwelling "God dwell in us and we dwell in him" (18). Congar describes the Spirit as anticipation, prophecy, and also memory. As memory, the Spirit makes the words of Jesus "into a present and a penetrating reality" (18). Therefore, the Spirit is the presence of the past and of the eschatological future in the "here and now" of the present era of the sacraments (18). Furthermore, there are many gifts of the Holy Spirit giving to the people. This people belong to a tradition, culture and a sociological group; receiving gifts appropriate for them. These gifts of the Holy Spirit are called to be exchanged among them; contributing for the common good and to build up the community of the Church, in mutual service (26).

History of the Parish

St. Katharine Drexel (SKD) parish was established on July 1, 2001 by Archbishop John C. Favalora.⁸ It is located in the city of Weston in Broward County, Florida. It is a suburban development, composed mostly of people who commute to different locations for work. Over the years, the demographics of the city have changed. Large numbers of people from Venezuela and Colombia have relocated to Weston making this city a bilingual community. At the beginning of the parish, Masses were celebrated in a local elementary school. The attendance was overwhelming. It convinced the founding pastor, to rent a larger facility of 12,000 sq. feet.

This facility was remodeled to receive a maximum of 600 people per Mass over weekends. The pastor decorated the Church with an iconographic style from the Byzantine and Orthodox Christian tradition, transforming a warehouse into a beautiful Church with a unique style. On Sunday, September 15, 2002 the first Mass was celebrated in this facility. The pastor initiated a campaign to motivate the SKD parishioners to build a final facility on the land that was owned by the Archdiocese of Miami. Several projects were prepared, but most of them were not viable due to the excessive cost. A capital campaign was launched to raise building funds. Unfortunately, plans were sadly interrupted by the pastor's death in 2006. In his absence, the parish kept running and an administrator was appointed to continue with the construction plans. After four years of planning, the project was stopped due to new regulations by the Archdiocese of Miami on new construction. The parishioners had to raise 75% of the total cost of the project to start construction. The new regulation disappointed and discouraged the parishioners. Efforts to continue the project waned. Parish activities

⁸ According to Coriden (1997) The parish represent the "Worldwide Church" especially in the celebration of the Eucharist (45)

continued running in the temporary facility. In April 2010, a new pastor was appointed to resume the project to provide SKD with its own facility.

The parish has seen considerable change over the course of the past 11 years. After successful negotiations with the Archdiocese, it was agreed that a new capital campaign should be implemented to raise 2.5 million dollars to secure a loan to develop a multipurpose building. This meant that a reduced scope of the building and a portion of the land would be developed in order to achieve a budget that would be supported by the capacity of the parish to repay the loan that would be incurred to build. In order to explain to the parishioners the new vision, a set of town hall meetings were planned and implemented. Additionally, a supervisory committee was created to provide support throughout the entire project. In 2011, a capital campaign was conducted to raise pledges. The response of parishioners was overwhelming, raising pledges of over 2.9 million dollars, which allowed SKD to proceed with pre-construction design, re-focusing on a new concept of the multipurpose building to satisfy the needs of the parish. The development would include only the area of preservation and space for parking, recreation and the multipurpose building. The land for the permanent church, school, and the rectory ultimately will be developed when these projects are feasible. On June 15, 2012 the SKD parish celebrated with a groundbreaking ceremony for their new facility. It was a remarkable celebration in the life of the parish. After 11 years, the parish finally had the promise and the certainty that someday the vision of being able to celebrate Mass in their own building would become a reality. That was a landmark and an important date in the life of the SKD parish. The construction was completed on January 11, 2014, and the dedication Mass of the multipurpose building was celebrated on February 16, 2014 presided by Archbishop Thomas Wensky. The next phases of construction will include an

elementary school, followed by a church, chapel, and rectory. A full build-out for the site is anticipated to be completed by 2025.

Problem Statement

The unsustainability of the cultic model of the pastor as the center of life in a parish compels theologians to investigate new models of effective leadership that guide the parish of the future, proposing a new model “Participatory Leadership.”

This dissertation is designed to explore the practical theological dimensions and implications of Participatory Leadership exercised by a pastor in a Catholic Parish, in the light of the Second Vatican Council. Participatory Leadership empowers the laity, sharing with them in the process of the decision-making in the life of a parish and allowing them to participate in decisions that affect their lives. In this process, practices that positively affect the flourishing of parish life are enabled, thus promoting parish excellence.

The dissertation research will provide a practical theological exploration of pastoral practices within a parish in the Archdiocese of Miami in order to advance a theological understanding of how Participatory Leadership builds up a vibrant and flourishing parish.

This proposed model was implemented in SKD, a young parish with almost fourteen years of existence. The parish built a multipurpose facility on its own land. At the time of the research, the parish was operating in a rental space that had been adapted as a temporal space to function as a parish/house of worship. The building of the new house of prayer underwent construction from July 2012 and finished building on January 2014. The research was done during the transition years of the parish. The parish moved from the rented facility to its own premises on February 2014. Currently, it is functioning in its new facility for over a year. SKD is located in the city of Weston, in Broward County, in the State of Florida.

Research Questions

As noted in the problem statement, parish pastoral excellence demands patterns of parishioner empowerment and involvement in parish decision-making; thus, enabling a set of practices that promote excellence in parish life. This empowerment of the laity is critical not only to build strong parishes, but also to respond to the “Missio Dei” and reflection on the presence of God in parish life. Further, the decline in the numbers of priest means that a traditional parish decision-making model in which the pastor’s voice is all that matters is no longer sustainable. Concretely, in the particular context of the Archdiocese of Miami, specific models appropriate to the situation must be explored and developed.

The central question of this practical theological research, then, is as follows:

How does Participatory Leadership exercised by a pastor through the empowerment of the laity promote effective structures of shared responsibilities at the parish level?

The following Three questions are designed to explore the effects that Participatory Leadership has on a parish.

- How does Participatory Leadership promote patterns of shared responsibilities that promote excellence in parish life and pastoral activities?
- How does Participatory Leadership affect parish community life at the level of commitment and involvement that parishioners have in their parish?
- How does Participatory Leadership change parishioners’ sense of parish identity?

The first question is designed to reflect upon the work of the parish. The second question is designed to reflect upon the participation of the people in parish life, and the third question is designed to reflect upon the effect of Participatory Leadership in the people’s feeling of belonging to the parish.

These are critical questions for a practical theological understanding of church life and ministry practices today, particularly in a time of fewer priests and greater expectations for collaborative decision-making among parishioners. Such questions cannot ignore the self-understanding of the church universal or the local church, of course, and these questions will therefore be explored in dialogue with documents from the Second Vatican Council, the *Code of Canon Law*, and other such texts, while at the same time considering relevant decrees and guidelines of the Archdiocese of Miami with respect to parish life and leadership.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the field of practical theology by suggesting and interpreting Christian practices with regard to Participatory Leadership within a specific community of faith. The main contribution of this practical theological study is to develop new experiences of Participatory Leadership at parish level. The parishioners have the opportunity to exercise Participatory Leadership sharing responsibilities and making decisions that affect their lives. This study could possible help parishes with multicultural and multilingual compositions to create a road map of their practices and, in the process, reach an encounter with theological reflection that is grounded in their daily life's experiences. Theologically, this is as much an exploration of God's action and call as it is of ministerial and lay action in a faith community.

Scope and Limitations

This study will be conducted in a single parish of the Archdiocese of Miami, with a multicultural composition, and bilingual in nature (English and Spanish). No similar studies were found at the parish level in the archdiocese of Miami, and no other studies of this kind

that bring together the elements discussed in this theological study were found. Although the results of this study cannot be generalized to other parishes, the methodology can be used as a model to duplicate research for other parishes in evaluating their pastoral practices that could lead them to excellence. As the pastor of this particular parish and the one who will conduct this research, one of the greatest challenges is being an insider in a Participatory Action Research (PAR) design. As Coghlan (2007) notes, the “insider” researcher faces three challenges. First, the researcher has to be close to the settings and at the same time keep a distance to observe things critically enabling change to happen. The research insider has a dual role to be the researcher and to keep his/her role as a member of the organization. Second, and conversely, it is necessary to keep organizational policies. Third, and most importantly, is maintaining a balance in a situation of power as a pastor and conducting the research with the parishioners of the same parish. It is important to maintain a careful balance (Coghlan 2007, 338-340). This situation is critical, and a note of caution needs to be made at the beginning of the formation of the research to underscore the objectives and design of the study in order to respond adequately to this challenge. This is a typical challenge in PAR research, but this does not make it any less challenging in this case. It is always a challenge and will need to be approached cautiously from the very beginning. No individual (e.g. Parishioner, Mass attendee, parish pastoral council member) will be compelled to participate in this research. All participants will be advised that they can freely end their participation, at any time. The highest standards of research anonymity and/or confidentiality or both will be extended to all involved in the project. Bias and acquiescence issues will be clearly identified and discussed from the beginning.

Acronyms

SKD	St. Katharine Drexel
PAR	Participatory Action Research
ADOM	Archdiocese of Miami
PPC	Parish Pastoral Council
CCCH	Catechism of the Catholic Church
USCCB	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
US	United States
CARA	Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
OT	Old Testament
RCIA	Rite of Catholic Initiation for Adults
CCL	Code of Canon Law

Summary

This dissertation explores a new way of reversing the vertical and horizontal relationship generated by pastor, staff and parishioners, when they interact with the normal life of a parish. The implementation of the concept of Participatory Leadership in a specific parish in the Archdiocese of Miami will generate a model that explores the effects produced in the participation of the people in parish life and its effects in the feelings of ‘belonging’ produced by this interaction.

The end of the cultic model of leadership, exercised solely by the pastor in a parish, is giving birth to new forms of leadership in parish life. This dissertation explores how the proposed model of Participatory Leadership, through the empowerment of parishioners,

makes them exercise its call to fulfill the Mission of God. This participatory interaction between the ordained and the non-ordained produces an effective pastoral care of souls. Thus, this theological exploration is framed in light of the documents of Vatican Council II, the *Code of Canon Law* and other such texts of the Roman Catholic Church and guidelines of the Archdiocese of Miami (ADOM).

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Rediscovering the Role of a Priest in today's World

Pope Francis' election has created great expectations among Catholics all over the world. He initiated his papacy with a humble gesture by asking the people to pray for him. That gesture promises changes in the Catholic Church—changes of recovery of the true Catholic identity and the important role that the priest will have in those changes—to make the Catholic Church, again, the church of the poor.

Pope Francis, in his homily for Chrism Mass 2013 recalls the profound meaning of the anointing in the priest's ordination ceremony. This anointing is for the poor, the prisoners, and the sick, and not to be used as a perfume or to be kept stored in the jar because it will become rancid (Francis 2013, Rome, Homily, Chrism Mass, 1). Pope Francis remarks that a sign of a good priest is when the anointing of the oil of gladness has been poured into the congregation. The faithful turned their prayer of supplications and entrusted them to the priest as mediators between God and his people. Further, Pope Francis states that priests need to be shepherds to go out and meet the faithful- to share the odor of the sheep. Priests need to be fishers of men and go into the deep of the contemporary world, to cast the nets and overflow them with the names of the people entrusted to his care (2-3). Pope Francis in his homily addressed to bishops, priests, religious, and seminarians in his apostolic journey to Rio de Janeiro on July 2013, focused on three aspects of the priestly vocation: The call of God, the proclamation of the Gospel, and the promotion of the culture of encounter. Priests are called by God to abide in him. This life in Christ has to be the mark that assures them an effective apostolate. In the proclamation of the Gospel, Pope Francis emphasized that priests need to be missionaries wherever the Lord has placed them. That means that priests have to

reach out, especially to the young people, rediscovering the faith and the joy to be loved by God. Priests need to go and reach out to those who do not usually go to church. Priests cannot wait only for the people who come to the door; they need to go and meet the people beyond the walls, at the crossroads. Additionally, Pope Francis notes that the promotion of the culture of encounter is to go against the pragmatism and efficiency that had generated a culture of exclusion. In this culture, there is no place for the elderly, for the unwanted child, or for the poor person in the street. Priests need to encounter and welcome everyone with solidarity and fraternity, words hidden by this culture, which contains actions that make society truly human. Pope Francis invited the bishops, priests and seminarians to be counter cultural and to promote this culture of encounter to touch lives by “the truth who is Christ, ever to be proclaimed” (Francis 2013, Homily, Rio de Janeiro §3).

Diocesan Spirituality: Toward a Spiritual Theology of Parish Leadership

A man who feels the call of God to serve as priest is sent to the seminary. Through a discernment process and after twelve years of preparation, his correspondent diocesan bishop ordains him. He is ordained to serve in that particular diocese. The bishop appointed the ordained priest to serve in a parish giving him faculties to celebrate the sacraments in his name. O’Keefe (1999) explains that the diocesan priest is the collaborator of the bishop. He is an extension of bishop’s ministry in the particular church, which is the parish. Bishops participate in the ministerial priesthood of Jesus Christ. Diocesan priests shared in that ministerial priesthood as co-workers with the bishop, continuing “the mission of Jesus as Teacher, Priest and Shepherd” (O’Keefe 1999, 40). Pope Paul VI (1965) affirms that priest primarily duty is to collaborate with his bishop in the preaching of the Gospel. He writes “priests, as co-workers with their bishops, have the primary duty of proclaiming the Gospel

of God to all” (Paul VI 1965, §4). They do not rely on their own wisdom but on the word of God, pursuing the conversion and holiness of men (§4). Pope John Paul II reaffirmed this in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* as he notes that “the priest is first of all a minister of the word of God” (John Paul II 1992, §26). Paul VI (1965) asserts that the Eucharist is at the center of the spiritual life of the Church, as priest, he presides at the Eucharist, which is “the very heart of the congregation” (Paul VI 1965, §5). John Paul II (1992) reiterates this in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* priest’s central place of his spiritual life and his ministry is in the celebration of the Eucharist, “for the priest as well, the central place, both in his ministry and spiritual life, belongs to the Eucharist” (John Paul II 1992, §26). Paul VI (1965) states that priests as educators in the faith, must see that faithful are led to their development of their own vocation through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As shepherd, special attention should be given to the poor, the youth, and married people. The priest must care especially for the sick and dying and for building the Christian community with the purpose of “the spiritual growth of the Body of Christ” (Paul VI 1965, §6).

John Paul II (1992) in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, further asserts, that priestly identity has its source in the Blessed Trinity. The revelation of all Christian identity is in the mystery of Trinitarian communion of the Church and in the tension of its mission. He explains “the priest, by virtue of the consecration which he receives in the sacrament of orders, is sent forth by the Father through the mediatorship of Jesus Christ, to whom he is configured in a special way as head and shepherd of his people, in order to live and work by the power of the Holy Spirit in service of the Church and for the salvation of the world” (John Paul II 1992, §12).

Therefore, the priest's identity is relational and derived from the essence of the Trinity;⁹ and his mission is defined by the interconnection of relationships originated from the Blessed Trinity extended in the communion of the Church and becoming a sign and instrument of Christ “of communion with God and of the unity of all humanity” (§12). The ecclesiology of communion defines the Priest’s identity, “the priest is a living and transparent image of Christ the priest” (§12). The priest is a servant of the Church both, as mystery celebrating the sacraments, “signs of the presence of the risen Christ” and as a mission, making “the community a herald and witness of the Gospel” (§16). Therefore, the priest has a radical communitarian form in relation to his bishop, other priests and the laity; and in sharing the priesthood of Christ, he works for the building of the body of Christ (§17).

The priest in his relationship with the laity is to serve the faith, hope and charity of the people of God. The mission of the laity even more than that of the ordained is the participation of the transformation of the world in the light of the Gospel. By leading and building up the parish, the priest creates a context whereby the laity can all the more carry out their mission. Yet at the same time, and precisely for this reason, the ministerial priesthood signifies a different dignity with regard to the common priesthood of the faithful. As John Paul II (1992) states, “the ministerial priesthood does not of itself signify a greater degree of holiness with regard to the common priesthood of the faithful” (§17). John Paul II (1992) calls for new ways of evangelization with the involvement of the entire people of God. This requires priests be fully immersed in Christ’s mystery and open to new ministerial style in full communion with the pope, bishops, other priests, and in collaboration with the laity. As he states, “this task demands of priest who are deeply and fully immerse in the mystery of

⁹ This affirmation is congruent with Congar’s remarks about the Holy Spirit: The Holy spirit is the provider of grace; the Church is the body of Christ and not of the Holy Spirit, but is the Holy Spirit the one who calls for a concrete personal relationship between the members of the Church (Congar 1983, 21-21).

Christ and capable of embodying a new style of pastoral life, marked by a profound communion with the pope, the bishops and other priests and a fruitful cooperation with the lay faithful” (§18). Moreover, priests’ education is to love the truth and to exercise the utmost respect for human beings. A priest conforms himself to Christ in order to be a bridge between Christ and men and not an obstacle. In this capacity, the priest has to be able to relate to others. Since a priest is called to be responsible for a community and a man of communion, the priest has to preach not only with words but also with actions testifying of the love of God. “This demands that the priest not to be arrogant or quarrelsome, but affable, hospitable, sincere in his words and heart, prudent and discreet, generous and ready to serve, capable of opening himself to clear and brotherly relationships and of encouraging the same in others, and quick to understand, forgive and console” (§43).

The Congregation for the Clergy in the *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priest*, (2013) reaffirms what Pope John Paul II wrote in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*: priests are a sacramental representation of Jesus Christ (Congregation for the Clergy 2013, 1). His identity is essentially related to the Holy Trinity in virtue of the priestly service to the church and humankind (Congregation for the Clergy 2013, 1.1§3). The priest is in a personal relationship with the Holy Trinity because it is the source of his existence and his actions (1.1§5). The ministerial priesthood is no greater than the common priesthood of the faithful, it is a service given in benefit of all the faithful, to intercede for the world and instituted by God in that mission (1.2§6). Priests must be able to evangelize not only the people who come to Mass but also the baptized that for diverse motives do not practice their faith, as well, as those who do not know anything of Christ (1.4§21). This statement is in agreement with Pope Francis

and the missionary character of the priest and the culture of encounter proclaimed by him (Francis 2013, Homily Rio de Janeiro §3).

Aschenbrenner (2002) sees diocesan priests' spirituality as a way of living the priesthood in the service of the people. He remarks that people approach the priests bringing their daily life problems, and with ultimate concerns regarding the meaning of life and death. People come asking about ways for improvement in their relationship with God. Priests do not always have a straight answer, but a reflective discernment of the dynamics in place and the spiritual growth. To develop that kind of discernment, the priest has to be rooted in a deep intimacy with God in Jesus. This allows the priest to be a light to shine through the Holy Spirit that "enkindle far beyond what he may ever intend or realize" (Aschenbrenner 2002, 52). Part of the ministry of diocesan priesthood is to deal with issues of suffering, dying, and sinfulness. Diocesan priests convey hope and encouragement only in the light of the paschal mystery, bringing life to desperate situations and hope in the midst of desperation. This is only possible through prayerful confrontation to the mystery of the cross, and the blessing of compassionate grace (52-54).

Discernment is the only approach for a mature spiritual development and involves a reflective awareness. God is committed to each one of us in this discernment process, as Aschenbrenner notes, "the Holy Spirit is constantly active in our hearts and in our world" (85). Diocesan priest exercise their ministry in the spiritual realm as pastors of souls and as the administrative leader of the parish, "thus the charism of administration is one sign of his diocesan priestly call" (57). The priest must facilitate a collaborative style of stewardship in the parish. Collaboration of the lay parishioners will help the priest to focus more on the spiritual ministry, helping him to become a spiritual leader and not a mere administrative

manager (57). A diocesan priest above all is a spiritual administrator, calling forth the gifts that the Holy Spirit has granted to parishioners, in order to build the body of Christ. This is the way that “administration becomes part of the whole spirituality of the priest and of the parish” (58).

Rossetti (2005) argues that diocesan spirituality have seen as a little spirituality full of demands from public ministry. Diocesan spirituality is not seen any more as remnants of a monastic life, but rather a unique spirituality thus, “the events of the day are an integral part of how we experience God and thus part of the very essence of our spiritual lives” (Rossetti 2005, 134). He proposes that the spirituality of the diocesan priest emanates from the deep relation between the diocesan priest and the people, becoming both parts of each other’s life (135). Moreover, the diocesan priest’s presence among the people is not only physical, but emotional and spiritual as well. This presence among the people of God serves the diocesan priest as a challenge, support and affirmation of his vocation (136-137). He further adds that the spirituality of the diocesan priest lives in the service and the edification of the Christian community. Therefore, in order for the priest to be accountable in the fulfillment of his vocation of service, he needs to listen to the people who he serves. He writes “in listening to them and responding to their needs, we exercise an obedience and selflessness that are essential” (79). Bohr (2009) adhered on Robert Schwartz’s affirmation, emphasizing that Christ is at the center of Christian faith; thus the nature of Christian priests’ spirituality is contemplative. He notes “the priest must study, contemplate and internalize God’s word until it becomes the very fabric of his being” (Bohr 2009, 103). Bohr stressed that diocesan priests need to know both, the things of God (Scripture, theology, prayer), and the human realities. These two realities, spiritual and human, need to come together in his spiritual life. Thus,

knowing the different spiritualities and devotions of the laity, he can support them, “in their secular vocation and in their mission to the world” (119). Bohr, following Robert Schwartz’s affirmation, remarks, that an effective pastor should be familiar with the realities that the people whom he serves, “since the laity must find and serve God in the midst of these realities, not in some other world” (119-120). Rossetti (2005) stresses that there is a need of priests that have the qualities of the priest cultic model of priesthood, mixed with the priest servant-leader model. He writes:

We need priests committed to collaboration, lay ministry and social justice. We also need priests who recognize the lofty calling of the priesthood; the priest is truly a man set apart. We need men who have a mature obedience to the faith, a joyful acceptance of our tradition, and a personal commitment to the vicar of Christ and to their bishops. At the same time, they ought to be sensitive, caring, and flexible, and be the servant who empowers others (Rossetti 2005, 129).

Relational Trinitarian Leadership Approach in Parishes

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCCH) (1993) asserts, “the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian Faith and life” (CCCH 1993, §234). Further, the CCCH (1993) states that the Father and the Son exists only in relationship, “he is eternally Father by his relationship to his only Son who, reciprocally, is Son only in relation to his Father” (§240). Additionally, the CCCH (1993) promulgates that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, “the Latin Tradition of the Creed confesses that the Spirit proceeds from the father and the Son (*filioque*)” (§246). The CCCH (1993) reaffirms that the only difference in the persons of the Holy Trinity is in their relationships, as it notes “the divine persons are relative to one another. Because it does not divide the divine unity,

the real distinction of the persons from one another resides solely in the relationships which relate them to one another” (§255). Finally, the CCCH (1993) denotes that the mission of the Holy Trinity is the perfect union of all creatures with God by explaining that, “the ultimate end of the whole divine economy is the entry of God’s creatures into the perfect unity of the Blessed Trinity” (§260). The relational character of the Holy Trinity is also noted by Hahnenberg (2003), who remarks that according to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, God is fundamentally relational (Hahnenberg 2003, 86). He adds that God lives as a dynamic community of persons seeking a relationship (85). Edwards (1997) sees in contemporary theology a turn into a relational and interpersonal approach to the Trinitarian God, and he highlights that the emphasis is to begin with the divine persons instead of the divine unity. This is the Eastern approach to the Trinity (Edwards 1997, 77). Further, he adds God as persons in mutual communion is the framework for self-understanding of church. From this communion the mission of the church is derived as the “sign and agent” of the divine relations of mutual love. Edwards affirms by explain that “the church is the sacrament of relationships, called to witness to the relational God” (78). Further, he asserts that the presbyter as representative of the Church, is the “sign and agent” of the unity of the local church, “the unity in diversity, of the local church, an in and through this the sign of Trinitarians relations of mutual love” (79). Edwards (1997) argues that the relations of the ordained ministry are better understood by a Trinitarian approach as in the Church coming from below and above where the Holy Spirit flows working in the community as the work in actions that also comes from the risen Lord. Edwards (1997) emphasizes, “ministry flows from the Spirit at work in the community and it also springs from the risen Christ” (81). Edward (1997) proclaims that diocesan spirituality is “fundamentally relational and

communal” (81), Further, he states that it derives from the relationship of a communal God that is celebrated and witnessed in the Church (81). A diocesan priest in relational terms is called to be present with the people, witnessing that they belong to both to the community of the local church and to the communion that is God; a priest’s role is to build authentic Christian community experiences in all kinds of ways. This Trinitarian approach of the ordained minister calls for a collaborative ministry. The diocesan spirituality that spring from this Trinitarian theological approach is contrary to all forms of clericalism and pyramidal power. This is a life style and a spirituality that calls for collaboration, where relationships happen as equals. In this context, relational power calls to transformations since it has “the capacity to both influence others and be influenced by them” (82). This Trinitarian approach is critical if Christians want to promote personal relationships with God and one another, especially due to the current crisis in Catholics who do not believe that a personal relationship with God is possible. To this, Weddell’s (2012) comments on Pew Research’s results, reporting that 48 percent of Catholics believe that is possible to have a personal relationship with God, revealing that more Catholics are not certain that a personal relationship with God is possible (Weddell 2012, 44).

Cahalan (2010) states that contemporary Trinitarian theology offers a way to understand the practice of discipleship and ministry. The immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity is understood through an integrate reality. Cahalan affirms: “who God is and what God does is one divine life” (150). Further, she asserts that a human is created in the image of God, by analogy, therefore, human practice is the integration of “being and doing before God” (150). Additionally, she adds, what we know about God is for the things God has done

through history of humankind. God is essentially relational through persons in community. She emphasizes, “who God is and what God does are one and the same” (155).

Hahnenberg (2003) stresses that God’s ultimate reality is not in nature or substance but in personhood. He explains that the divine personhood is defined in terms of relationship congruent with the Trinitarian doctrine that “a divine person (Father, Son, or Spirit) does not exist prior to relationship; rather, a divine person exists only in and through relationship with the other divine persons” (Hahnenberg 2003, 90). Further, he asserts that the claim made in the First Letter of John: “God is love”¹⁰ moves God closer to a verb than a noun because God is a dynamic being in relation (91). For Cahalan (2010), relationality points out in a bi-fold direction, shaping each person by relationship and shaping the world by being in relationship. She remarks, “the call to discipleship is to live in relationship to God and neighbor in a particular way” (Cahalan 2010, 156). Practices that are lived by a community of followers shaped themselves and in turn, these practices shaped the world around them (156). Additionally, Cahalan claims that Hahnenberg and others Catholic ecclesiolgists have shifted from substance ontology to relational ontology, which is a transition from discipleship to minister (157).

Hahnenberg (2003) explains that ministers become ministers when they enter into relationships of service. This occurs when somebody accepts to be part of a ministry. This new responsibility does not make a person a different Christian, but her actions are something new for the community; hence, if there is a change, it has to be understood as a relational ontological change. He proposed an example of a person in the community taking the responsibility to be a lector in the liturgy, stating “the change consists in a new set of relationships. Her identity is based – like the distinctive identity of each person of the Trinity

¹⁰ Cf. 1John 4:8,16

– on relationships. It is not simply being someone new or doing something new but a combination of both” (Hahnenberg 2003, 94).

Hahnenberg concludes that Christ’s activity cannot be separated from his Spirit; therefore, an approach that contemplates both Christological and Pneumatological approaches is necessary for a healthy theology of ministry. He notes that “This insight offers a language that matches contemporary experience and that supports a view of ministry as relationships of service” (97). This is echoed by Gaillardetz’s (2008) assertion that the principle concept of *koinonia* is rooted in the Trinitarian doctrine of God. The communion life of the Trinity draws humans as beings created for communion. Gaillardetz emphasizes, “what God is in God’s very being, we can become by grace” (Gaillardetz 2008, 163). The development of the relational theology of ministry allows the separation between ministry and the power given at the conferral of the sacrament of ordination; consequently, ordained and non-ordained baptized are to play a complementary role in the life of the church. It is not power, but a new way of relations that allows the minister to serve the church’s missions (163). Gaillardetz (2008) suggests, “when a person enters into public ministry, whether by ordination or some other liturgical rite, they enter into a new way of participating in the church’s mission and a new relationship to other believers” (163).

This approach is critical for a Participatory Leadership model, because it creates a new set of relationships where the pastor empowers the laity, and generates a new context of relational power. In this new context, a pastor is open to transformation, influencing the laity and in turn being influenced by the laity.

Models of Leadership: An Approach to Leadership in Parish Life

Robert Greenleaf developed the servant-leadership theory. Greenleaf (1998) investigates in a personal way how leaders can be servants, and how people try to position first as leaders to finally, perhaps become servants. Greenleaf clarifies this: the servant-leader has to be a servant first, with a clear desire to serve. This service is manifested with the highest priority to care for the needs of the other, and the assurance that they are being served (Greenleaf 1998, 19). Further, Greenleaf asserts that the purpose of a servant leader is to serve people to make them better persons, and he questions, “do those served grow as persons? Do they while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived?”(19). Covey (1998) sustains that servant leadership is the empowering of people. He further asserts that a high-speed, sophisticated economy requires constant innovation and production at minimal cost and high quality. Empowering people is the only sustainable way to make this system work due to empowerment; it is possible to turn “bosses into servants and coaches” (Covey 1998, xi). He adds, this is only possible through empowering people, “which is what servant-leadership represents, is one of the key principles that, based on practice, not talk, will be the deciding point between an organization’s enduring success or its eventual extinction” (xii). Kelly (2010) illustrates in Robert Greenleaf’s work *The Servant as Leader*. For her, the characteristics of servant leaders have two dimensions. The first is foundational and the second is the implementation. The foundational is called organizational virtues, which requires from the leader “enormous measures of passion, commitment, creativity, self-restraint, wisdom, and courage” (Kelly 2010, 15). She states that the implementation requires

that the leader has a vision, to motivate others, to create trust and consistency between the message (core values) and actions (lived experiences). To help others find a vocation in their work empowers others to achieve personal and social transformation, a life guided by the truth, a promptness to learn and grow, and a leadership to correspond and find courage to do good always (15-16). The characteristics of the servant leadership style are participative. They call for, “respects the individual, calls out the talents of each, strengthens community, and provides a structure for ongoing assessment and recommitment” (16). This servant leader style is not authoritative, but at the same time maintains its authority. Kelly (2010) describes how a servant-leadership stands with others. She writes, “the servant-leader stands equal to and close to servant-followers in a circular rather than pyramidal relationship” (16).

Blanchard (1998) argues that there is a misconception in the term servant-leadership. He mentions that this happens when corporation presidents hear about “servant-leadership,” what they hear is that the ‘managers’ should be working for their people, and the people would decide what to do; they do not see this as leadership. The failure of this misunderstanding is that the areas covered by the term leadership had not been defined. However, he concurs with Kelly that leadership has two dimensions. The first is the visionary role that undertakes to do the right thing; and second is the implementation role that carries out doing things right (Blanchard 1998, 22). Blanchard states that problems occur in the implementation of servant leadership, in maintaining the traditional organizational pyramid. When people perceive this in the organization, they see the boss as the person “responsible” for implementation and the people responsive to that boss; as a result, there is a separation between the customer and the front line workers (23). This pyramidal organization base results in pleasing the boss and not in pleasing the customer. To solve this conflict, he poses

a solution, to reverse the pyramid. Reversing the pyramid give the people on the front line immediate responsibility, resulting in immediate response to the customer. He states that the immediate effect in reversing the pyramid is a change of roles, He writes, “your people become responsible and the job of management is to be responsive to their people” (25).

Richard Hamm (2007), trying to explain the difficulties that mainline churches confront regarding leadership, suggests that some of them are explained by the inadequacies of individual leaders unable to understand the organizations they serve or by personal pathologies of leaders that are reflected in unhealthy ways that hurt the organization (Hamm 2007, 1-2). He adds that expectations for a minister are to continue the status quo of the organization, and not to make changes that fundamentally alter the organization (2). He further adds that ministers need to differentiate themselves from the institutions they serve or risk their capacity to lead (3). Leaders cannot disappear into the whole system as part of a mechanism because leading is a corporate activity; Hamm believes that it is “not something one person does to or for the whole” (3). He argues that expectations for a minister are to fix the day-to day problems without altering the system (4).

Wood and Field (2007) explore the effect of the implementation of shared leadership and the work outcome experienced by the team involved (Wood and Field 2007, 264). They also explore the effect on an organization with a culture of teamwork and the relationship between shared leadership and outcomes as “role conflict, role ambiguity, job stress, and job satisfaction of team members” (265). Further, group leaders can empower team members and thus enhance outcomes, as more effective and loyal teams (266). Wood and Field (2007), remarking on some limitations of their study, argue that in small organizations, managers expect to work as a team to cover all responsibilities these organizations may present. Thus,

the effect of shared responsibilities on team job members, in complex and big environments may be different because leaders' performance will be evaluated and rewarded in individual basis (266). Similarly, Carter (2009) researching in pastoral leadership effectiveness notes that effective leaders are those who develop leaders within the body of the church, additionally to their daily functions as pastors such as preaching, counseling, worshipping (Carter 2009, 261). Such leaders tend to be either transactional or transformational leaders. Transactional leaders do not look for changes in the organization but are experts in maintaining the status quo. On the other hand, the strengths of transformational leaders are in articulating a vision for the future and sharing it with peers and followers. They are able to consider long-term needs and to change followers into leaders (262).

Branson and Martinez (2011) argue that organizations shaped by hierarchies and controlled by modern management theories are similar to church's organizations where the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the pastor. Sometimes the pastor, like a CEO, has the participation of a board and sometimes the pastor does not. In any case, here is where he takes decisions and determines the goals; these goals after dissemination become part of the structure of the organizational life of the church (Branson and Martinez 201, 54). They suggest another approach for leadership, one composed of three levels called the "leadership triad," composed of three spheres. The first component called "interpretive leadership," engages the practical theological process by constructing meanings for discerning and shaping new praxis (55). The second component is "relational leadership," which refers to the church's connections, internal and external. This level provides awareness and resources to connect church's participants and neighbors to the redemptive presence of God (56). The third component is that of "implemental leadership," which involves putting into place

structures and practices consistent with the interpretive and relational activities, including those related to such critical areas as “worship, governance, and education” (56). In short, leadership is not about an individual or group of individuals setting goals and pulling the church toward their vision. Rather, leadership is about setting a framework in which the people of God corporately and personally discern God’s activity and call in their lives (57).

Jewell and Ramey (2010) see leadership in a parish as a system of relationships, and not as a single person who lead the parish. For them, studying leadership in a parish involve the roles of pastor, staff, and parishioners (Jewell and Ramey 2010, 77). They understand leadership as the talent of a person or group to engage a group of people to make the transition from a vision into a reality (79). The pastor, the staff and parishioners work together for the good of the parish, a total ministering community where they work together to accomplish the mission (79). The leadership of the parish pastoral council plays an important role in the life and direction of the parish (82). Parishioners who are not engaged may be due to lack of empowerment or because of the existence of a dominant group that excludes others or by the expectations of parishioners that the pastor should be the leader or finally, by the minimal role that the pastoral council has (85).

Jewell and Ramey (2010) present three models of pastoral leadership: intentionally collaborative, centered on a core staff, and the traditional model of pastor-centered model. The intentionally collaborative leadership model empowers the baptismal call of the baptized, calling forth their gifts. They describe this model as collaborative, “with shared ministry of the baptized, supported by the pastor and staff” (95). The core team leadership model emphasizes the staff and personnel at the center of the life of a parish, ensuring its sacramental life. It is also described as a corporate model (97). The pastor-centered

leadership model accentuates the role of the pastor, to the point that he is needed to run the parish. Their model is mostly found in small parishes or in “parishes where parishioners continue to believe that everything should be done by the pastor (99).

In the same way as the intentionally collaborative /shared ministry leadership model, defined by Jewell and Ramey (2010), Sofield and Juliano (2000) define collaboration as “the identification, release, and union of all the gifts in ministry for the sake of mission” (Sofield and Juliano 2000, 17). For them, collaboration is doing ministry using the gifts of the community to continue the mission of Jesus Christ. They assert that when the community lacks the vision to follow the mission, it becomes a self-service and narcissistic community (33). Sofield and Juliano make an analogy between shared leadership, a term used in the business world and collaborative ministry, a term that is evolving constantly in Church documents. They report that the Church for decades has used this language of shared leadership in ecclesial documents and it is mentioned as “collaborative ministry” (40). They stress, “collaboration is a response to God’s invitation and call” (41). This call is to ministry and is totally based in the gifts that the people of God have received with the sole purpose of mission, evangelization, and to world transformation (42). This mission is referred to as the service rendered to the world to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, and to extending the Kingdom of God (45). Furthermore, they explain that collaboration has theological bases and not only a mere organizational principle. Even though its theology is evolving, it is focused on three theological concepts: Trinity, Sacrament, and Communion. Related to the Trinity, collaboration finds its theological foundation in the three persons and the one mission (47). Collaborative ministry found its origins in the sacrament of baptism and in the gifts that each person receives to the service of the mission of the Church and to its communal nature (48).

Regarding Communion, Sofield and Juliano state that communion needs recognition by all Christians and is the God's given gift for the community (33). Sofield and Kuhn (1995) assert that Jesus himself gives us a model of Christian leadership. Jesus' message is transforming, and his life and ministry is a model for Christian leadership that can apply to all leaders, despite differences in culture, education and personality (Sofield and Kuhn 1995, 34). Collaboration is vital in the life of Jesus - He listens, heals, and empowers, calls to ministry.

Sofield and Kuhn identify eleven characteristics for pastors and other parish leaders today that they derive from their understanding of Jesus' leadership. While they see these characteristics as rooted in their reading of the Gospels, the key point that they are making is not so much an historical understanding of Jesus's ministry as much as an appropriate current expression of effective pastoral leadership consistent with contemporary Catholic theological and ecclesiological understanding. First, they affirm that Jesus was an attentive listener and that pastoral leaders can learn much of practice listening. Second, Jesus always responded "in a loving way to what he heard" (34). Naturally, as for contemporary Catholics leaders today, this also involves making hard decisions and sometime taking positions that lead to conflict rather than consensus. Third, Jesus created a vision to transform the world, transforming people, "achieving wholeness and union with God" (35). Fourth, Jesus showed himself who he was. This is not meant by Sofield and Kuhn to make a theological claim about Jesus' self knowledge but rather to suggest that the effective pastor, like Jesus in his ministry, will be as clear and transparent as situations warrant. Fifth, Jesus was compassionate with people's feeling and suffering. Sixth, Jesus forgave sins; he was responsive to human suffering and released the burden of guilt and sin from people who repented, giving people a new horizon

in their life. Seventh, Jesus confidently exercised authority in his ministry, but this authority was at the same time a new way of authority. That is, a Catholic pastoral authority needs to be seen in a different light than authority as it is exercised in secular contexts. Eighth, Jesus was generative; he focused on the other, rather than self. Ninth, Jesus was inclusive in his outreach to tax collectors, sinners, women, and others, representing a leadership style that went far beyond typical limitations, and in the “Great Commission” he gave to his disciples to preach the Gospel to all people. Tenth, Jesus was empowering; he empowered people to continue his ministry. Eleventh, Jesus was a person of integrity; he did the right thing regardless of the consequences (35-36).

These eleven characteristics of Jesus’ leadership help us to envision the kind of leader that can continue Jesus’ mission. Participatory Leadership is based on these principles of listening, responding, creating vision, transforming realities, generative, empowering people, and doing the right thing. Furthermore, collaborative ministry or shared ministry is integral in the elaboration of the concept of Participatory Leadership. In the model of Participatory Leadership, the pastor empowers the laity in the decision-making process of the life of the parish; all effective means are used to ensure that ministries and communications are facilitated, allowing all parishioners to be engaged in sharing responsibilities for action and taking decisions that affect their lives. In this role, the pastor acts as a facilitator while always retaining the authority to make the final decision.

Leadership in Parishes

Leadership in parishes is a study in tension; closely observed by many researchers due to its constant change. Parish leadership must continually review and recognize contributing factors such as the decreasing number of priests in Catholic parishes, as well as

cultural changes and trends that affect our society. This situation has brought the exploration of new forms of leadership in parishes. Critical is the ecclesiological understanding of the role of the pastor as defined in the *Code of Canon Law*.¹¹ The *Code of Canon Law* sets out expectations for the pastor of the parish. Fundamentally the purpose of the parish is to provide pastoral care for the Christian faithful (Janicki 1985, 415). These critical duties include those of teaching sanctifying and governing (c. 519). Specific functions are also assigned to the pastor by the Code.¹²

Mogilka and Wiskus (2009) explore the pastoring of multiple parishes by one pastor, emphasizing that pastoral leadership is a prayerful articulation of the vision and the way to help people with the realization of that vision. They comment, “together, they discern God’s will for the communities and make a plan of action that works toward the realization of that vision” (Mogilka and Wiskus 2009, 22). They noted that pastors of multiple parishes see collaboration as the unique value that each one of the communities bring to make things work appropriately (22).

The current situation faced by parishes is becoming critical due to the lack of ordained ministers. Sweetser and Forster (1993) comment regarding leadership in parishes, noting that especially the pastor, staff, and lay leaders “shape people’s opinion (Sweetser and Foster 1993, 24). They stress that the pastor’s personality is the most critical factor because he enables people to act in a collaborative manner. Hence, parishes tend to reflect the pastor’s personality. If he is outgoing, the parish will be outgoing; if he is academic, that will be the tone of the parish (24). A change of pastor underlines this effect. Parishioners that fit

¹¹ Both Canon 515 and Canon 519 refer to the pastor as entrusted “under the authority of the diocesan bishop” in whose ministry of Christ he shares.”

¹² According to Canon 530 this include administration of Baptism, Confirmation in certain circumstances, the anointing of the Sick and related practices, witnessing marriages, performing funerals, specific liturgical acts, and the celebration of the Eucharist on Sundays and Holy days of obligation.

the personality of the outgoing pastor will wait to see if they fit with the personality of the incoming pastor. Otherwise, they will move to another parish. In general, successful forms of leadership in parish leadership tend to mirror cultural expectations. Therefore, it is not surprising that parishioners, similar to people in the United States in general, favor a participative, facilitating style of leadership. Sweetser and Foster explain that “one that listens to their thoughts and suggestions and allows them a voice in important decisions and choices in the parish” (50). For Sweetser and Foster, the crisis in parish leadership today is a systemic one because pastors respond to people in the same way that they experienced with their superiors. Thus, if the bishops do not consult with pastors in the decision-making and policies of their (arch) dioceses, pastors will tend to reflect the same characteristics in their leadership. Another problem is that the limited numbers of priests available for assignment are not sufficient for the parishes in the United States today. Thus, parishes are fortunate to have a pastor who serves a single parish, without any other assignment (51). Weddell (2012) contends that Catholicism in the US has created a dangerous trend because it still relies in cultural Catholicism depending on rites of passaging to fill out our parishes. For her, fewer young Catholics are getting married in the Church and even fewer of the younger Catholics attend Mass. She claims that continuing with this trend a lack of priest will no longer be a problem. Additionally, sacramental practice will drop dramatically and financial support will be at the lowest ever. Catholicism cannot longer rely on cultural Catholicism but needs to shift to intentional discipleship in parishes to stop the loss of more Catholics (Weddell 2012, 39).

Sweetser and Foster (1993) see that the dearth of priests force parishes to look for alternatives like retrenchment or expansion. The alternative of retrenchment is to close

programs that are important for parishioners and the tendency is to tolerate poor quality of services rendered to parishioners. In the end, the people suffer because programs should continue even in the absence of priests. The alternative of expansion amid scarcities of priestly personnel leads to three results. First, the role of collaborative decision-making by bishops, priests, and staff increases, empowering people to contribute with their wisdom and insights and letting people make decisions that affect their lives. The immediate effect is an increased sense of belonging as all are involved in becoming partners in this new organization. Second, leaders see the system as a whole in expansion, using what is possible and reshaping what is needed and innovating where necessary. Third, leaders discover what people really want and provide a positive response to their wishes and needs (Sweetser and Foster 1993, 52–53).

Sweetser and Foster (1993) note the necessity that effective parish leadership implies the knowing of parishioners' needs, especially if those in pastoral leadership are to respond to their needs. Since 1973, they have found that 86 percent of the people who attend Mass receive the Eucharist, but there is often a lack of engagement in the homily because there is no relation to daily life and to living one's faith (18). For contemporary Catholics, confessing their sins is not as important as healing, self-knowledge, and personal growth—values that stem from the culture, but which they understand in a religious frame and seek in part from parish life. People feel the need for forgiveness, but not in the traditional way. Rather, they seek other means to express sorrow and experience forgiveness (20). Finally, Sweetser and Forster emphasize that leadership is more than management because there is an interaction between the leader and the people that mutually pursue change, reflecting purposes that lead to something new and different. This leadership mix transforms both the leader and the

follower. Leadership is not the coordination of the delivery of services but is the effort of bringing real change. Management maintains parishes, but leadership fruits' are transformation obtained by the interaction between the leader and the followers; that, at the end, is leadership in action (54–56).

Similarly, Weems (2010) makes the distinction between administration, management, and leadership. Administration is about properly executing functions, and management includes a long-range goal setting where time, finances, and other resources are considered. Leadership consists in the articulation of a shared vision among key people. Without the involvement of these people, a shared vision cannot become a reality. Unlike administration or management, leadership must intrinsically consider vision and values. Leadership by its very nature is a moral act. Weems argues that “genuine leadership is always values-driven leadership” (Weems 2010, 12-13). In theological terms, this is a matter for moral theological reflection and is particularly open to exploration in the light of virtue ethics.

Osmer (2008) presents three forms of leadership distinguished in leadership literature. The first form of leadership is the task competence; here the most important thing is to do things well. The ability for excellence is the generative process that guides the leader of an organization to perform all functions with competence. The second form of leadership is the transactional leadership; here transactions to achieve results are the generative process in this type of leadership. The results depend on the ability of the leader to generate mutual reciprocity exchanges for achieving the results of the organization. This transactional leadership is common in political organizations with competing agendas. The third form of leadership is the transforming leadership; it involves deep changes in the identity, mission and procedures in an organization. In congregations, it will involve changes in vision,

mission and worshipping. These changes would occur according to the vision of the congregation (Osmer 2008, 176-177). Osmer reflects on the distinction of these three forms of leadership and argues that this gives us languages to lead to transformation. Theological reflection about congregation's mission and 'how' this mission is carried out in its present context, as well as the role that the leaders play in leading the congregation to fulfill their mission, lead us to reflect on 'how' Jesus carried out his mission (176-177). Osmer (2008) affirms that Jesus led as a servant and redefined the nature of power and authority (184).

Correspondingly, Ebener (2010) argues that servant leadership is a two-dimensional concept where power and service are not in competition: the two enhance each other in a new relationship. The service of others inspires new followers and exercises more leadership, Ebener writes "the servant leader is someone who is a servant and who is a leader" (Ebener 2010, 18). He stresses that power enhances service and the service enhances power. Such power develops Servant leaders who serve their followers and focus on the needs of their followers and their organizations. The servant leaders share their power with the group and strengthen the team for the benefit of all. Servant leadership can be practiced in every position of power-including positions in the church. Further, he asserts that servant leadership does not relinquish the leadership role but enhances it through service. The servant leader serves others and has the capacity to transform realities; the servant leader uses the power and the service in an integrated manner (19-22).

For Brennan (2008) the Catholic Church lacks the spirit of servant leadership among the hierarchy and the pastors of the church. For him, "servant leaders lead by serving" (Brennan 2008, 18). Leaders have to articulate and discern Jesus' mission and vision, and they must preach and be a servant of the "Reign of God" (18). He states that Catholics are

made for communion and parishes “ought to be the places where we enter into genuine communion with God and each other” (23). He further asserts that over the past twenty-five or thirty years research shows that truly evangelizing parishes offer worships that are religious unique experiences. The homilies bring livable spirituality to the people, and the existence ministries touch real life needs of the people and parishes that are welcoming and embracing. He notes that “these are the kinds of parishes and congregations that will thrive in the future. Others will gray, age, and, perhaps, close (29).

Ebener (2010) argues that it is very difficult to measure the effectiveness of leadership style that a particular parish experiences, this is because quantifiable measures in religious organizations miss the point of a faith community. Unlike business organizations, what matters more in religious organizations is the spirituality of the people and salvation, something by definition less open to “objective” quantifiable analysis from a human standpoint. Further, he states that “the purpose of a parish is to enhance the faithfulness of its members. The essence of religious performance is faithfulness to God, not effectiveness” (Ebener 2010, 49). Parish performance has to do with more than numbers. Numbers are indicators, but they are insufficient to explain the mission, vision, or values in parish life. Behavior of parish leaders and members is critically important to understand organizational life and how leaders and members of the organization identify with these organizations’ values (53).

In a related way, Dudley and Ammerman (2002) assert that practices are at the very heart of religious organizations because they respond to theological reflection. They also note that conflict can often offer congregations an opportunity for transformation. Such congregations that are willing to disagree, but still move forward, can produce important

advances in their self-understanding. Dudley and Ammerman (2002) summarize their findings by noting successful habits of certain congregations: curiosity, honest self-assessment, playful experimentation, entrepreneurship, using drama and symbols, practicing hospitality, and embracing conflicts. Such practices are found in congregations that have undertaken the hard effort of change. They emphasize that such change is not a managerial exercise, but rather stem from spiritual discernment brought forth by the congregation. Such spiritual discernment helps congregations witness in prayerful action the full dimension of these practices that allow to respond adaptively and creatively to change (Dudley and Ammerman 2002, 10). They argue that the response from the congregation should require more than social analysis, but also involve spiritual commitment (11). Work such as this offers a powerful grounding for a practical theology of parish life.

Lay Ministries and Leadership in Catholic Parishes

Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord is a document produced by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in 2005. The document addresses the incremental participation of the lay people in the ministering of the Church in the US. This participation is in supporting priests in parishes and dioceses in their day-to-day work, due to a decrease in the numbers of ordained ministers. Bishops describe this document as a framework to guarantee that this development is faithful to the church's theological and doctrinal tradition and will "respond to contemporary pastoral needs and situations" (USCCB 2005, 6). McCord (2010) sees this document as a national response to a national phenomenon because this is happening in every region of the US and is certainly necessary but not sufficient because the structure designed by bishops is "as a resource for local leaders to use" (McCord 2010, 6). Further, he asserts that *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* clarify the difference

between lay minister and ordained minister, and he gives a deserved recognition of their existence (7). Additionally, he sees in the document a connection between the lay ecclesial minister and the Magisterium and theological tradition that springs from the Trinitarian mystery of God congruent with communion and mission. McCord emphasizes that this document recognizes the character of vocation as a call to discern, providing guidelines to choose proper candidates for lay ministers (8-9).

Gaillardetz (2010) analyzes *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* explaining the difference between the priesthood of the baptized and ministry. He stresses that all the baptized are called to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. This is discipleship, to grow in holiness in this journey. Meanwhile, ministry is not a call to all Christians, because that call comes from the community that begins with the expression of a particular gift that enriches the church in mission. The community calls a specific person to ministry because of the charism given to perform an activity that will serve the strengthening of the church in mission. Gaillardetz remarks that this insight is one of the most important contributions of the document, which differentiates volunteer work from ministry (Gaillardetz 2010, 22-24).

In a related way, Hahnenberg (2010) states that *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* “is a theological response to a pastoral reality” (Hahnenberg 2010, 69). He affirms that while the theology of this document is in the tradition and doctrine of the Church, the reality that tries to explain it is new, generated as a new way of ministering (70). Hahnenberg made the claim that the emergence of lay ministers is a pivotal moment of ministerial transformation in the life of the Church (71). Further, he comments that a new category of vocation is now emerging differently from the historically understood as the totally committed and associated with clerical or religious vocations (73). Lay ministry is

understood as a call to serve in specific functions and ministries. Their response is a life - oriented decision that impacts the life of the lay ministry and his/her family. They are caught in the middle of the classical definition of 'call' as a change of state of life and the new definition that loosens up the category of vocation as the lay vocation to discipleship. This opens the door for a future exploration in the definition of vocation concerning lay ministry (74).

Pastoral Practices in the Catholic Parishes

Swinton and Mowat (2006) define practices as patterns of activities developed within communities over an extended period. These Christian practices are related to particular communities. Their history and tradition and the context in which they are found generate rich sources of meaning to these specific Christian communities (Swinton and Mowat 2006, 20). Ultimately, they stated that, "all Christian practices emerge from reflection on and interpretations of the nature and purposes of the practices of God in history" (23). They reference Forrester (2000), who described this as the "communicative practice of Jesus" (Forrester 2000, 8). This is explained in the acts of God through human history by getting involved and inviting people to be perfect as He is perfect. In such practices of "enabling people to learn and participate in the 'communicative practice of Jesus' and the continuing quest to perform them faithfully, that Practical Theology finds its focus and goal" (Swinton and Mowat 2006, 23).

As Groome (1991) states, the Christian faith tradition is rooted in history. He further affirms, "it arises from God's activities among human kind-among the people of Israel, in the historical life of Jesus, in the Christian community over time" (Groome 1991, 140-141). Thus, God's activities shape people in their whole being in the world. He further asserts, "a

narrative pattern of discourse conveys this sense of historicity and practicality; it reflects and teaches that Christianity is always about and for praxis” (Groome 1991, 141). Swinton and Mowat (2006) complement this: all authentically Christian practices, at all times, must be understood in the context of the reign of God as faithful participation in the continuing practices of the triune God’s redemptive action in the world. Practices enable the people of God to engage faithfully in the mission of God¹³ (Swinton and Mowat 2006, 24-25).

Following Cahalan (2010), one might define practices as social and communal patterned actions, anthropological constants with meaning and values embedded within themselves and specific to a cultural context (Cahalan 2010, 102). Dykstra and Bass (2002) affirm that speak regarding a Christian way of life is to speak about Christian practices. They write “Christian practice is large enough to permit us to draw together the shards and pieces of particular understanding, belief, events behaviors, actions, relationships, inquires, and skills into sets that are capacious and cohesive enough to show how they might guide one into a way of life” (Dykstra and Bass 2002, 18). Cahalan (2010) stresses that Christian practices are human practices because they are theological reflections of ‘what’ God is doing in the world and our response to that action. Christian practices are expressed in actions that define a set of belief and convictions. As Cahalan affirms, “belief and ideas about God do not exist separately from life and actions, but are constitutive of practices” (103).

Frank (2006) pushes this further when he explores the integrative concept of leadership. He applies reflective practice, where scripture and ecclesial tradition are both

¹³ The Second Vatican Council in its decree on Church’s Missionary activity *Ad Gentes* understands mission as the participation in the mission of the Trinity (*Missio Dei*). In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* Paul VI is focused on “the preaching, serving and witnesses to the reign of God.” John Paul II in his encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio* turns to place Christ as the center, as the unique savior (Bevans and Schroeder 2005, 71). A contemporary theology of mission should contemplate a dialogue and the recognition of the “goodness and holiness of human culture and recognizing the presence of God in other religious ways (71-72).

addressed on one side and contemporary situations and cultural changes on the other side. In this way, the concept of leadership is constructed. This occurs because of a constant conversation between practice and reflection regarding situations and concepts. These are related to the understanding of current circumstances and the experiences that faith communities have confronted in the past (Frank 2006, 130). Ward (2005) remarks that doing practical theology is to be immersed in culture and contemporary issues, reflecting upon practice and disciplined study and reflection; thus, Ward writes “reflective practice as an ongoing method of learning holds together action and reflection in a continual cycle of doing, being and thinking” (Ward 2005, 18). Further, Ward asserts that the concept of reflective practice encourages the development of critical thinking in research and professional practice. Ward emphasizes, “practitioners continue to learn and develop by reflection on experience” (33). Cameron, Reader, Slater, and Rowland (2012) reinforce the importance of reflecting on people’s practices; they remark that faithful practices need continually review to analyze what they are doing and why they do it. This brings theological reflection to listen to people in the context and the tradition, with the hope that the Holy Spirit enlightens them in their ways and to take the courage to respond. Thus, they state, “theological reflection relates equally to a deepening understanding of who we are as people of faith and to how that understanding and identity flows out into transformative action and presence in the world” (Cameron et.al 2012, 9). This concept of reflective practice is critical to the practical theological approach taken in this study of transformative parish leadership practices.

At the same line, McAlpin (2009) defines theological reflection as “a process used by Christians to become aware of the living God in the context of their daily life” (McAlpin

2009, 12). This is an individual and communal reflection about the work of God in the midst of life and in society. Even though brokenness in the world is made visible, the hope of God for humankind is evident. This reflection critically makes individuals see the events of the world around them, thus facilitating the response and making them participants of the kingdom of God (12). McAlpin elaborates in the work of Mary Ellen Sheehan's (1990), she affirms that theological reflection is a "process of correlation, or reflective conversation" (14). This conversation has four critical sources as she mentioned, "human experience, context of experience, espoused faith tradition and operative spirituality" (14). Further, she explains that critical correlation is the fruit of the conversation among sources of critical information achieving knowledge that can lead to a change of practices, turning down prejudices and changing attitudes as a response to life (14). She explains the results of theological reflection is "the product of theology is the fruit of reflection and critical correlation that leads to transformation of theory and practice. This is known as praxis in ministry. I believe the product of theological reflection contributes to the gift of ongoing conversion in the life and service of compassionate ministers" (14).

In the same venue, Osmer (2008) examines theological reflection. For him, theological reflection is structured on four basic core tasks of practical theological interpretation. The first is the descriptive-empirical task, gathering information to analyze and discern patterns and dynamics in particular situations or contexts. The second is the interpretive task, here based on science and the arts to try to understand the discovered patterns and dynamics of a community of faith. The third is the normative task, which through the interpretation of the patterns and dynamics, lights theological concepts and ethical norms which guide the response to good practice in faith community. The fourth is

the pragmatic task, the place to trace the strategies to influence the situation in the desired outcome (Osmer 2008, 4). The definition of practical theology, provided by Swinton and Mowat (2006) help us to formulate the concept of Participatory Leadership. They state that the theological reflection on the practices of the Church in interaction with the practices of the world, with the purpose of participating in the continual mission of the Triune God, is the critical task of practical theology (Swinton and Mowat 2006, 25). In the same venue, Duncan Forrester (2000) affirms, “that the ‘reflective practitioner’ is involved in an ongoing dialogue between theory and practice in which, if it is effective, understanding is deepened and practice improved” (Forrester 2000, 27-28). This is critical in Participatory Leadership, because the reflection of the practices of a parish community leads the community to search for excellence. In this process, practices are in constant evaluation through theological reflection. Vibrant communities of faith, through theological interpretation, must seek practices that can guide them to live their faith to the fullest.

The Role of the Parish Pastoral Council in Parish Life

The Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) is regulated in the *Code of Canon Law* (1983). Canon 536 §1 norms that after consulting the council of priests, the diocesan Bishop considers it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish. In this council, which is presided over by the parish priest, Christ’s faithful, together with those who by virtue of their office are engaged in pastoral care in the parish, give their help in fostering pastoral action. Canon 536 §2 norms that the pastoral council has only a consultative vote, and it is regulated by the norms laid down by the diocesan Bishop.

Fisher (2010) proposes that the PPC contributes to the pastoral work of the pastor in leading the parish community through the preaching of the gospel, the celebration of the

sacraments, the faith formation of parishioners and the administration of the temporal goods of the Parish (Fisher 2010, 12). The main work of the PPC is not the coordination of parish ministries because this is a competence of the pastor. Pastors consult his pastoral council in all matters with the exception of “faith, orthodoxy, moral principles or laws of the universal Church” (14). The selection of the members of the council is at the discretion of the pastor and the members should represent the Parish community and the wisdom of Jesus Christ (15). The members of the PPC need to study the pastoral situation, reflect upon their findings, and issue recommendations. In the United States, this process is called pastoral planning (16). Fisher stresses that pastors consider the members of the PPC as consultants and not as board of directors; they are consultative entity and therefore, have no authority but with their recommendations, the pastor could implement policies as he agrees upon them (17). Zech, Gautier, Miller, and Bendyna (2010) propose that two lines of thought exist in regards of PPC. One leading by Mark Fisher (2010), discussed above which argues that the main reason for PPC is pastoral planning and carrying out the vision of the parish formulated in the parish’s mission statement. The second line of thought sees the PPC as a council of ministries that oversee and coordinate parish groups and ministries. This vision is associated with the work done by Fr. Thomas Sweetser and Carol Holden on 1987 (Zech et al. 2010, 25). This vision of a council of ministries decentralizes parish decision-making while at the same time empowers lay members.

Participatory Leadership combines these two lines of thought, because while the PPC main task is to develop a pastoral plan that responds to the vision stated in the mission statement of the parish; it also empowers the heads of the ministries to oversee and organize, coordinating the different activities of the life of the parish. Therefore, as Pickett (2007) puts

it, the key to an effective PPC is collaboration based on the commitment to the mission of Jesus Christ. Pickett argues that “an effective pastoral council will be open to the gifts and wisdom of all. It will foster a process by which members of the assembly discern their gifts and the needs of the community” (2007, 35).

Summary

The Pope Francis’ papacy has opened a new air of renewal in the Church. He has called the priests to leave the walls of the parishes and to go to the outskirts, looking for the people adrift. The role of the priest is essential for this renewal process and the success of the culture of encounter that he has proposed.

Diocesan priests are collaborators of the ministry of bishops, serving in the local church, which is the parish. Diocesan priestly identity should be essential relational; his identity emanates from the Holy Trinity. He lives and works by the power of the Holy Spirit to serve the Church for the salvation of the world. The diocesan priest lives his ministry and works to build the body of Christ, in a communitarian relation with his bishop, other priests and the laity. His ministerial priesthood is no of greater dignity than the priesthood of the faithful. The diocesan priest lives a life of witness, not only with his words, but also in actions performed testifying with his life, the love of God. The life of a priest is service given in benefit for the community of faith, and lay parishioners’ collaboration will help the priest to focus more in the spiritual realm and not transforming his ministry into an administration. In this context, the ideal priest should be a mix between the priest cultic model and the priest servant-leader model.

The church in the context of God as a community of persons; derives its mission from the divine relation of mutual love. Ordained ministries can serve better the church if they

understand this relational Trinitarian approach. Here the driving force that emanates from the Trinitarian theological approach is egalitarian relationships that dominate a life style that is in essence, collaborative.

The re-discovery of the relational Trinitarian theology offers a way to understand the practice of discipleship and ministry. Discipleship is a call to live in relationship to God and neighbors in a new set of relationships while ministry is oriented as a relationship of service giving in ordination through sacramental power. Consequently ordained and non-ordained are bound by relationships of complementarity in the life of the church. This approach is critical for a Participatory Leadership model, because it creates a new set of relationships where the pastor empowers the laity; it generates a new context of relational power. In this new context, a pastor is open to transformation while influencing the laity and in turn being influenced by the laity.

All the leadership models reviewed present frameworks where people work with the pastor in a collaborative manner in concert with the laity, discerning at a corporate and personal level God's activity and call in their life. This collaboration calls forward the gift of all the members of a community of faith to use their gifts to fulfill the mission of Jesus Christ in terms of mission, evangelization and world transformation.

Jesus as a model of Christian leadership identified by Sofield and Kuhn (1995) gives the structure for Participatory Leadership because it is based on those principles: listening, responding, creating vision, transforming realities, generative, empowering people, and doing the right thing. Furthermore, collaborative ministry or shared ministry is critical in the elaboration of the concept of Participatory Leadership. In the model of Participatory Leadership, the pastor empowers the laity in the decision-making process of the life of the

parish; all effective means are used to ensure that ministries and communications are facilitated, allowing all parishioners to be engaged in sharing responsibilities for action and making decisions that affect their lives. The pastor acts as a facilitator who retains the authority to make the final decision.

The dearth of priest has created a concept of leadership in parishes as dynamic and tense, thereby conveying the need for exploration of new forms of leadership such as the pastoring of multiple parishes by one pastor. The most influential member of a parish is the pastor, because he is the one who enables lay leaders to act in a collaborative manner and promotes changes through theological reflection. Theological reflection is critical in transformational leadership, providing vision and mission of a congregation. Practices in religious organizations correspond to theological reflection.

Lay ministries' participation has increased in past decades. They support the work of the priest in the parishes in their day-to-day tasks. This participation is critical due to the diminishing number of ordained ministers. All lay people are called to discipleship, but not all people are called to ministry. As Hahnenberg (2010) argues lay ministry is a theological response to a pastoral situation that has generated a new category of vocation. Lay ministry responds to a call to serve in specific functions and ministries and this response affects the life of lay ministries and of their families. A good theological approach of a lay minister involves collaboration and is critical in the concept of Participatory Leadership because it calls forth the gifts of both the ordained and the lay ministry.

Christian practices are patterns of activities developed over an extended period. These practices are the result of theological reflection from God's action in the world and the way we respond to those actions. As McAlpin (2009) affirms: theological reflection is the critical

correlation between theory and practice and leads to transformation. In the words of Osmer (2008), theological reflection is structured on the four-core task of practical theology: descriptive empirical task, interpretive task, normative task, and pragmatic task. As echoed by Swinton and Mowat (2006), the critical task of practical theology is the theological reflection on the practices of the church in interaction with the practices of the world and with the purpose of participating in the continued mission of the Triune God. Theological reflection is critical in Participatory Leadership, because the reflection of the practices of a parish community leads the community to search for excellence. In this process, practices are in constant evaluation, through theological reflection. Vibrant communities of faith, through theological interpretation must seek practices that can guide them to live their faith to the fullest.

Finally, in the professional literature the PPC has two lines of thoughts. One who proclaims that the main reason for the existing of PPC is the pastoral planning while the other line of thought is that the PPC is a council of ministries that oversee and coordinate parish groups and ministries. The concept of Participatory Leadership combines these two lines of thought. It keeps the main task of the PPC: to develop a pastoral plan that responds to the vision stated in the mission statement of the parish. At the same time, it also empowers the heads of the ministries to oversee and organize, coordinating the different activities of the life of the parish.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As Cameron, Richter, Davies, and Ward (2005) state “methodology is best regarded as the study of different approaches to research within an academic discipline” (Cameron et al. 2005, 19). Cameron, Bhatti, Duce, Sweeney and Watkins (2010) affirm that practical theology is in relationship with Christian theological tradition and human experience. Therefore, practical theology is active theology in conversation with humanity in contemporary culture. The intersection of Christian theological tradition with human experience is a critical site for enhancing the faith community theological understanding (Cameron et al. 2010, 13). This chapter will discuss two methods of research, action research, and participatory action research, and will review the pastoral circle.

Action Research

Cameron et al. (2010) propose that action research is a research method that responds to the “aim to increase faith practitioners’ capacity for theological functioning” (Cameron et al. 2010, 14). The purpose of this theological reflection is transformation, which is embedded in theological action research, as is described by Cameron et al. (2010). She writes “theological Action Research seeks a transformation of practice which includes new insight, new theological insight not just generic insights into the theory of practice” (Cameron et al. 2010, 17). Practical theology enables practitioners to articulate faith, speaking of God in practice (21). A practical theologian facilitates authentic connections “between theology, practice and personal experience” (27).

McTaggart (1997) defines Action Research as “the way in which groups of people can organize the conditions under which they can learn from their own experience and make

this experience accessible to others” (McTaggart 1997, 27). Cameron et. al (2010), emphasize that Action research responds to the problem of studying practice. More an understanding of the research enterprise (a “methodology”) than simply a particular set of methods (Cameron et al. 2010, 36), such research is a partnership between participants of an organization interested in researching their practices. This partnership only works through the establishment of adequate relationship between the participants (37). Action research flows on in cycles: at the end of each action-reflection cycle, a new practice or meaning emerges to be assessed by another cycle of research (38).

In the same vein, Stringer (2007) defines action research as “action research is a collaborative approach to inquiry or investigation that provides people with the means to take systematic action to resolve specific problems” (Stringer 2007, 8). For him, action research is first, phenomenological in the sense that it focuses on how people construct their experiences; second, interpretive in the sense that it focuses on meaning; third, hermeneutical in the direction that it explores what people make of the events in their lives (Stringer 2007, 20). According to O’Brien (2001) what differentiates action research from other types of research is that the people involved become researchers themselves. Allying with the principle researcher in a common activity that melts away the distinction between subject and object. Action research has a social dimension because it takes place in real-world situations with the aim of solving real problems. Further, the initiating researcher openly acknowledges possible bias to other participants, who are themselves part of the situation being studied (O’Brien 2001, 4). In action research, theory informs practice and practice refines theory in a continuous transformation (6).

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

McTaggart (1997) sees action research as a group activity where people holding different situations of “power, status, influence, and facility with language come together to work on a thematic concern” (McTaggart 1997 28). He stresses that participation means ownership that is “responsible agency in the production of knowledge and improvement of practice” (28). Further, he illustrates that the use of the term participatory action research is used to differentiate other types of research doing by the academy on people, “making the people objects of the research” (29). In participatory action research people from the academy and the researched people, develop an entirely different relationship. They are not the object of the research, but doers of the research, united by a thematic concern with the purpose of informing and improving a specific practice (30).

According to McIntyre (2008), Participatory Action Research (PAR) embodies the following four principles or practices. First, it offers a collective commitment to investigate a problem that affects a group of people. Second, it shows willingness to participate individually and collectively to reflect upon the problem in order to gain knowledge of it. Third, it provides a collective decision to engage in actions that solve the problem benefitting the people involved. Fourth, it provides for the establishment of alliances between the researcher and participants. These facilitate the processes of planning, application, and diffusion of the research (McIntyre 2008, 1). Knowledge is generated through a cyclical process of exploration at different moments throughout the research process. As PAR evolves, the results are problematized through critical reflection and the continual conversation among the participating. Thus, PAR becomes a living dialectical process. The effect is the change of the participants and the situations in which they act (1). There is no

single theoretical framework in which PAR processes are sustained. Instead, there is flexibility in the way “PAR processes are framed and carried out” (3).

Stringer (2007) remarks that PAR is more broadly understood as scholarly inquiry that intends to improve the quality of people’s lives. It envisages a collaborative approach to research that engage subjects as equal participants in the research process. Its purpose is to assist people in furthering their understanding of their situation and helping them to resolve problems that affect them. As such, PAR provides models for relating local action approaches to small-scale theories that may be applied to specific problems and situations (Stringer 2007, 10). PAR works on the supposition that all participants affected by the problem should be engaged in the research process. Stakeholders participate actively in the data collection processes. They reflect over the information, furthering their knowledge and comprehension of the problem under study. The development of new understanding is a product of the specific responses generated to the issue under investigation. The role of the researcher is more a facilitator, rather than a research director. The participants collectively investigate their own situation, building a collective vision of their life world in a sense of community at the various intellectual, social, political, and emotional levels touched by the phenomenon (11). Linville, Lambert-Shute, Fruhauf, and Pierce (2003) argue that PAR differs from other qualitative methods in the relationship between the researcher and the participants who become co-researchers by establishing collaborative relationships with the participants (Linville et al. 2003, 210). They assert that in traditional research the researcher is in a hierarchical position due the knowledge extracted from the participants. The researcher could share that knowledge with the participants or not. On the other hand, in PAR the researcher shares that knowledge because the participants are active co-researchers

(210). Perez, Blanco, Ogalla, and Rossi (1998) state that the acknowledging of the differences and similarities between researcher and participants allows the establishment of commitment that allows sharing and negotiating language, ideas, and concepts in a fruitful manner. As they state: “this acknowledgment makes possible a fruitful and meaningful collaboration in which everyone gains” (Perez et al. 1998, 250). Moreover, they emphasize that collaboration is a process built in a democratic way. Collaboration runs in a two-way communication, building democratic relationships between the participants coming from different backgrounds and the researcher (250).

Participatory Action Research (PAR) offers an ideal method for this practical theological study. It provides a means to evaluate the effect produced by empowering parishioners in parish decisions; how parishioners engage in collaborative leadership, and how, through theological reflection, they generate a body of knowledge about the practices in parish life that in itself further promotes excellence in parish life. The application of PAR offers an opportunity to produce both deeper theological knowledge in ecclesiology and ministerial praxis while at the same time providing practical tools to select the best practices through the collaborative participation of those involved in the research. For this reason, this practical theological research uses the pastoral circle with its four moments: insertion, social analysis, theological reflection and pastoral planning (Holland and Henriot 1983, 8-9). The present study is developed in a transformative paradigm, empowering parishioners and sharing power in the decision-making (Mertens 2005, 17). The researcher would be part of the study group, providing a voice to the participants (Creswell 2009, 9), with the purpose of furthering understanding of faith practices. As O’Brien (2001) argues, “knowledge is derived from practice, and practice informed by knowledge, in an ongoing process.” This continuing

process is the foundation for action research, which, as described by O'Brien (2001), is nothing other than the praxis paradigm (O'Brien 2001, 7).

Epistemological Considerations in PAR

PAR promotes participation from the initial design or problem diagnosis to the adoption of strategies, thus moving the researcher's role of an expert to that of a facilitator. Participatory action research is associated with the needs of the community and defined in its own terms (Cassel and Johnson 2006, 796).

PAR is a social process where through collaboration people, who engage in changing their practices in which they socially interact, acquire knowledge for the purpose of improvement. Kemmis and McTaggart (2008) explain that PAR is described only in terms of its process as a spiral of self-reflective series of planning, acting, observing and reflecting suggest. They stress that these processes are best undertaken in a collaborative way and that research involves actual practices and not abstract practices. As they describe, "it involves learning about the real, material, concrete, and particular practices of particular people in particular places" (Kemmis and McTaggart 2008, 277). Kemmis and McTaggart (2008) explain that the image of the spiral cycle has become the dominant approach in PAR, but they affirm that seven key features are relevant as the self-reflective spiral. First, PAR is a social process. People individually or collectively try to understand their situation through examining and re-examining their situation as individuals or in relationship with one another. They are shaped and re-shape by these relationships for the purpose of improving it. Second, PAR is participatory, engaging people in the reflection of their practices and how their knowledge and social structures constrain their action. Third, PAR is practical and collaborative. It investigates social practices in interaction with others, exploring practices

that may be unproductive, unjust or unsatisfying and what constitute that practices with the purpose of improving them. Fourth, it is emancipatory. Kemmis and McTaggart (2008) explain, PAR “aims to help people recover, and release themselves from, the constraints of irrational, unproductive, unjust, and unsatisfying social structures that limit their self-development and self-determination” (282). Fifth, PAR is critical, encouraging just practices, helping people to release themselves from constraints imposed by language, modes of work and social relationships of power. Sixth, PAR is reflexive, examining the participants’ reality with the purpose of improving their practice “through a spiral of cycles of critical and self-critical action and reflection” (282). Seventh, PAR aims to transform both theory and practice. Kemmis and McTaggart (2008) argue that PAR advances the understanding of situations, illuminating particular practices and practical settings to develop critical insights about how things might be transformed and affecting both practitioners’ theories and practices, and theories and practices of others who will in turn benefit from shaping their practices in particular local settings (283).

Cassel and Johnson (2006) argue that the emphasis that participatory research places on epistemological principles is derived from critical theory and its discourse on the democratization of social practices. This echoes with the Habermas’ attacks on positivist epistemology, highlighting the socio-cultural factors that influence all sensory experience. Critical theory critiques the moral authority of action researchers and its practice based on the imposition of higher-order participants imposing will upon others. Critical theorist’s concerns are to critique the status quo and to promote emancipation of people from asymmetrical power relations, and to encourages alternative forms of organization. Such theorists interpret reality subjectively through the negotiation of inter-subjectivity. This

epistemological and ontological position further reinforces critical theory's concern with organizational changes that tilt toward more democratic social relations. By such means, PAR promotes a balance of power in favor of the marginalized and disenfranchised groups. Participatory action research articulates critical theory's ontological and epistemological commitments (Cassel and Johnson 2006, 798).

McTaggart (1997), citing Habermas in *Knowledge and Human Interest* (1972), argues that research on people, either empirical analytic or interpretive, is not emancipatory. As Habermas (1972) states "The emancipatory cognitive interest aims at the pursuit of reflection as such...thus in the power of self-reflection, knowledge and interest are one" (Habermas 1972, 318). McTaggart further argues, the knowledge produced in those researches can be used in coercive ways, creating an illusion of participation because such research is of them and not by them. McTaggart (1997) explains "this is not participatory action research but the co-option of people into the research, development, and dissemination approach invented by a coalition of policy makers and social scientists whose primary interest is in maintaining control" (McTaggart 1997, 29). On the contrary, participatory action research' ontology suggest that human beings are capable of reflexivity and self-change and an epistemology that is based on the reflective capacity of human beings within the research process (Kendon, Pain, and Kesby 2007, 13). Such an approach need not be seen as opposed to Catholic theology, but rather as offering a point of entrée toward a more robust pneumatology and a stronger, more praxis oriented practical theological method.

The Pastoral Circle

The pastoral circle or cycle, also known as the circle of praxis or the hermeneutical circle (Holland and Henriot 1983, 8), is described in the literature as having four movements.

The first movement is one of insertion, where the feeling and experiences of the people are considered. In this movement the primary data are obtained. The second movement is the social analysis, where the interrelations of the experiences are analyzed. The third movement is theological reflection. In this moment, experiences are confronted in the light of faith, scripture, church social teaching, and the resources of tradition. The fourth movement is pastoral planning that is the response in light of the experiences analyzed and reflected upon. This circle can be repeated without conclusion. In this way, it might be better to envision a spiral rather than a circle. Such a spiraling effort constantly brings new knowledge and further reflection on new perspectives that the pastoral circle would bring in its continual development (Holland and Henriot 1983, 9). In many ways, the PAR approach described above fits well with the orientation of the classical pastoral circle. This practical theological project builds from the mutual affinities between these approaches.

Mixed Methods in a Participatory Action Context.

Framed within a PAR approach and the pastoral cycle, this research will utilize a variety of data gathering tools. Such a mixed method approach accommodates the need for data, which in this study must be both quantitative and qualitative. The strategy employed in this mixed method is a sequential explanatory strategy. This strategy involves the collection and analysis of numeric data in the first phase that we will call “First Research Phase: An Intensive Approach.” The second phase of the research will follow from the collection and analysis of qualitative data, in turn building on the results of the first phase. This second phase, is identified as “Second Research Phase: An Intensive Approach.” The elaboration of the two phases are separated but connected with the results of each phase (Creswell 2009, 211).

Scope of Research

The Parish Pastoral Council was informed about the purpose and scope of the research. It consists in the collective commitment to investigate a problem, generate the necessary knowledge of it and solve it together for the benefit of all people involved. In other words, it is a collaborative approach to problem solving in which we all have been invited to help. Everybody agreed on the need of researching their practices especially when the parish was in the process of building its new house of prayer. Participants were informed that the method of the research would be a Participatory Action Research. They will not be only consulted, but active participants in all the process, which will require of them a great deal of commitment because of the extensive time of participation. This study would help in the transition of moving the parish from a rental facility to its house of worship, through the identification of best practices and at the same time, the ministries and groups that most people would enjoy participation. The entirety of the PPC agreed to participate freely in this research.

First research phase: An extensive approach

This phase focuses on data gathering. The people will be informed of a research study of parish best practices through the parish bulletin, announcements during Mass, and the parish e-mail communication system. They will be informed about the scope of the research and that their participation is voluntary. The collection of the information will be through an anonymous survey. The purpose is to research three important aspects of parish life: a) the work of the parish b) the participation of the people in parish life, and c) people's feelings of belonging to the parish. This survey will be developed by the researcher and in consultation with the parish using the proper channels of communications through the PPC. The research

team in collaboration with the ushers will distribute the survey at the time of the homily. The survey will be in both languages, English and Spanish, due to the multicultural composition of this parish. The research team expected that 800 valid surveys would be collected.

Second research phase: An intensive approach

Once the survey data has been collected, it will be processed and analyzed in order to inform the second phase of this practical theological research. The participants in this second phase will be the people who constitute the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC). The PPC will thus serve both as a site for research and as a research team. All will be informed of the nature and scope of the research study as well as their freedom to participate or not, and that their participation on this team will not affect their membership in the parish or parish pastoral council. Their actual names will not be used in relation to any quotes or discussions of individual comments given by this team, whether in research reports, the eventual dissertation, or any other presentations or publication resulting from this work. All will be asked to complete a signed consent form (Appendix I). The pastoral council is composed of 15 members, a recording secretary, a deacon, and the pastor. Each member represents a group or ministry or some parish activities. The pastoral council will be divided into three groups. The first group will consist of representatives of the sacraments and Christian Formation. The second group will consist of representatives of groups dedicated to help our brothers in need. The third group will consist of representatives of church development and presence in our community (Appendix II). Each of the groups will follow the pastoral circle that responds to a participatory action research (PAR) design that is used in the present practical theological research.

The three groups established for research purposes will follow the model proposed by Holland and Henriot (1983). Each group will work with relevant collected survey data pertaining to the pastoral area of the different groups or ministries they represent. Each group will follow the same framework. A recording secretary will participate in these sessions, notes will be taken, and minutes of these meetings will be produced. Each group will fulfill the four stages of the pastoral circle described below. It is expected that one or two sessions per stage will be conducted, totaling 18 sessions. The sessions are designed as follows.

Insertion process (First Stage).

Each of the groups will analyze the data in-depth, trying to answer the following questions: What is going on in the concrete situations to which the data refer in these areas? What is known about this issue within the community? What is the experience in the community with these specific practices? Who are most affected and who benefits from these practices, and how? It is anticipated that these discussions will require a minimum of two meetings and a maximum of three, but this will be up to the group, following the standards set in the literature of processes such as these. Once these things are clarified, the group will proceed to the second step.

Social analysis (Second Stage).

This is the space for exploring concrete challenges and tensions discovered in the first step of the pastoral circle. The group will try to respond to the underlying “why” questions. What are the tensions or challenges within these situations and practices? Why are these situations or practices happening as they are? Why do things continue? How are larger social structural relations within the parish or larger society at issue in these tensions? To what

degree are these issues, contradictions, or even conflicts, ones that flow from church traditions and norms? To what degree are they simply local institutional practices?

Theological reflection (Third Stage).

In this phase of the research, the information obtained from the previous step will be correlated with Scripture, tradition, pastoral practice, and the surrounding culture. The group will try to determine how their experience and understanding of their faith informs the realities being studied. How could our faith respond to these situations? How could our practices be faithful to scripture in loving God and our neighbor? Are we responding to the mission and the vision not only of our parish but from the Gospel? Are our practices informed by the tradition of the church? Are these practices culturally influenced? Are these practices a response to different socio-economic and socio-cultural differences? Through a hermeneutical process, the group will try to determine the ethical aspect contemplated in the practices. Concepts of mutuality and of Christian love for one another understood as “equal regard” (Browning 1991, 187) and the ethical and moral teachings of the Catholic Church will be critical in this process. This corresponds to the normative question of practical theology as suggested by Osmer, which includes the following aspects: theological interpretation, ethical reflection, and good practice (Osmer 2008, 161).

Pastoral planning (Fourth Stage).

The goal of this final phase is to develop strategies to implement the practical priorities for parish life as suggested by the data and in light of the work of the group. Care will be taken to develop a careful strategic approach that achieves the desired outcome and avoids unintended consequences.

Testing the results: closing the circle.

After an initial implementation of the pastoral planning strategies resulting from this action research project, the results will be reviewed in the monthly meetings of the parish pastoral council over a period of six months in order to monitor and reflect on how it affects the life of the parish community.

CHAPTER FOUR: FIRST RESEARCH PHASE: AN EXTENSIVE APPROACH

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the quantitative phase of the research. This consists in the process of obtaining the data, processing, and determines the first conclusions. The results of this first phase of the research will be the source to proceed to the second phase of the research.

Elaboration of the Instrument

The entire Pastoral Parish Council (PPC) participated in the elaboration of the survey. They collected information and concerns of the different groups and ministries. They inquired specific questions to the different pastoral groups and ministries in concerning what information they would like to obtain from the survey. The pastor with a selected group of the PPC reviewed all the information obtained and finalized the instrument in both languages, Spanish and English. The survey will include mainly closed-ended questions, but there will be two open-ended questions as well. There will be 63 questions designed to collect information in three critical areas of the community: a) the work of the parish; b) the participation of the people in parish life and; c) people's feelings of belonging to the parish. These questions will cover these three critical aspects of parish life as it was designed in participation with the PPC. The majority of the questions will be on existing pastoral practices of Saint Katharine Drexel Catholic Church (SKD). Most closed ended questions are 4-point Likert scales. Blank responses will be treated as a system missing value (not taken into consideration for the analysis). It is expected that 800 valid surveys will be collected during that weekend. The final document is shown in "Appendix III."

Application of the Instrument: Collecting the Data

The entirety of the parishioners received information about the research. They were informed regarding the research through the proper channels of the parish, the parish bulletin, and the parish announcements at the end of Masses and through e-bulletin. The voluntary participation was stressed in all the channels of communication and in all the information that the parishioners received regarding the research study. The survey was administered on the weekend of December 1-2, 2012. The data collection method was self-administered, paper and pencil survey. It was administered in the respondents' language of choice (English or Spanish).

Data Processing: Compilations and presentation of the results

The survey was administered to all parishioners who attended Mass (Three Masses in English and Two Masses in Spanish) that weekend. All parishioners 13+ years old in attendance were given the survey to fill out. A total of 1,379 valid surveys were collected. Responses were entered into an Excel file and then exported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for tabulation. Answers to each question were cross-tabulated with relevant demographics. A "Congregational Engagement Index" was created by aggregating responses to questions measuring desiring parish outcomes (Connection with Catholic Church, SKD parish, and the Archdiocese of Miami). Regression analysis was performed to estimate the relative weight of certain parish service attributes towards predicting parish connection and "Congregational Engagement." A leverage analysis was performed by pairing the relative weight of each service attribute with the parish's performance on them, as rated by respondents.

Preliminary findings

As stated in the elaboration of the methodology, the data was compiled and divided in three major areas: a) the work of the parish; b) the participation of the people in parish life and; c) people’s feelings of belonging to the parish. In addition, demographic questions were included in the survey.

The Work of the Parish

This area of the survey tries to collect data regarding the work of the parish. The work of the parish is evaluated in two parts of the questioner. The first area deal with questions 1-13 referred to the life of the parish, and the second part deal with questions 33-39 referred to communications in the parish. The results of the tabulation of the responses obtained from the survey are presented in Table 1 through 20. Table 1 through 13 cover the life of the parish and Table 14 through 20 cover communication in parish life.

First Area (Questions 1 to 13 from the survey): The Life of the Parish

How well our parish does the following?

TABLE 1. Meet your spiritual needs

Question1	Mass ID cross tabulation						Total
	Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3		
Meet Spiritual needs	Not at all	1 1.6%	2 1.2%	1 .5%	7 1.2%	5 1.5%	16 1.2%
	Little	8 12.9%	8 4.7%	16 8.5%	24 4.2%	18 5.5%	74 5.6%
	Some	21 33.9%	52 30.4%	77 40.7%	176 30.9%	121 36.8%	447 33.9%
	Very much	32 51.6%	109 63.7%	95 50.3%	362 63.6%	185 56.2%	783 59.3%
Total		62 100.0%	171 100.0%	189 100.0%	569 100.0%	329 100.0%	1320 100.0%

Fifty-three percent feel that their spiritual needs are very much met, and 33.9% feel that some spiritual needs are met while 6.8% of parishioners’ opinions are that their spiritual needs are not met.

TABLE 2. Warmly welcome people to the parish

Question 2		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Warm welcome	Not at all	2 3.1%	1 .6%	5 2.7%	3 .5%	4 1.2%	15 1.1%
	Little	5 7.8%	14 8.0%	21 11.2%	18 3.2%	31 9.3%	89 6.7%
	Some	15 23.4%	45 25.7%	47 25.0%	115 20.1%	87 26.0%	309 23.2%
	Very much	42 65.6%	115 65.7%	115 61.2%	435 76.2%	212 63.5%	919 69.0%
	Total	64 100.0%	175 100.0%	188 100.0%	571 100.0%	334 100.0%	1332 100.0%

Sixty-nine percent of parishioners feel that they receive a warm welcome in the parish, and 23.2% feel that in some way they receive a warm welcome while 7.8% has a negative perception.

TABLE 3. Form young people in their faith

Question 3		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Form youth in their faith	Not at all	1 1.8%	3 1.9%	4 2.2%	12 2.2%	12 3.8%	32 2.5%
	Little	8 14.5%	16 9.9%	17 9.4%	37 6.8%	39 12.2%	117 9.3%
	Some	17 30.9%	53 32.9%	63 35.0%	170 31.4%	103 32.2%	406 32.3%
	Very much	29 52.7%	89 55.3%	96 53.3%	323 59.6%	166 51.9%	703 55.9%
	Total	55 100.0%	161 100.0%	180 100.0%	542 100.0%	320 100.0%	1258 100.0%

Fifty-five and nine tenths percent of SKD's parishioners say that young people receive faith formation, and 32.3% of them say that young people receive some formation while 11.8% of parishioners' opinions are that young people receive little or not at all faith formation.

TABLE 4. Bring a sense of holiness to worship

Question 4		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Bring a sense of holiness to worship	Not at all	2 3.3%	2 1.2%	1 .5%	1 .2%	2 .6%	8 .6%
	Little	3 5.0%	4 2.4%	15 8.1%	10 1.8%	24 7.3%	56 4.3%
	Some	19 31.7%	28 16.7%	46 24.9%	96 17.1%	93 28.3%	282 21.6%
	Very much	36 60.0%	134 79.8%	123 66.5%	455 81.0%	210 63.8%	958 73.5%
	Total	60 100.0%	168 100.0%	185 100.0%	562 100.0%	329 100.0%	1304 100.0%

Seventy-three and five tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that the parish brings a sense of holiness to worship, and 21.6% of them say that some sense of holiness is bringing to worship while only 4.9% of SKD’s parishioners have a negative opinion.

TABLE 5. Provide good music for worship

Question 5		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Provide good music for worship	Not at all	4 6.3%	6 3.4%	8 4.2%	17 3.0%	17 5.1%	52 3.9%
	Little	10 15.6%	15 8.6%	26 13.6%	64 11.2%	42 12.6%	157 11.8%
	Some	20 31.3%	42 24.1%	52 27.2%	156 27.3%	85 25.4%	355 26.6%
	Very much	30 46.9%	111 63.8%	105 55.0%	334 58.5%	190 56.9%	770 57.7%
	Total	64 100.0%	174 100.0%	191 100.0%	571 100.0%	334 100.0%	1334 100.0%

Fifty-Seven and seven tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that good music is provided for worship and 26.6% of them say that some good music is provided for worship while 15.7% of SKD’s parishioners say that little or none good music is provided for worship.

TABLE 6. Link preaching at Mass to daily life

Question 6		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Link preaching at Mass to daily life	Not at all	4 6.6%	2 1.2%	5 2.7%	6 1.1%	8 2.5%	25 1.9%
	Little	8 13.1%	13 7.7%	19 10.2%	40 7.3%	43 13.2%	123 9.5%
	Some	29 47.5%	50 29.6%	61 32.6%	158 28.8%	112 34.5%	410 31.8%
	Very much	20 32.8%	104 61.5%	102 54.5%	345 62.8%	162 49.8%	733 56.8%
	Total	61 100.0%	169 100.0%	187 100.0%	549 100.0%	325 100.0%	1291 100.0%

Fifty-six and eight tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that there is a link between the preaching and daily life’s situation, and 31.8% of them say that they found some connection with preaching and daily life’s situation while 11.4% of SKD’s parishioners do not find this connection.

TABLE 7. Promote vocations to the priesthood

Question 7		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Promote vocations to the priesthood	Not at all	5 8.3%	4 2.5%	10 5.8%	22 4.2%	20 6.5%	61 5.0%
	Little	10 16.7%	24 15.1%	28 16.4%	75 14.4%	49 15.9%	186 15.2%
	Some	20 33.3%	55 34.6%	60 35.1%	207 39.7%	137 44.3%	479 39.2%
	Very much	25 41.7%	76 47.8%	73 42.7%	218 41.8%	103 33.3%	495 40.5%
	Total	60 100.0%	159 100.0%	171 100.0%	522 100.0%	309 100.0%	1221 100.0%

Forty and five tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that the parish, very much promote vocations to the priesthood, and 39.2% of them say that some promotion of vocations to the priesthood is made while 20.2% of SKD’s parishioners have a negative perception regarding the promotion of vocation to the priesthood in the parish.

TABLE 8. Manage parish finances

Question 8		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Manage parish finances	Not at all	4 7.1%	1 .7%	6 3.6%	15 3.0%	8 2.7%	34 2.9%
	Little	5 8.9%	7 4.6%	13 7.8%	26 5.2%	25 8.6%	76 6.5%
	Some	16 28.6%	32 21.1%	47 28.3%	130 26.1%	87 29.8%	312 26.8%
	Very much	31 55.4%	112 73.7%	100 60.2%	328 65.7%	172 58.9%	743 63.8%
	Total	56 100.0%	152 100.0%	166 100.0%	499 100.0%	292 100.0%	1165 100.0%

Sixty-three and eight tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners, say that parish finances are very well managed, and 26.8% of them say that in some way they are well managed while 9.4% of SKD’s parishioners say that finances are little or not at all well managed.

TABLE 9. Listen to the people

Question 9		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Listen to the people	Not at all	2 3.6%	2 1.3%	6 3.4%	11 2.1%	5 1.6%	26 2.1%
	Little	9 16.4%	19 11.9%	25 14.0%	40 7.5%	45 14.6%	138 11.2%
	Some	23 41.8%	70 44.0%	67 37.6%	204 38.1%	115 37.2%	479 38.8%
	Very much	21 38.2%	68 42.8%	80 44.9%	280 52.3%	144 46.6%	593 48.0%
	Total	55 100.0%	159 100.0%	178 100.0%	535 100.0%	309 100.0%	1236 100.0%

Forty-eight percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are very much listened to, and 38.8% of them say that in some way they are listened to while 9.4% of SKD’s parishioner say that they are little or not listened to at all.

TABLE 10. Build trust within the parish

Question 10		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Build trust within the parish	Not at all	4 7.3%	2 1.2%	3 1.7%	12 2.3%	9 2.9%	30 2.4%
	Little	9 16.4%	13 8.0%	26 14.6%	29 5.6%	37 11.8%	114 9.3%
	Some	14 25.5%	43 26.4%	59 33.1%	173 33.1%	104 33.2%	393 31.9%
	Very much	28 50.9%	105 64.4%	90 50.6%	308 59.0%	163 52.1%	694 56.4%
	Total	55 100.0%	163 100.0%	178 100.0%	522 100.0%	313 100.0%	1231 100.0%

Fifty-six and four tenths percent of the SKD’s parishioners say that SKD very much builds trust within the parish, and 31.9% of SKD’s parishioners say that in some way SKD build trust within the parish while 11.7% of them say that little or not at all trust are built within the parish.

TABLE 11. Reflect our parish mission and vision

Question 11		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Reflect our parish mission and vision	Not at all	5 9.3%	1 .6%	2 1.1%	2 .4%	3 1.0%	13 1.1%
	Little	4 7.4%	9 5.6%	14 8.0%	31 5.9%	19 6.1%	77 6.3%
	Some	16 29.6%	41 25.6%	63 35.8%	158 30.0%	112 36.0%	390 31.8%
	Very much	29 53.7%	109 68.1%	97 55.1%	336 63.8%	177 56.9%	748 60.9%
	Total	54 100.0%	160 100.0%	176 100.0%	527 100.0%	311 100.0%	1228 100.0%

Sixty and nine tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that SKD reflects its mission and vision, and 31.8% of them say that in some way SKD reflects its mission and vision while 7.4% of SKD’s parishioners say that SKD reflects its mission and vision a little or not at all.

TABLE 12. Provide strong parish leadership

Question 12		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Provide strong parish leadership	Not at all	4 7.1%	1 .6%	3 1.7%	9 1.7%	6 1.9%	23 1.9%
	Little	6 10.7%	14 8.5%	22 12.7%	45 8.5%	34 10.9%	121 9.8%
	Some	16 28.6%	54 32.9%	52 30.1%	177 33.6%	110 35.1%	409 33.2%
	Very much	30 53.6%	95 57.9%	96 55.5%	296 56.2%	163 52.1%	680 55.2%
	Total	56 100.0%	164 100.0%	173 100.0%	527 100.0%	313 100.0%	1233 100.0%

Fifty-five and two tenths percent of the SKD’s parishioners say that a strong parish leadership is provided and 33.2% of them say that some strong leadership is provided while 11.7% of SKD’s parishioners say that little or no leadership is provided in SKD.

TABLE 13. Warmly welcome people when visiting the parish office

Question 13		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Warmly welcome people when visiting the parish office	Not at all	2 3.6%	4 2.5%	7 3.9%	11 2.1%	7 2.3%	31 2.6%
	Little	5 9.1%	18 11.4%	21 11.6%	43 8.4%	32 10.5%	119 9.8%
	Some	12 21.8%	46 29.1%	38 21.0%	133 25.9%	83 27.1%	312 25.7%
	Very much	36 65.5%	90 57.0%	115 63.5%	327 63.6%	184 60.1%	752 61.9%
	Total	55 100.0%	158 100.0%	181 100.0%	514 100.0%	306 100.0%	1214 100.0%

Sixty-one and nine tenths percent SKD’s parishioners say that they receive a warmly welcome when they visit the parish office and 25.7% of them say that in some way they receive a warm welcome while 12.4% of SKD’s parishioners say that they receive little or no warm welcome when they visit the SKD’s parish office.

Second Area (Questions 33 to 39 from the survey): Communications

How effective are these parish communications?

TABLE 14. Parish Bulletin

Question 33		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Parish Bulletin	Not at all	1	3	3	6	6	19
		1.6%	1.8%	1.6%	1.1%	1.9%	1.5%
	Little	6	12	15	40	32	105
		9.7%	7.2%	8.1%	7.4%	10.4%	8.3%
	Some	22	46	54	146	89	357
	35.5%	27.5%	29.0%	27.2%	28.8%	28.3%	
	Very much	33	106	114	345	182	780
		53.2%	63.5%	61.3%	64.2%	58.9%	61.9%
Total		62	167	186	537	309	1261
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Sixty-one and nine tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that parish bulletin is effective way of communication, and 28.3% of them say that is some way effective while 9.8% of SKD’s parishioners say that the bulletin have little or not at all effectiveness as a way of communication.

TABLE 15. Parish e-mail messages

Question 34		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
E-mail messages	Not at all	4	22	25	50	42	143
		7.8%	14.8%	15.2%	10.2%	14.6%	12.5%
	Little	8	29	30	95	65	227
		15.7%	19.5%	18.2%	19.3%	22.6%	19.9%
	Some	17	51	48	151	81	348
	33.3%	34.2%	29.1%	30.8%	28.2%	30.4%	
	Very much	22	47	62	195	99	425
		43.1%	31.5%	37.6%	39.7%	34.5%	37.2%
Total		51	149	165	491	287	1143
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Thirty-seven and two tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that parish e-mail is a very much more effective way of communication, and 30.4% of them say that is some effective way of communication while 32.4% of SKD’s parishioners say that e-mail is little or not at all an effective way of communication.

TABLE 16. Parish Website

Question 35		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Parish Website	Not at all	5 9.4%	17 11.3%	14 8.1%	42 8.7%	34 11.6%	112 9.7%
	Little	10 18.9%	37 24.5%	32 18.6%	86 17.8%	85 29.1%	250 21.7%
	Some	15 28.3%	50 33.1%	65 37.8%	176 36.4%	75 25.7%	381 33.1%
	Very much	23 43.4%	47 31.1%	61 35.5%	180 37.2%	98 33.6%	409 35.5%
	Total	53 100.0%	151 100.0%	172 100.0%	484 100.0%	292 100.0%	1152 100.0%

Thirty-five and five tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that parish website is very much more effective way of communication, and 33.1% of them say that is some effective way of communication while 31.4% of SKD’s parishioners say that website is little effective or not an effective way of communication.

TABLE 17. Signs in parish offices and worship space

Question 36		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Parish signage	Not at all	2 3.6%	4 2.6%	10 5.8%	21 4.2%	22 7.7%	59 5.0%
	Little	9 16.1%	26 17.1%	31 18.0%	77 15.3%	57 19.9%	200 17.1%
	Some	21 37.5%	61 40.1%	67 39.0%	193 38.3%	107 37.3%	449 38.3%
	Very much	24 42.9%	61 40.1%	64 37.2%	213 42.3%	101 35.2%	463 39.5%
	Total	56 100.0%	152 100.0%	172 100.0%	504 100.0%	287 100.0%	1171 100.0%

Thirty-nine and five tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that signage is very much effective and 38.3% of them say that is some way effective while 22.1% of SKD’s parishioners say that is little or no effective at all way of communications.

TABLE 18. Parish financial statements

Question 37		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Parish Financial statements	Not at all	5 9.3%	9 5.7%	12 7.4%	17 3.4%	25 8.9%	68 5.9%
	Little	13 24.1%	25 15.8%	22 13.5%	60 12.1%	54 19.1%	174 15.1%
	Some	11 20.4%	52 32.9%	62 38.0%	178 35.8%	94 33.3%	397 34.4%
	Very much	25 46.3%	72 45.6%	67 41.1%	242 48.7%	109 38.7%	515 44.6%
	Total	54 100.0%	158 100.0%	163 100.0%	497 100.0%	282 100.0%	1154 100.0%

Forty-four and six tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that parish financial statements are very much well communicated and 34.4% of them say that parish financial statements are some effective well communicated while 21% of SKD’s parishioners say that little or not at all the parish’s financial statements are well communicated.

TABLE 19. Information about our building project

Question 38		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Informati- on about our building project	Not at all	2 3.3%	2 1.2%	6 3.3%	6 1.1%	21 7.1%	37 3.0%
	Little	10 16.4%	11 6.7%	12 6.7%	40 7.6%	26 8.8%	99 8.1%
	Some	16 26.2%	52 31.7%	60 33.3%	145 27.5%	96 32.3%	369 30.0%
	Very much	33 54.1%	99 60.4%	102 56.7%	336 63.8%	154 51.9%	724 58.9%
	Total	61 100.0%	164 100.0%	180 100.0%	527 100.0%	297 100.0%	1229 100.0%

Fifty-eight and nine tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that the information about the building project is very much well communicated and 30% of them say that this information is in some way well communicated while 11.1% of SKD’s parishioners say that communication regarding the building project is little or not at all well communicated.

TABLE 20. Information about church groups, programs and activities

Question 39		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Information about church groups, programs and activities	Not at all	2 3.5%	6 3.7%	7 4.0%	9 1.7%	14 4.8%	38 3.2%
	Little	9 15.8%	21 13.0%	22 12.6%	47 9.1%	44 15.0%	143 11.9%
	Some	21 36.8%	56 34.6%	66 37.7%	180 34.7%	106 36.2%	429 35.6%
	Very much	25 43.9%	79 48.8%	80 45.7%	283 54.5%	129 44.0%	596 49.4%
	Total	57 100.0%	162 100.0%	175 100.0%	519 100.0%	293 100.0%	1206 100.0%

Forty-nine and four tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that the information regarding church’s group programs and activities are very much effective, and 49.6% of them say that this information is some effective while 15.1% of SKD’s parishioners say that the information regarding church groups is little or not at all effective.

Participation of People in Parish Life (Questions 14 to 32 from the survey)

This area of the survey tries to measure the interest of parishioners in activities or ministries for themselves or for members of their family. Questions numbers 14 to 32 of the survey are engaged in collecting data from the participation of the people in the parish. The results of the tabulation of the responses obtained from the survey are presented in Table 21 through Table 39.

The general question posted in the survey for this area of the research: How interested are you in these activities or ministries for yourself or your family members?

TABLE 21. Special children’s Masses

Question 14		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Special children’s Masses	Not at all	19 32.8%	9 5.8%	26 14.4%	27 5.0%	41 13.1%	122 9.8%
	Little	5 8.6%	27 17.5%	17 9.4%	62 11.6%	49 15.7%	160 12.9%
	Some	8 13.8%	42 27.3%	44 24.4%	148 27.6%	78 25.0%	320 25.8%
	Very much	26 44.8%	76 49.4%	93 51.7%	299 55.8%	144 46.2%	638 51.5%
	Total	58 100.0%	154 100.0%	180 100.0%	536 100.0%	312 100.0%	1240 100.0%

Fifty-one and five tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are very much interested in the special children’s Masses, 25.8% of them say that they are interested some interested while 22.7% of SKD’s parishioners say that they are little to not at all interest in the special children's Masses.

TABLE 22. Children’s liturgy of the Word during regular Masses

Question 15		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Children’s liturgy of the Word during regular Masses	Not at all	17 29.3%	6 3.8%	23 12.6%	28 5.3%	34 11.0%	108 8.7%
	Little	7 12.1%	24 15.1%	13 7.1%	34 6.4%	48 15.5%	126 10.2%
	Some	10 17.2%	41 25.8%	39 21.4%	148 27.9%	70 22.7%	308 24.9%
	Very much	24 41.4%	88 55.3%	107 58.8%	320 60.4%	157 50.8%	696 56.2%
	Total	58 100.0%	159 100.0%	182 100.0%	530 100.0%	309 100.0%	1238 100.0%

Fifty-six and two tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are very much interested in the children’s liturgy of the Word during regular Masses, and 24.9% of them say that they are some interested while 18.9% of SKD’s parishioners say that they are little or not at all interested in children’s liturgy of the word during regular Masses.

TABLE 23. Preparing children for First Communion

Question 16		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Preparing children for First Communion	Not at all	14 23.7%	15 9.5%	22 12.2%	24 4.5%	20 6.3%	95 7.6%
	Little	5 8.5%	11 7.0%	13 7.2%	24 4.5%	25 7.9%	78 6.3%
	Some	3 5.1%	23 14.6%	18 9.9%	70 13.2%	51 16.2%	165 13.3%
	Very much	37 62.7%	109 69.0%	128 70.7%	412 77.7%	219 69.5%	905 72.8%
Total		59 100.0%	158 100.0%	181 100.0%	530 100.0%	315 100.0%	1243 100.0%

Seventy-two and eight tenths percent of SKD's parishioners are very interested in preparing their children for First Communion, and 13.3% of SKD's parishioners are some interested while 13.9% of SKD's parishioners say that they are little or not at all interested in preparing children for First Communion.

TABLE 24. Preparing children for Confirmation

Question 17		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Preparing children for Confirmation	Not at all	14 24.6%	9 5.8%	18 10.3%	18 3.5%	16 5.0%	75 6.1%
	Little	5 8.8%	12 7.7%	7 4.0%	20 3.8%	24 7.5%	68 5.5%
	Some	3 5.3%	23 14.7%	14 8.0%	75 14.4%	45 14.2%	160 13.1%
	Very much	35 61.4%	112 71.8%	136 77.7%	407 78.3%	233 73.3%	923 75.3%
Total		57 100.0%	156 100.0%	175 100.0%	520 100.0%	318 100.0%	1226 100.0%

Seventy-five and three tenths percent of SKD's parishioners are interested in preparing their children for Confirmation, and 13.1% of them are some interested in preparing their children for Confirmation while 11.6% of SKD's parishioners are little or not interested at all in the children's preparation for Confirmation.

TABLE 25. Children’s religious education in general

Question 18		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Children's religious education in general	Not at all	13 22.8%	7 4.4%	13 7.2%	15 2.8%	17 5.4%	65 5.3%
	Little	4 7.0%	7 4.4%	13 7.2%	18 3.4%	26 8.3%	68 5.5%
	Some	5 8.8%	36 22.8%	18 10.0%	104 19.7%	58 18.4%	221 17.9%
	Very much	35 61.4%	108 68.4%	136 75.6%	390 74.0%	214 67.9%	883 71.4%
	Total	57 100.0%	158 100.0%	180 100.0%	527 100.0%	315 100.0%	1237 100.0%

Seventy-one and four tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners are interested in children’s religious education in general, and 17.9% of them are some interested in children religious education while 10.8% of SKD’s parishioners are little or not at all interested in children’s religious education in general.

TABLE 26. Youth ministry programs

Question 19		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Youth ministry programs	Not at all	12 21.1%	8 5.0%	17 10.0%	12 2.3%	22 7.2%	71 5.9%
	Little	8 14.0%	9 5.7%	19 11.2%	30 5.8%	25 8.2%	91 7.5%
	Some	10 17.5%	41 25.8%	31 18.2%	116 22.5%	74 24.2%	272 22.5%
	Very much	27 47.4%	101 63.5%	103 60.6%	358 69.4%	185 60.5%	774 64.1%
	Total	57 100.0%	159 100.0%	170 100.0%	516 100.0%	306 100.0%	1208 100.0%

Sixty-four and one tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners are very much interested in youth ministry programs, and 22.5% of them are some interested in youth ministry programs while 13.4% of SKD’s parishioners are little or not at all interested in youth ministry programs.

TABLE 27. Family life programs

Question 20		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Family life programs	Not at all	9 15.8%	8 4.8%	13 7.4%	14 2.6%	15 4.8%	59 4.7%
	Little	9 15.8%	9 5.4%	18 10.3%	26 4.8%	27 8.7%	89 7.1%
	Some	12 21.1%	43 25.9%	51 29.1%	128 23.8%	77 24.8%	311 25.0%
	Very much	27 47.4%	106 63.9%	93 53.1%	370 68.8%	191 61.6%	787 63.2%
	Total	57 100.0%	166 100.0%	175 100.0%	538 100.0%	310 100.0%	1246 100.0%

Sixty-three and two tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners are very much interested in family life programs, and 25.0% of them are some interested in family life programs while 11.8% of SKD’s parishioners are little or not at all interested in family life programs.

TABLE 28. Marriage enrichment programs

Question 21		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Marriage enrichment programs	Not at all	12 20.7%	7 4.3%	12 7.1%	20 3.9%	20 6.6%	71 5.9%
	Little	10 17.2%	9 5.6%	25 14.7%	29 5.6%	20 6.6%	93 7.7%
	Some	9 15.5%	41 25.3%	48 28.2%	113 21.9%	72 23.6%	283 23.4%
	Very much	27 46.6%	105 64.8%	85 50.0%	353 68.5%	193 63.3%	763 63.1%
	Total	58 100.0%	162 100.0%	170 100.0%	515 100.0%	305 100.0%	1210 100.0%

Sixty-three and one tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are very much interested in marriage enrichment programs and 23.4% of them say that they are some interested in marriage family enrichment programs while 13.6% of SKD’s parishioners say that they are little or not at all interested in marriage enrichment programs.

TABLE 29. Bible study opportunities

Question 22		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Bible study opportunities	Not at all	5 8.3%	8 4.9%	9 5.1%	13 2.5%	14 4.5%	49 4.0%
	Little	7 11.7%	18 11.0%	25 14.2%	43 8.3%	43 13.8%	136 11.1%
	Some	18 30.0%	37 22.7%	58 33.0%	172 33.2%	84 27.0%	369 30.0%
	Very much	30 50.0%	100 61.3%	84 47.7%	290 56.0%	170 54.7%	674 54.9%
	Total	60 100.0%	163 100.0%	176 100.0%	518 100.0%	311 100.0%	1228 100.0%

Fifty-four and nine tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are very much interested in Bible study opportunities, 30% of them say that they are some interested in Bible study opportunities while 15.1% of SKD’s parishioners say that they are little or not at all interested in Bible study opportunities.

TABLE 30. Adult faith formation programs

Question 23		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Adult faith formation programs	Not at all	4 7.3%	6 3.8%	13 7.6%	11 2.1%	17 5.7%	51 4.2%
	Little	10 18.2%	17 10.6%	20 11.8%	34 6.5%	33 11.0%	114 9.5%
	Some	15 27.3%	36 22.5%	58 34.1%	133 25.6%	81 27.0%	323 26.8%
	Very much	26 47.3%	101 63.1%	79 46.5%	342 65.8%	169 56.3%	717 59.5%
	Total	55 100.0%	160 100.0%	170 100.0%	520 100.0%	300 100.0%	1205 100.0%

Fifty-nine and five tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are very much interested in adult faith formation programs, and 26.8% of them say that are some interested in adult faith formation programs while 13.7% of SKD’s parishioners say they are little or not at all interested in adult faith formation programs.

TABLE 31. Adults volunteers for programs serving children and teens

Question 24		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Adults volunteers for programs serving children and teens	Not at all	6 11.1%	5 3.1%	12 7.0%	12 2.3%	19 6.2%	54 4.5%
	Little	8 14.8%	18 11.3%	17 9.9%	45 8.7%	39 12.7%	127 10.5%
	Some	12 22.2%	44 27.7%	59 34.3%	142 27.5%	78 25.5%	335 27.8%
	Very much	28 51.9%	92 57.9%	84 48.8%	317 61.4%	170 55.6%	691 57.2%
	Total	54 100.0%	159 100.0%	172 100.0%	516 100.0%	306 100.0%	1207 100.0%

Fifty-seven and two tenths percent of SKD’s adult parishioners say that they are very much interested in volunteering for programs serving children and teens, 27.8% of them say are some interested in volunteering for programs serving children and teens while 15% of SKD’ parishioners say that they are little interested or not at all interested in volunteering for these programs.

TABLE 32. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Question 25		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	Not at all	2 3.6%	3 1.8%	10 5.6%	9 1.7%	13 4.2%	37 3.0%
	Little	7 12.5%	12 7.3%	22 12.4%	22 4.2%	25 8.0%	88 7.1%
	Some	12 21.4%	34 20.6%	41 23.2%	115 22.1%	68 21.7%	270 21.9%
	Very much	35 62.5%	116 70.3%	104 58.8%	374 71.9%	207 66.1%	836 67.9%
	Total	56 100.0%	165 100.0%	177 100.0%	520 100.0%	313 100.0%	1231 100.0%

Sixty-seven and nine tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are very much interested in time for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and 21.9% of them say that they are some interested while 10.1% of SKD’s parishioners say that they are little or not at all interested in time for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

TABLE 33. Emmaus Retreat

Question 26		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Emmaus retreat	Not at all	10 18.2%	11 6.9%	24 14.2%	25 4.9%	30 10.0%	100 8.3%
	Little	12 21.8%	12 7.5%	32 18.9%	49 9.6%	44 14.6%	149 12.4%
	Some	9 16.4%	40 25.0%	34 20.1%	120 23.4%	80 26.6%	283 23.6%
	Very much	24 43.6%	97 60.6%	79 46.7%	319 62.2%	147 48.8%	666 55.6%
	Total	55 100.0%	160 100.0%	169 100.0%	513 100.0%	301 100.0%	1198 100.0%

Fifty-five and six tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are very much interested in participating in Emmaus retreat, and 23.6% of them say that they are some interested in participating in Emmaus retreat while 20.7% of SKD’s say that they are little or not at all interested in participating in Emmaus retreat.

TABLE 34. Small Christian Communities

Question 27		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Small Christian Communities	Not at all	8 15.4%	6 4.0%	17 10.2%	16 3.2%	21 7.1%	68 5.9%
	Little	7 13.5%	18 12.0%	32 19.2%	47 9.5%	47 16.0%	151 13.0%
	Some	18 34.6%	37 24.7%	41 24.6%	150 30.2%	88 29.9%	334 28.8%
	Very much	19 36.5%	89 59.3%	77 46.1%	284 57.1%	138 46.9%	607 52.3%
	Total	52 100.0%	150 100.0%	167 100.0%	497 100.0%	294 100.0%	1160 100.0%

Fifty-two and three tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are very much interested in participating in a small Christian community, and 28.8% of them say that they are some interested in participating in a small Christian community while 18.9% of SKD’s parishioners say that they are little or not at all interested in participating in a small Christian community.

TABLE 35. Detention Ministry

Question 28		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Detention ministry	Not at all	10 19.6%	12 7.7%	29 19.1%	22 4.4%	38 13.3%	111 9.7%
	Little	7 13.7%	31 20.0%	36 23.7%	61 12.3%	53 18.5%	188 16.5%
	Some	15 29.4%	34 21.9%	41 27.0%	166 33.5%	79 27.6%	335 29.4%
	Very much	19 37.3%	78 50.3%	46 30.3%	246 49.7%	116 40.6%	505 44.3%
	Total	51 100.0%	155 100.0%	152 100.0%	495 100.0%	286 100.0%	1139 100.0%

Forty-four and three tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are very much interested in participating in detention ministry, and 29.4% of them say that they are some interested in participating in detention ministry while 26.7% of SKD’s parishioners say that they are little interested or not at all interested in participating in detention ministry.

TABLE 36. Respect life projects

Question 29		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Respect life projects	Not at all	3 5.7%	5 3.1%	17 10.0%	14 2.8%	18 6.0%	57 4.8%
	Little	8 15.1%	16 10.1%	21 12.4%	16 3.2%	29 9.6%	90 7.6%
	Some	11 20.8%	42 26.4%	40 23.5%	139 27.4%	69 22.8%	301 25.3%
	Very much	31 58.5%	96 60.4%	92 54.1%	338 66.7%	186 61.6%	743 62.4%
	Total	53 100.0%	159 100.0%	170 100.0%	507 100.0%	302 100.0%	1191 100.0%

Sixty-two and four tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are very much interested in participating in respect life projects, and 25.3% of them say that they are some interested in participating in respect life projects while 12.4% of SKD’s parishioners say that they are little or not at all interested in participating in respect life projects.

TABLE 37. Social justice projects

Question 30		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Social justice projects	Not at all	4 7.4%	4 2.6%	12 6.9%	13 2.5%	16 5.5%	49 4.1%
	Little	8 14.8%	18 11.5%	22 12.7%	25 4.9%	30 10.3%	103 8.7%
	Some	12 22.2%	46 29.5%	53 30.6%	144 28.1%	73 25.1%	328 27.7%
	Very much	30 55.6%	88 56.4%	86 49.7%	330 64.5%	172 59.1%	706 59.5%
	Total	54 100.0%	156 100.0%	173 100.0%	512 100.0%	291 100.0%	1186 100.0%

Fifty-nine and five tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are very much interested in participating in social justice projects, and 27.7% of them say that they are some interested in participating in social justice programs while 12.8% of SKD’s parishioners say that they are little or not at all interested in participating in social justice projects.

TABLE 38. Celebrating our annual parish gala

Question 31		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Celebrating our annual parish gala	Not at all	8 14.5%	12 7.6%	17 9.9%	18 3.5%	27 9.2%	82 6.9%
	Little	9 16.4%	22 13.9%	31 18.0%	79 15.6%	48 16.3%	189 15.9%
	Some	15 27.3%	41 25.9%	50 29.1%	150 29.5%	86 29.2%	342 28.8%
	Very much	23 41.8%	83 52.5%	74 43.0%	261 51.4%	134 45.4%	575 48.4%
	Total	55 100.0%	158 100.0%	172 100.0%	508 100.0%	295 100.0%	1188 100.0%

Forty-eight and four tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are very much interested in participating in the celebration of the annual gala, and 28.8% of them say that they are some interested in participating while 22.8% of SKD’s parishioners say that they are little or not at all interested in participating in the celebration of the annual gala.

Table 39. Celebrating our parish Feast Day

Question 32		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Celebrating our parish Feast day	Not at all	5 9.1%	2 1.2%	11 6.2%	9 1.8%	20 6.7%	47 3.9%
	Little	2 3.6%	8 4.9%	17 9.6%	38 7.4%	31 10.3%	96 7.9%
	Some	14 25.5%	41 25.3%	44 24.9%	136 26.5%	73 24.3%	308 25.5%
	Very much	34 61.8%	111 68.5%	105 59.3%	331 64.4%	176 58.7%	757 62.7%
	Total	55 100.0%	162 100.0%	177 100.0%	514 100.0%	300 100.0%	1208 100.0%

Sixty-two and seven tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are very much interested in celebrating our parish Feast Day, and 25.5% of them say that they are some interested in celebrating our parish feast day while 11.8% of SKD’s parishioners say that they are little or not at all interested in celebrating our parish Feast Day.

Peoples feelings of belonging to the parish (Questions 40 to 53 from the survey)

This area of the survey deals with the parishioners’ feelings of belonging to SKD. Questions numbers 40 to 53 of the survey are engaged in collecting data from the feelings of belongings to SKD. The results of the tabulation of the responses obtained from the survey are presented in Table 40 through Table 53.

The general question posted in the survey for this area of the research: please express your agreement or disagreement.

Table 40. I feel closed connected to the parish

Question 40		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
I feel closed connected to the parish	Strongly Disagree	4	4	10	25	20	63
		6.5%	2.3%	5.3%	4.6%	6.1%	4.9%
	Somewhat Disagree	11	14	19	51	46	141
		17.7%	8.2%	10.1%	9.4%	14.0%	10.9%
	Somewhat Agree	23	66	84	206	137	516
		37.1%	38.6%	44.4%	37.9%	41.8%	39.9%
Total	Strongly Agree	24	87	76	262	125	574
		38.7%	50.9%	40.2%	48.2%	38.1%	44.4%
Total		62	171	189	544	328	1294
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Forty-four and four tenths percent of SKD parishioners say that they strongly agree to be closely connected to SKD, and 39.9% of them say that they have somewhat agreed to be closely connected to SKD. While 15.8% of SKD’s parishioners say that they somewhat are not closely connected to SKD or they strongly disagree to be connected to SKD.

Table 41. I feel connected to the Archdiocese

Question 41		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
I feel closed connected to the Archdiocese	Strongly Disagree	8	23	40	70	56	197
		13.8%	14.3%	22.1%	13.6%	17.7%	16.0%
	Somewhat Disagree	18	51	61	144	92	366
		31.0%	31.7%	33.7%	27.9%	29.1%	29.7%
	Somewhat Agree	23	58	60	204	113	458
		39.7%	36.0%	33.1%	39.5%	35.8%	37.2%
Total	Strongly Agree	9	29	20	98	55	211
		15.5%	18.0%	11.0%	19.0%	17.4%	17.1%
Total		58	161	181	516	316	1232
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Seventeen and one tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners strongly agree to be connected to the Archdiocese and 37.2% of them say that they are somewhat connected to the Archdiocese while 45.7% of SKD’s parishioners say that they somewhat disagree with this connection or strongly disagree to be connected to the Archdiocese.

Table 42. I feel connected to the Catholic Church

Question 42		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
I feel connected to the Catholic Church	Strongly Disagree	0 .0%	0 .0%	2 1.1%	9 1.6%	4 1.2%	15 1.1%
	Somewhat Disagree	1 1.6%	3 1.7%	13 6.8%	26 4.7%	23 7.0%	66 5.0%
	Somewhat Agree	20 32.3%	32 18.6%	55 28.9%	125 22.5%	83 25.2%	315 24.1%
	Strongly Agree	41 66.1%	137 79.7%	120 63.2%	396 71.2%	219 66.6%	913 69.7%
	Total	62 100.0%	172 100.0%	190 100.0%	556 100.0%	329 100.0%	1309 100.0%

Sixty-nine and seven tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they feel strongly connected to the Catholic Church and 24.1% of them say that they are somewhat connected with the Catholic Church, while 6.1% of SKD’s parishioners say that they feel somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with to be connected with the Catholic Church.

Table 43. Know parish's mission & vision

Question 43		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Know parish's mission & vision	Strongly Disagree	3 5.0%	6 3.6%	21 11.5%	33 6.3%	33 10.4%	96 7.6%
	Somewhat Disagree	9 15.0%	23 13.8%	20 11.0%	73 13.8%	56 17.6%	181 14.4%
	Somewhat Agree	22 36.7%	63 37.7%	67 36.8%	192 36.4%	105 33.0%	449 35.8%
	Strongly Agree	26 43.3%	75 44.9%	74 40.7%	230 43.6%	124 39.0%	529 42.2%
	Total	60 100.0%	167 100.0%	182 100.0%	528 100.0%	318 100.0%	1255 100.0%

Forty-two and two tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they strongly agree knowing the mission and vision of the parish, and 35.8% of them say that they somewhat know the parish mission and vision, while 22% of SKD’s parishioners say that they somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with this statement.

Table 44. I try to be involved in parish life

Question 44		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
I try to be involved in parish life	Strongly Disagree	5	8	6	26	26	71
		8.8%	4.9%	3.4%	5.0%	8.2%	5.7%
	Somewhat Disagree	11	25	39	79	70	224
		19.3%	15.4%	21.8%	15.1%	22.2%	18.1%
	Somewhat Agree	15	61	69	223	118	486
		26.3%	37.7%	38.5%	42.6%	37.3%	39.3%
Strongly Agree	26	68	65	195	102	456	
	45.6%	42.0%	36.3%	37.3%	32.3%	36.9%	
Total		57	162	179	523	316	1237
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Thirty-six and nine tenths percent of SKD's parishioners say that they strongly try to be involved in parish life and 39.3% of them say that they try to be somewhat involved in parish life, while 23.8% of SKD's parishioners say that they somewhat or strongly disagree to be involved in parish life.

TABLE 45. I would attend healing masses if they were celebrated more frequently

Question 45		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
I would attend healing Masses if they were celebrated more frequently	Strongly Disagree	7	7	23	34	27	98
		13.0%	4.2%	12.9%	6.5%	8.6%	7.9%
	Somewhat Disagree	7	28	37	57	61	190
		13.0%	16.9%	20.8%	10.9%	19.4%	15.4%
	Somewhat Agree	13	48	58	170	86	375
		24.1%	28.9%	32.6%	32.4%	27.4%	30.3%
Strongly Agree	27	83	60	264	140	574	
	50.0%	50.0%	33.7%	50.3%	44.6%	46.4%	
Total		54	166	178	525	314	1237
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Forty-six and four tenths percent of the SKD's parishioners say that they strongly agree to attend healing Masses if they were available and 30.3% of them say that they somewhat agree with this statement while 23.3% of SKD's parishioners say that they somewhat disagree or strongly disagree to this statement.

TABLE 46. We need a Spanish Mass on Sunday night

Question 46		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
We need a Spanish Mass on Sunday night	Strongly Disagree	16 32.0%	10 6.1%	40 25.0%	36 6.5%	35 11.1%	137 11.0%
	Somewhat Disagree	10 20.0%	6 3.6%	25 15.6%	37 6.6%	29 9.2%	107 8.6%
	Somewhat Agree	7 14.0%	25 15.2%	35 21.9%	82 14.7%	51 16.1%	200 16.0%
	Strongly Agree	17 34.0%	124 75.2%	60 37.5%	403 72.2%	201 63.6%	805 64.5%
	Total	50 100.0%	165 100.0%	160 100.0%	558 100.0%	316 100.0%	1249 100.0%

Sixty-four and five tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they need a Spanish Mass on Sunday night and 16% of them say that somewhat they need it while 19.6% of SKD’s parishioners say that they somewhat disagree or strongly disagree on this need.

TABLE 47. We should increase our parish support for the poor in Haiti and Peru

Question 47		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
We should increase our parish support for the poor in Haiti and Peru	Strongly Disagree	10 17.5%	6 3.7%	18 10.1%	17 3.2%	23 7.5%	74 6.0%
	Somewhat Disagree	12 21.1%	28 17.1%	31 17.3%	59 11.2%	46 15.1%	176 14.3%
	Somewhat Agree	20 35.1%	58 35.4%	63 35.2%	182 34.5%	109 35.7%	432 35.0%
	Strongly Agree	15 26.3%	72 43.9%	67 37.4%	270 51.1%	127 41.6%	551 44.7%
	Total	57 100.0%	164 100.0%	179 100.0%	528 100.0%	305 100.0%	1233 100.0%

Forty-four and seven tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners strongly agree to increase the support of the poor in Haiti and Peru, and 35% of them somewhat agree in this increment while 20.3% of SKD’s parishioners somewhat disagree or strongly disagree in increasing our support.

TABLE 48. We should increase our parish support for the poor in Belle Glade

Question 48		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
We should increase our parish support in Belle Glade	Strongly Disagree	3 5.5%	6 3.9%	10 5.7%	8 1.5%	16 5.3%	43 3.6%
	Somewhat Disagree	11 20.0%	17 11.0%	21 12.1%	40 7.7%	37 12.3%	126 10.5%
	Somewhat Agree	22 40.0%	65 41.9%	70 40.2%	198 38.3%	114 37.9%	469 39.0%
	Strongly Agree	19 34.5%	67 43.2%	73 42.0%	271 52.4%	134 44.5%	564 46.9%
	Total	55 100.0%	155 100.0%	174 100.0%	517 100.0%	301 100.0%	1202 100.0%

Forty-six and nine tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners strongly agree to increase the support of the poor in Belle Glade, and 39% of them say that somewhat agree in this increment while 14.1% of SKD’s parishioners say that they somewhat disagree or strongly disagree in increasing our support.

TABLE 49. My faith informs my political views

Question 49		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
My faith informs my political views	Strongly Disagree	5 9.6%	35 23.0%	29 17.7%	101 20.5%	62 20.8%	232 20.0%
	Somewhat Disagree	7 13.5%	35 23.0%	34 20.7%	72 14.6%	47 15.8%	195 16.8%
	Somewhat Agree	16 30.8%	31 20.4%	46 28.0%	153 31.0%	92 30.9%	338 29.2%
	Strongly Agree	24 46.2%	51 33.6%	55 33.5%	167 33.9%	97 32.6%	394 34.0%
	Total	52 100.0%	152 100.0%	164 100.0%	493 100.0%	298 100.0%	1159 100.0%

Thirty-four percent of SKD’s parishioners strongly agree that their faith informs their political views and 29.2% of them somewhat agree to this statement while 36.8% of SKD’s parishioners say that they somewhat disagree or strongly disagree that faith informs their political views.

TABLE 50. Our parish should be stewardship parish, where we commit to offer our time, talent, and treasure as a return gift back to God and the community

Question 50		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Our parish should be stewardship parish, where we commit to offer our time, talent, and treasury	Strongly Disagree	0	4	3	13	11	31
		.0%	2.6%	1.7%	2.6%	3.6%	2.6%
	Somewhat Disagree	3	16	9	42	23	93
		5.3%	10.6%	5.2%	8.5%	7.6%	7.9%
	Somewhat Agree	11	44	46	162	94	357
		19.3%	29.1%	26.7%	32.7%	31.0%	30.3%
	Strongly Agree	43	87	114	278	175	697
		75.4%	57.6%	66.3%	56.2%	57.8%	59.2%
Total		57	151	172	495	303	1178
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Fifty-nine and two tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners strongly agree that our parish should be a stewardship parish, and 30.3% of them somewhat agree to this statement while 10.5% of SKD’s parishioners say that they somewhat or strongly disagree with this statement.

TABLE 51. It is important to attend Mass each week

Question 51		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
It is important to attend Mass each week	Strongly Disagree	0	0	2	8	2	12
		.0%	.0%	1.1%	1.4%	.6%	.9%
	Somewhat Disagree	0	3	4	6	8	21
		.0%	1.7%	2.1%	1.1%	2.4%	1.6%
	Somewhat Agree	2	17	15	47	32	113
		3.1%	9.8%	8.0%	8.2%	9.6%	8.5%
	Strongly Agree	62	153	166	510	291	1182
		96.9%	88.4%	88.8%	89.3%	87.4%	89.0%
Total		64	173	187	571	333	1328
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Eighty-nine percent of SKD’s parishioners strongly agree with the importance of weekly Mass attendance, and 8.5% of them somewhat agree to this statement, while 2.5% somewhat disagree or strongly disagree regarding the importance to attend Mass each week.

TABLE 52. Parents of children and teens should bring their children to Mass every weekend

Question 52		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Parents of children and teens should bring their children to Mass every weekend	Strongly Disagree	0	0	2	10	3	15
		.0%	.0%	1.1%	1.8%	.9%	1.1%
	Somewhat Disagree	0	2	6	6	15	29
		.0%	1.2%	3.2%	1.1%	4.5%	2.2%
	Somewhat Agree	5	15	19	42	30	111
		8.6%	8.7%	10.1%	7.5%	9.1%	8.5%
	Strongly Agree	53	156	161	505	282	1157
	91.4%	90.2%	85.6%	89.7%	85.5%	88.2%	
Total		58	173	188	563	330	1312
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Eighty-eight and two tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners agree to bring their children and teens to weekend Masses, and 8.5% of them somewhat agree to this statement while 3.3% of SKD’s parishioners somewhat disagree or strongly disagree regarding bringing their children or teens to Mass every weekend.

TABLE 53. Religious education is more important for my children than any activity from school

Question 53		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Religious education is more important for my children than any activity from school	Strongly Disagree	5	3	14	15	21	58
		10.0%	1.8%	7.8%	2.9%	6.7%	4.7%
	Somewhat Disagree	4	16	17	42	35	114
		8.0%	9.8%	9.4%	8.0%	11.1%	9.2%
	Somewhat Agree	13	39	60	153	87	352
		26.0%	23.9%	33.3%	29.1%	27.6%	28.5%
	Strongly Agree	28	105	89	316	172	710
	56.0%	64.4%	49.4%	60.1%	54.6%	57.5%	
Total		50	163	180	526	315	1234
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Fifty-seven and five tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners strongly agree that Religious education is more important than any activity from School and 28.5% of them somewhat agree to this statement while 13.9% of SKD’s parishioners somewhat disagree or strongly disagree that religious education is more important than any activity from school.

Demographics (Questions 54 to 63 from the survey)

This area of the survey tries to gather information about our composition, collecting information regarding gender, country of origin, education, registration in the parish and, the use of envelopes and their monetary contribution to the parish. This information is shown in Table 54 through 63.

TABLE 54. Gender

Question 54		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Gender	Male	25	73	60	208	149	515
		40.3%	41.5%	31.1%	36.2%	44.2%	38.3%
	Female	37	103	133	367	188	828
		59.7%	58.5%	68.9%	63.8%	55.8%	61.7%
Total		62	175	193	575	337	1343
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Thirty-eight and three tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are males and 61.7% say that they are females.

TABLE 55. In what year were you born?

From Year	To Year	From Age	To Age	Number of Parishioners	%
1919	1940	94	74	67	5.2%
1941	1960	73	54	285	22.3%
1961	1980	53	34	655	51.2%
1981	2000	33	14	270	21.3%
				1277	100.0%

Five and two tenths percent of SKD’s parishioner say that they are between 74 – 94 years old, 22.3% of them say that they are between 54 -73. Fifty-one and two tenth percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are between 34 – 53 years old and 21.3% of them say that they are between 14 – 33 years old.

TABLE 56. Foreign Born

Question 56		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Foreign born	Born in U.S.	29 49.2%	15 8.5%	65 33.5%	52 9.2%	79 23.6%	240 18.0%
	Born Abroad	30 50.8%	161 91.5%	129 66.5%	516 90.8%	256 76.4%	1092 82.0%
Total		59 100.0%	176 100.0%	194 100.0%	568 100.0%	335 100.0%	1332 100.0%

Eighteen percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they were born in the US and 82% say that they were born outside of the US.

TABLE 57. Country of Origin

Question 57		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total	
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3		
Country born	Argentina	0 .0%	5 3.0%	1 .9%	13 2.4%	4 1.7%	23 2.1%	
	Colombia	9 18.4%	71 42.3%	26 22.6%	153 27.7%	90 38.1%	349 31.2%	
	Chile	0 .0%	0 .0%	1 .9%	0 .0%	4 1.7%	5 .4%	
	Cuba	0 .0%	2 1.2%	2 1.7%	6 1.1%	7 3.0%	17 1.5%	
	DR	0 .0%	1 .6%	5 4.3%	8 1.4%	4 1.7%	18 1.6%	
	Ecuador	0 .0%	1 .6%	6 5.2%	19 3.4%	15 6.4%	41 3.7%	
	Mexico	0 .0%	3 1.8%	6 5.2%	10 1.8%	9 3.8%	28 2.5%	
	USA	27 55.1%	12 7.1%	1 .9%	35 6.3%	0 .0%	75 6.7%	
	Venezuela	9 18.4%	48 28.6%	30 26.1%	226 40.9%	73 30.9%	386 34.5%	
	Other	4 8.2%	25 14.9%	37 32.2%	82 14.9%	30 12.7%	178 15.9%	
	Total		49 100.0%	168 100.0%	115 100.0%	552 100.0%	236 100.0%	1120 100.0%

Thirty-four and five tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners were born in Venezuela’s born, 31.2% of them were born in Colombia, 6.7% of them were born in the US, and 27.6% of parishioners who attend Mass at SKD were born in other countries. Therefore, SKD is multicultural and multinational parish.

TABLE 58. Marital Status

Question 58		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Marital status	Never Married	14	29	37	141	88	309
		23.3%	16.8%	19.3%	24.7%	26.7%	23.3%
	Married in the Catholic Church	35	115	105	301	182	738
		58.3%	66.5%	54.7%	52.6%	55.3%	55.7%
	Married not in the Catholic Church	4	17	26	74	28	149
		6.7%	9.8%	13.5%	12.9%	8.5%	11.2%
	Divorced	3	6	17	39	21	86
		5.0%	3.5%	8.9%	6.8%	6.4%	6.5%
	Widow/ Widower	4	6	7	17	10	44
		6.7%	3.5%	3.6%	3.0%	3.0%	3.3%
Total		60	173	192	572	329	1326
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Fifty-five and seven tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are married in the Catholic Church, 12.2% of them say that they are not married in the Catholic Church, and 23.3% of SKD’s parishioners say that they never been married. Six and five tenths % of SKD’s parishioners say that they are divorced and 3.3% of them are widowed.

TABLE 59. Do you have children under 15 years old?

Question 59		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Children <15	No	37 63.8%	99 58.6%	87 47.3%	276 51.3%	165 50.0%	664 51.9%
	Yes	21 36.2%	70 41.4%	97 52.7%	262 48.7%	165 50.0%	615 48.1%
Total		58 100.0%	169 100.0%	184 100.0%	538 100.0%	330 100.0%	1279 100.0%

Forty-eight and one tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they have children under 15 years old and 51.9% of them say that they do not have children under 15 years old.

TABLE 60. What is your highest level of education?

Question 60		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Education	High school or Less	3 5.1%	43 25.0%	32 17.0%	129 23.1%	73 22.1%	280 21.4%
	Some University	10 16.9%	30 17.4%	40 21.3%	109 19.5%	54 16.3%	243 18.6%
	A University Degree	46 78.0%	99 57.6%	116 61.7%	320 57.3%	204 61.6%	785 60.0%
Total		59 100.0%	172 100.0%	188 100.0%	558 100.0%	331 100.0%	1308 100.0%

Sixty percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they earned a university degree, 18.6% of them say that they have attended university, and 21.4% of them say that they have graduated from high school or less.

TABLE 61. Are you or your family registered as a member of the parish?

Question 61		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Registered in the parish	No	13	49	34	203	108	407
		21.0%	28.5%	18.1%	36.8%	33.5%	31.4%
	Yes	49	123	154	348	214	888
		79.0%	71.5%	81.9%	63.2%	66.5%	68.6%
Total		62	172	188	551	322	1295
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Sixty-eight and six percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they are registered in the parish, and 31.4% of them say they are not registered.

TABLE 62. Do you use envelopes when you contribute to parish support?

Question 62		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Use envelopes	No	21	71	71	274	168	605
		34.4%	42.3%	38.2%	50.8%	54.5%	47.9%
	Yes	40	97	115	265	140	657
		65.6%	57.7%	61.8%	49.2%	45.5%	52.1%
Total		61	168	186	539	308	1262
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Fifty-two and one tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that they use envelopes for their contribution to the parish support, and 52.1% of them say that they do not use envelopes.

Table 63. Parishioners’ contribution according to question “63” in the questionnaire

Range of Contribution in US\$	Number of parishioners	Percentage of parishioners
1-5	163	17.69
6-10	203	21.90
11-15	59	6.40
16-20	174	18.80
21-25	80	8.60
26-30	64	6.90
31-35	21	2.30
36-40	38	4.10
41-45	2	0.21
46-50	57	6.10
51-55	4	0.40
56-60	16	1.70
61-65	1	0.10
66-70	5	0.50
71-75	5	0.50
76-80	3	0.30
81-100	20	2.20
101-150	10	1.00
151-180	1	0.10
181-250	1	0.10
251-400	1	0.10
>400	0	0.00
Total	928	100.00%

Forty-five and ninety nine hundredths percent of SKD’s parishioners give less than 20 dollars as their financial support per week, and 18.8% give twenty dollars per week. Twenty eight and twenty one hundredths % of SKD’s parishioners give between 21 to 50 dollars and 7% give more than 50 dollars.

Open questions 64 from the survey: What one thing you most like about the parish?

Regarding question number “64” (results showed in Table 64), fifteen categories were generated to allow the cross tabulation. As a result, 9.6% of SKD’s parishioners say that the church is like a family, 22.4% say that they have a sense of community in SKD. Twelve and three tenths % say that the church is warm, welcoming and spiritual, 10.9% say that the pastor is nice, warm and funny, 11.0% say that they like the homilies, and 6% like the way the liturgy is celebrated, and 3.5 % like the Spanish Masses. Two and three tenths % like the youth group, and 2.1% of parishioners like the Small Christian Communities.

Sixteen and three tenths % answered the rest of the categories.

TABLE 64. What one thing you most like about the parish?

Question 64		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
Mostlike	The church is like a family	1 2.5%	16 13.3%	12 9.7%	38 9.6%	20 8.9%	87 9.6%
	I like the people/ sense of community	11 27.5%	31 25.8%	30 24.2%	84 21.3%	46 20.5%	202 22.4%
	The church is warm/ welcoming/ spiritual	6 15.0%	11 9.2%	17 13.7%	43 10.9%	34 15.2%	111 12.3%
	Fr. Enrique himself	0	3	12	63	20	98
	Nice/Warm/ Funny	.0%	2.5%	9.7%	15.9%	8.9%	10.9%
	I like the cultural activities	0 .0%	1 .8%	1 .8%	3 .8%	2 .9%	7 .8%
	I like the Spanish Masses	1 2.5%	8 6.7%	1 .8%	20 5.1%	2 .9%	32 3.5%
	Good homilies	1 2.5%	22 18.3%	8 6.5%	53 13.4%	15 6.7%	99 11.0%
	I like the way the Father leads the parish	4 10.0%	2 1.7%	1 .8%	5 1.3%	0 .0%	12 1.3%
	I like the way Masses are celebrated	2 5.0%	6 5.0%	4 3.2%	28 7.1%	14 6.3%	54 6.0%
	I like the music ministry	0 .0%	0 .0%	2 1.6%	3 .8%	1 .4%	6 .7%
	I like the youth group	0 .0%	4 3.3%	0 .0%	13 3.3%	4 1.8%	21 2.3%
	I like the children's activities	0 .0%	2 1.7%	4 3.2%	5 1.3%	2 .9%	13 1.4%
	I like the Small Christian Community	0 .0%	3 2.5%	6 4.8%	6 1.5%	4 1.8%	19 2.1%
	I like the Emmaus retreat	0 .0%	2 1.7%	3 2.4%	4 1.0%	1 .4%	10 1.1%
	Other	14 35.0%	9 7.5%	23 18.5%	27 6.8%	59 26.3%	132 14.6%
Total		40	120	124	395	224	903

Open question 65: What new thing would you most like the parish to do?

Regarding open-ended question number “65” (results showed in Table 65), what new things would you most like the parish to do? Twenty-five new categories were established to allow the process of cross tabulation.

As a result, 7.5% of SKD’s parishioners say that there is a need for a Spanish Mass on Sunday evening, and 7.0% of them say that there should be more activities for children and youth. Five and eighth tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that there should be better songs in the liturgy, and 5.5% of them say that there should be better formation programs for adults and Bible studies.

Five and four tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that there should be more activities in the family ministry, and 4.9% of them say that there should be more outreach programs. Four and four tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that there should be better choirs, and 4.4% of them say that there should be more time for confessions. Three and eight tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that there should be better homilies and 3.3% of them say that there should be a better youth group.

Three and two tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that there should be less preaching about money and 2.5% of them say that there should be more children Masses. Two and three tenths percent SKD’s parishioners say that there should be a school in SKD and 1.2% of them say that there is a need for better communications. One and two tenths percent of SKD’s parishioners say that there should be a youth Mass, and 1.1% of them say that there should be more integration between the Anglo and the Hispanic community. One percent of SKD’s parishioners say that there should be an early Sunday Mass, and 28.2% of the rest of the responses of the new things proposed, fall under the range of 1%.

Table 65. What new thing would you most like the parish to do

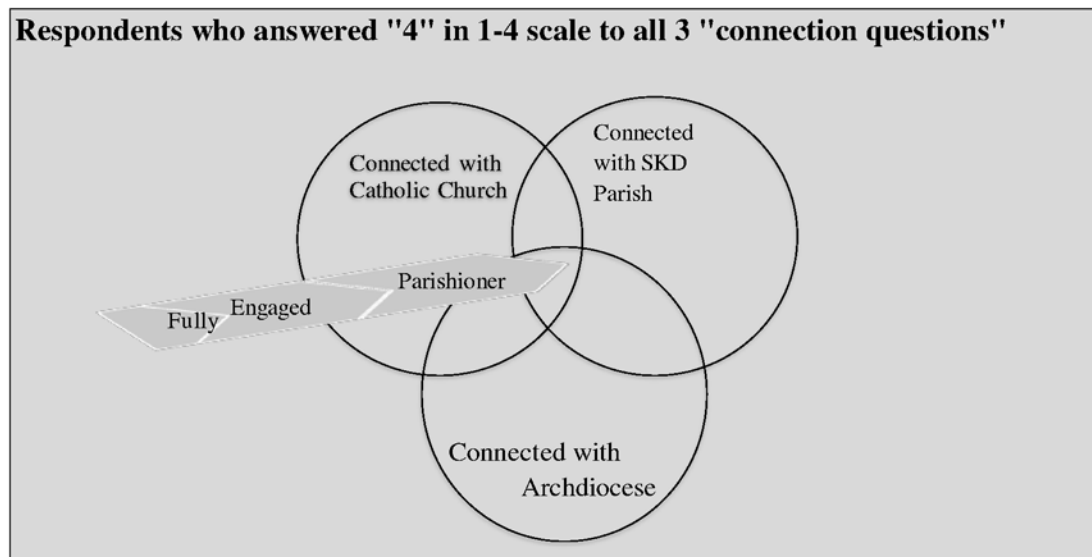
Question 65		Mass ID cross tabulation					Total
		Saturday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	
New thing	More formation programs for adults/ Bible study	3 8.1%	7 6.9%	8 7.5%	23 6.3%	4 2.0%	45 5.5%
	More time for confessions	3 8.1%	4 4.0%	4 3.7%	18 4.9%	7 3.4%	36 4.4%
	Spanish Mass on Sunday Evenings	0 .0%	3 3.0%	2 1.9%	38 10.4%	18 8.8%	61 7.5%
	An Early Sunday Mass	3 8.1%	0 .0%	1 .9%	3 .8%	1 .5%	8 1.0%
	More healing Masses	0 .0%	1 1.0%	1 .9%	3 .8%	1 .5%	6 .7%
	More time for adoration	0 .0%	0 .0%	1 .9%	0 .0%	3 1.5%	4 .5%
	Better homilies	1 2.7%	4 4.0%	7 6.5%	11 3.0%	8 3.9%	31 3.8%
	Less preaching about money	3 8.1%	4 4.0%	1 .9%	10 2.7%	8 3.9%	26 3.2%
	Better choirs	1 2.7%	10 9.9%	2 1.9%	18 4.9%	5 2.4%	36 4.4%
	Better songs	2 5.4%	6 5.9%	6 5.6%	22 6.0%	11 5.4%	47 5.8%
	Better sound system	0 .0%	0 .0%	1 .9%	0 .0%	1 .5%	2 .2%
	Children Masses	0 .0%	3 3.0%	4 3.7%	8 2.2%	5 2.4%	20 2.5%
	More activities for children and youth	0 .0%	11 10.9%	4 3.7%	25 6.9%	17 8.3%	57 7.0%
	More formation programs for youth	0 .0%	1 1.0%	6 5.6%	10 2.7%	9 4.4%	26 3.2%
	Youth Masses	0 .0%	1 1.0%	3 2.8%	3 .8%	3 1.5%	10 1.2%
	A better youth group	0 .0%	4 4.0%	3 2.8%	11 3.0%	9 4.4%	27 3.3%
	More integration between Anglos and Hispanics	0 .0%	1 1.0%	4 3.7%	0 .0%	4 2.0%	9 1.1%
	Finish the church building	2 5.4%	5 5.0%	6 5.6%	12 3.3%	7 3.4%	32 3.9%
	A school at SKD	1 2.7%	6 5.9%	1 .9%	9 2.5%	2 1.0%	19 2.3%
	More outreach programs	2 5.4%	1 1.0%	5 4.7%	11 3.0%	21 10.2%	40 4.9%
	Better communication	0 .0%	1 1.0%	3 2.8%	4 1.1%	2 1.0%	10 1.2%
	More activities for family ministry	2 5.4%	4 4.0%	2 1.9%	31 8.5%	5 2.4%	44 5.4%
	Another priest	0 .0%	1 1.0%	0 .0%	4 1.1%	0 .0%	5 .6%
	Other	14 37.8%	23 22.8%	32 29.9%	90 24.7%	54 26.3%	213 26.2%
Total		37 100.0%	101 100.0%	107 100.0%	364 100.0%	205 100.0%	814 100.0%

Establishment of Congregational Engagements Indicators for Parish Excellence

Definition of Congregational Engagement Index

The definition of Congregational Engagement comprehends the convergence of three areas. The first area is named “strongly connected to the Catholic Faith,” the second area is named “strongly connected to Parish” and the third area is named “strongly connected to Archdiocese.” The fully engaged parishioners are the ones who answered “4” in a “1 – 4” scale for all three-connection questions from the survey. This is shown in Figure “1”:

Figure 1.

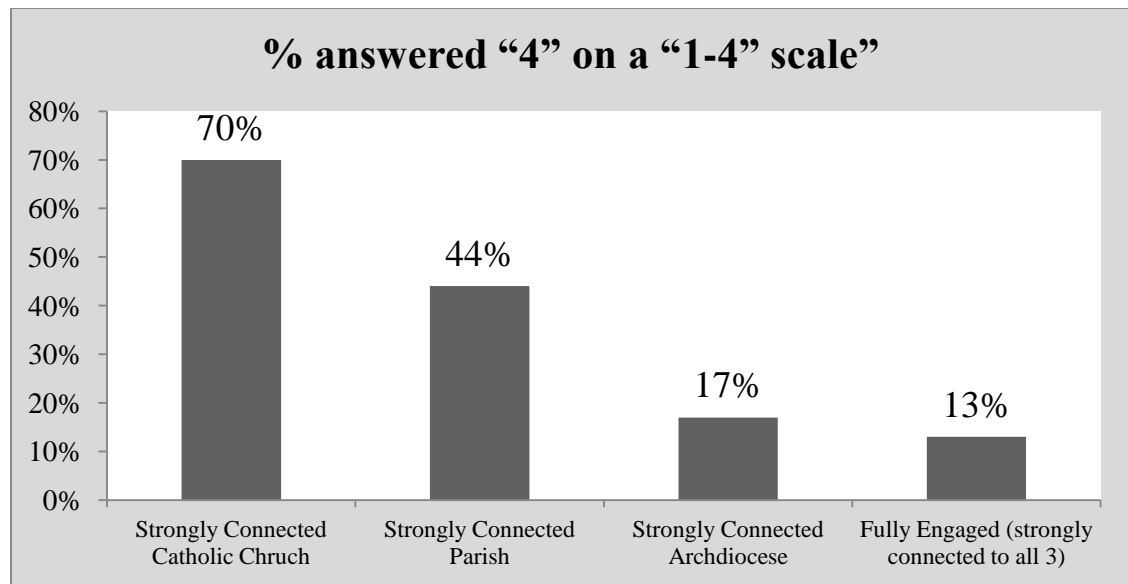


Fully engaged parishioner

The congregational Engagement Index was built by grouping responses to survey question number “40” (Personal connection with the parish), survey question “41” (Personal connection with the Archdiocese), and survey question “42” (personal connection with the Catholic Church). Respondents who answered “4” to all three questions were categorized as “Fully Engaged.” All other respondents were categorized as “Not Fully Engaged.” This is shown in Figure 2, 70% of SKD’s parishioners are strongly connected with the Catholic

Church, 44% are strongly connected with the parish, and 17% are strongly connected to the Archdiocese. Only 13% of the total respondents are categorized as fully connected with the tree: Catholic Church, Parish, and Archdiocese.

Figure 2.



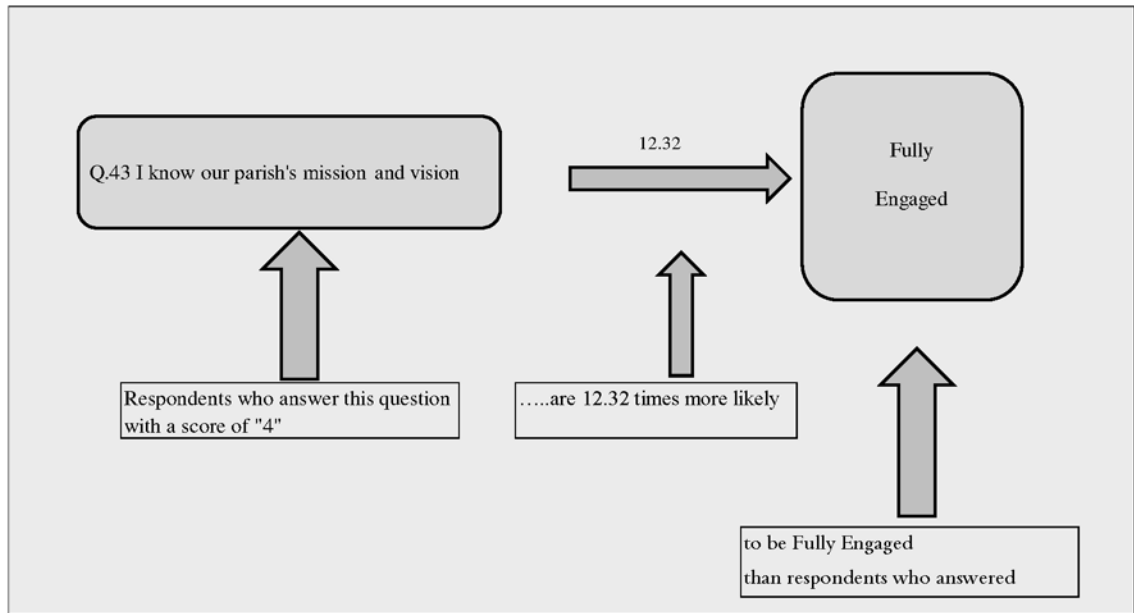
Percentage of parishioner engagement.

Drivers or Predictors of Congregational Engagements

This index was used as a dichotomous dependent variable where the positive outcome (fully engaged) equaled “1” and the negative outcome (not fully engaged) equaled “0.” A set of independent variables (questions from the survey) was tested for predicted power in terms of driving “full engagement.” To that end, odd ratios of being in the “full engagement” category were computed for scores of “4” on each candidate independent variable. These odd ratios were used as indicators of the relative importance of each dependent variable as drivers of “Full Engagement.”

On Figure “3,” it is shown how respondents who answer question 43 from the survey with a score of “4” on a scale from “1” to “4” are 12.32 times more likely to be fully engaged than respondents who answered “3,” “2,” or “1” to the same question.

Figure3.



Interpreting “Odd Ratios”

The conceptual model defined in the research methodology contains three specific areas of parish life: the work of the parish, the participation of people in parish life, and the people’s feeling of belonging to the parish. Fourteen indicators or predictors were established. These key predictors have been defined as “Predictors of Congregational Engagement.” The predictors of congregational engagement are shown in Table 66.

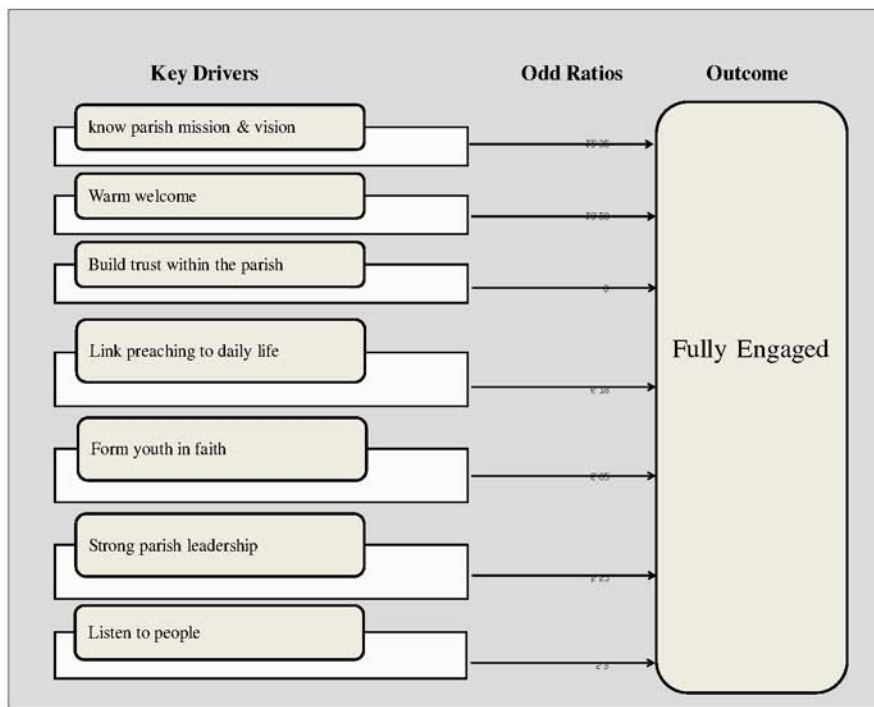
TABLE 66. Predictors of Congregational Engagement

Critical key predictors	Performance	Performance	Importance
Drivers of parish connection	% 4	Mean	Odd Ratios
1. Know mission & vision	42%	3.12	12.32
2. Warm welcome	69%	3.60	10.28
3. Build trust within parish	56%	3.42	8.00
4. Link preaching to daily life	57%	3.43	6.78
5. Form youth in faith	56%	3.41	6.02
6. Strong parish leadership	55%	3.42	5.52
7. Listen to people	64%	3.51	5.30
Less critical predictors	Performance	Performance	Importance
8. Information about activities	49%	3.31	5.18
9. Reflect mission & vision	61%	3.53	5.17
10. Sense of holiness	74%	3.68	4.95
11. Inform political views	34%	2.77	4.74
12. Interested in social justice projects	60%	3.43	4.22
13. Interested in “respect life” projects	62%	3.45	4.16
14. Interested in detention ministry	44%	3.08	4.02
Median	57%	3.37	5.24

Winseman (2006) defines congregational engagement as the degree of belonging individuals have to their congregation; they use the language church as family and have strong psychological and emotional connections to their church or parish, where “they organize their lives around the church” (Winseman 2006, 67-68). These predictors (indexes) were built by aggregating responses to their personal connection with the parish, the

archdiocese and the Catholic Church. Respondents who answered “4” to all three questions were categorized as fully engaged while other respondents were categorized as not fully engaged. A set of independent variables originated from the survey was tested for predictive power in terms of driving the predictors of engagement. Seven key predictors were determined as critical and seven as less critical. The research will focus only on the seven critical predictors of congregational engagements. Figure “4” shows the seven critical predictors of Congregational Engagement.

Figure 4.



Congregational Engagement Predictive Model - Key Predictors

First Engagement Critical Predictor: “Know Parish Mission and Vision”

A parish mission statement is the explicit proclamation of how to serve God’s people, service which flows directly from Jesus’s mission and encourages parishioners to accept this mission as their own (Hater 2004, 199). SKD expended six months of its existence formulating the mission and the vision of the parish. The mission statement is as follows:

“SKD is the cornerstone of Weston’s Catholic community. We are one body, one spirit, one family actively ministering to the spiritual needs of all, as we journey together in the name of Jesus Christ.” This statement has helped SKD to modulate, operate and envision how to serve better their parishioners and consider the specific needs of this particular community. The mission statement of SKD expresses very openly the goals of a proactive Christian community that provides for the spiritual needs of its members while the openness is to the whole community.

SKD has lived its mission observing four priorities, contemplated in its mission statement. The first priority is to live as a stewardship community, bringing their talent, time, and treasure to service the spiritual and human growth of every member of the community. The second priority has been, over the time, to organize various ministries. These ministries respond to the call to service of the majority of their parishioners. The third priority has been to care for the youth and the families of the parish; in this process, SKD has developed a strong youth ministry and a variety of family ministries. Finally, the fourth priority has been to establish a solid Catholic identity in its community.

SKD has lived over the years with a mixture of a horizontal and a vertical spirituality, which follows the definitions of horizontal and vertical spiritualities mentioned in the research study done in the Rockford Catholic diocese in 1997. This study defined Horizontal spirituality in the parish as a community where God is present in the people and especially in the poor and dispossessed. The parish must reach out to the poor, show warmth and hospitality, demonstrate leadership sensitive to the concerns of the parish and promote respect for human life (Cieslak 2003, 132). This view often corresponds most with a parish having a higher transiency rate of parishioners and having limited time to establish

relationships (133-134). This is one of the characteristic of SKD. While at the same time, the vertical spirituality is highly estimated among their parishioners. This vertical spirituality defines a community where God is primarily in the sacraments, the church and the Scripture. The focus is in the sacredness of the church and the devotion of the minister. God is not in the neighbor because is a sinner, but is in the sacred where the transcendent God can be found. This is linked to factors as sufficient time for reconciliation, devotional services after Mass and reverent performances of liturgical ministers during Mass (133). Cieslak, found that Hispanics value both dimensions of Horizontal and vertical spirituality as well, because is part of their experiences (134). This statement is congruent with SKD that has an 80% Hispanic composition. Both spiritualities walk hand in hand and in no way are in tension, instead as a complement of the experiences of the daily life of the parishioners of SKD.

The establishment of a solid Catholic identity among the parishioners is an ongoing work in the parish, reinforced by all its activities as a local church. The sense of belonging to a religious group could be cultural, inherit from the family of origin or discover and appropriate in the process of daily live. Belonging stresses the feeling of connectedness, and one feels being part of an institution. Regarding faith, Catholics feel in some positive or negative degree connected to their parish represented by their pastor, to their diocese represented by their bishop, or to the Universal Church represented by the Vatican and the Pope. Monkerud (2008) argues that this connection is made in some or less degree to the universal church through the Eucharist. However, this connection has to emphasize a positive relation with the local Church, otherwise it will not appreciate the local church, reinforcing a privatized form of faith, which discourage the building of the local church into the universal church in a particular time and place (Monkerud 2008, 14).

Second Engagement Critical Predictor: “Warm Welcome”

SKD parish is a multicultural and multinational community, where difference is celebrated and embraced. Bilingual liturgies are celebrated as a way to integrate the community. Various ministries exist in both languages, English and Spanish to allow people to feel welcome and accepted. Ganim (2008) in her study *The Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership Project* established four marks of excellence: Collaborative, Ethical, Pastoral, and Welcoming. Regarding welcoming, she states, “welcoming leaders ensure that all who desire a closer relationship to God are genuinely received and welcomed, in a spirit of heartfelt hospitality, openness, and eagerness both to give and receive.” (Ganim 2008, 1). Further she adds, “they are also inclusive leaders, who invite support, and animate diversity in the parish, paying particular attention to diverse cultures, languages, ethnicities, gender, generations, abilities, and beliefs, in ways that are respectful and mutually enriching” (1). Hater (2004) reminds readers that people need roots for meaningful relationships and a welcoming atmosphere is what people find in an effective parish (Hater 2004, 50). SKD over the years has cultivated this spirit of welcoming. This statement is validated from the survey: the parish as the church is like a family (9.6%), I like the people sense of community (22.4%), and the church is warmth welcoming and spiritual (12.3%).

Third Engagement Critical Predictor: “Build Trust within Parish”

In a round of conversations with the pastoral council about this congregational engagement, three elements were identified. The first element is that parishioners trust the parish and all its members to protect their children from any harm, so they could learn, nurture and develop their life of faith. The second element identified was that the parishioners trust the administration that their monies will be used for what they have been

asked for and in a very responsible way, especially when building the new facilities is underway. The third element was that trust within the parish is not a given element, but an earned one, which is developed during the day to day actions that are perceived as building trust.

Fourth Engagement Critical Predictor: “Link Preaching to Daily Life”

People come to church to have a meaningful experience. They want to hear the Word of God, and how they can apply this Word in their daily life. Homilies that are connected to their experiences and concerns are the ones, which will talk to their hearts. Moreover, educated people expect a level of quality in the interpretation of the Word of God. Council Vatican II in its decree *The Ministry and Life of Priests* states that preaching is the primary function of the priest and “the word of God ought not to be explained in a general and abstract way, but rather by applying the lasting truth of the Gospel to the particular circumstances of life” (Vatican Council II - *Presbyterorum Ordinis* 1965, §4).

Fifth Engagement Critical Predictor: “Form Youth in Faith”

SKD is one of the few parishes in the Archdiocese of Miami who has a youth minister on its paid staff. The youth program offers plenty opportunities for the youth to engage in parish activities, and spiritual retreats are offered for middle and high school kids, with the purpose of formation and to enhance their experiences of faith. Research found in *Soul Searching*, done by Smith and Lundquist (2005) regarding the spiritual lives of teenager in America, suggests that the Catholic Church needs to invest more in its young members to engage and to form them. They write, “church has a long way to go to reach that immense potential.” They further add, this would require “that the Church invest a great deal more attention, creativity, and institutional resources into its young members.” This investment

will benefit its own life and its future. They state, “undeniably, the future shape of the U.S. Catholic Church vitality depends on it” (Smith and Lundquist 2005, 217). Hater (2004) states that Catholic youth need to be taught in basic Catholic doctrine, scripture, morality, and social justice, and the connection between the youth ministry to the broader parish will produce an effective youth ministry (Hater 2004, 115-116).

Sixth Engagement Critical Predictor: “Strong Parish Leadership”

SKD parish is under a Participatory Leadership style. This model empowers the laity, sharing with them in the process of decision-making, allowing them to participate in decisions that affect their lives. In this process, practices that positively affect the flourishing of parish life are enabled, thus promoting parish excellence.

Seventh Engagement Critical Predictor: “Listen to People”

The Seventh Predictor of Parish Congregational Engagement found is “Listen to People.” People need to be heard, they need to know that even in a vertical organization as a parish structure might seem to be, they have the opportunity to express their concerns and worries. In 2011 after a process of reorganization of the parish, a parish council was appointed and Organogram was distributed among the parishioners, groups, ministries and staff of the parish. The implementation of a parish council that cover all pastoral groups and activities of the parish has given the parishioners a voice in the decision making of the parish. The members of the parish pastoral council may work at their level but always under the ultimate authority of the pastor as provided by the Code of Canon Law. As in all decision making, information is required so that the people involved know about the decisions taken and their implications

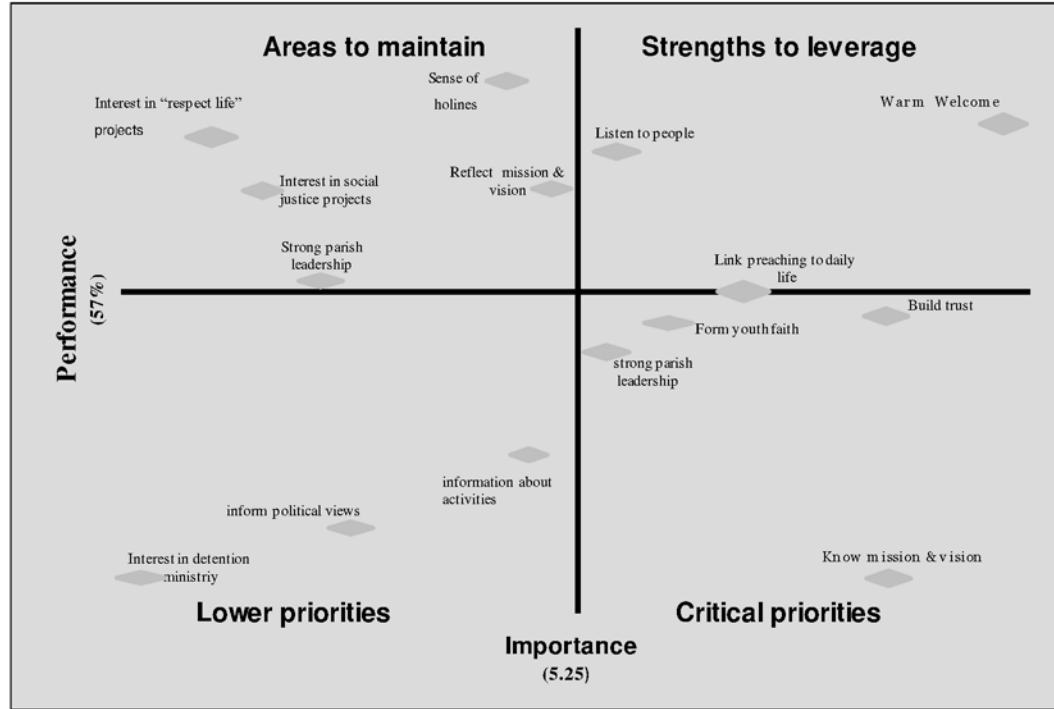
Importance of Engagement Predictors in Parish Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is fundamental in the life of every organization, it does not matter what is the final product of that organization. If they want to succeed, they need to know what they want and how to get there. The same happens to religious organizations at all levels. Catholic parishes do not escape from this reality. A parish that has a clear idea where they want to go and how to get there, show a better opportunity to succeed. Parishes with mission statements create a positive ground where the seed of the Gospel is ready to grow up and bear fruit. They need to know how to better serve their members.

The mission statement has to be part of the life of a parish. It has to reflect the needs of a community of faith and their vision of how to live their spiritual life. This mission statement has to be embedded in all their functions as a church. In this process, its members fulfill their spiritual needs producing excellence in parish life. This section of the research has determined predictors of “Congregational Engagement” that can be measured and which of these indicators will serve us to focus on what matters to a community of faith. These indicators can help us to identify key areas that would make parishioners’ religious experiences more fulfilled. This research study has answered these questions, through the identification of key indicators in parish life to map the road, focusing on things that matter to people in their spiritual life. Knowing what matters to people, can provide a logical plan to respond to those challenges through strategic planning.

The figure “5” Prioritization Chart, shows the seven lower priorities, and the seven critical priorities that represent the strengths to build upon. This Chart helps to visualize the road map for strategic planning, prioritizing the seven critical engagement predictors.

Figure 5



Prioritization Chart.

Conclusions

Our demographics show that SKD’s parishioners are more females than males and that our main population is in the range of 34 to 53 years old. Eighty-two percent of SKD’s parishioners were born outside of the US. Most of them are predominant from Venezuela and Colombia. More than half of the SKD’s population, says that they are married in the Catholic Church and almost 50% of them say that they have children under 15 years old. Sixty percent of SKD’s parishioners are educated; they say that they hold a university degree and 66% of them say that they are registered and half of them use envelops to make their financial support to the parish.

The extensive approach of the research has determined vast information on the practices of SKD parish. Three areas have been researched: a) the work of the parish; b) the

participation of the people in parish life and; c) peoples' feelings of belonging to the parish. This information has been used to establish “Engagement Predictors” that would help the second phase of the research to prioritize the strategic planning. This would make the process of planning more meaningful as the parish invests its time, talent and treasury in identified key areas of the practices of SKD parish. This would help the parish to respond in a more constructive way to the needs of parishioners, affecting positively their spiritual well-being.

CHAPTER FIVE: SECOND RESEARCH PHASE: AN INTENSIVE APPROACH

Introduction

According with the research design formulated for this stage, the Pastoral Parish Council was informed about the results of the first phase and the establishment of the key predictors for parish engagement. This Second Phase of the research tries to answer the following research question: How Participatory Leadership exercised by a pastor, through the empowerment of the laity, promotes effective structures of shared responsibilities at the parish level.

Methodology

To explore the effects on Participatory Leadership, we formulated three questions:

1. How does Participatory Leadership promote patterns of shared responsibilities that promote excellence in parish life and pastoral activities?
2. How does Participatory Leadership affect parish community life, at the level of commitment and involvement that parishioners have in their parish?
3. How does Participatory Leadership change parishioners' sense of parish identity?

The first question responds to the work of the parish, the second question responds to the participation of people in parish life, and the third question responds to peoples feelings of belongings to the parish. To dissect these three questions the Parish Pastoral Council will be divided in three groups. The pastor, the assistant to pastor's administration, who acting as a recording secretary, and the Deacon will participate in all the meetings. Each of these groups corresponds to analyze one of the areas assigned in the research.

The first group will analyze the first Research Question, which responds to the work of the parish using the information obtained from the parish survey that was presented to the

PPC. This group will meet four times each Thursday over the span of two months. Each session should last between two to three hours, and the specific questions from the survey to be analyzed are Questions 1 to Question 13 and Question 33 to Question 39.

The second group will analyze the second Research Question that responds to the participation of people in parish life, using the results from the survey to the specific Questions 14 to Question 32. This group will meet four times each Monday over the span of two months. Each session should last between two to three hours.

The third group will analyze the third Research Question, which responds to peoples feeling of belonging to the parish, using the results from specific Questions 40 to Question 53. This group will meet four times each Tuesdays over the span of two months. Each session should last between two to three hours.

The last two sessions will be with all the Pastoral Council, scheduled for the elaboration of the final Pastoral Planning. These sessions will be from 9 am to 1 pm.

The first group consists of the following representatives of ministries:

- Worship representing: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Altar servers, Children's liturgy of the word, Children's Mass, Eucharistic ministers, Lectors, Ushers, Music ministry, and Sacristy
- Faith Formation representing: Religious Education, RCIA, and Bible Study
- Spiritual Life representing: Small Christian Communities, Prayer & life Workshop, Hijos de la Madre de Dios, and Detention Ministry
- Emmaus retreat

The Second group consists of the following representatives of ministries:

- Knights of Columbus

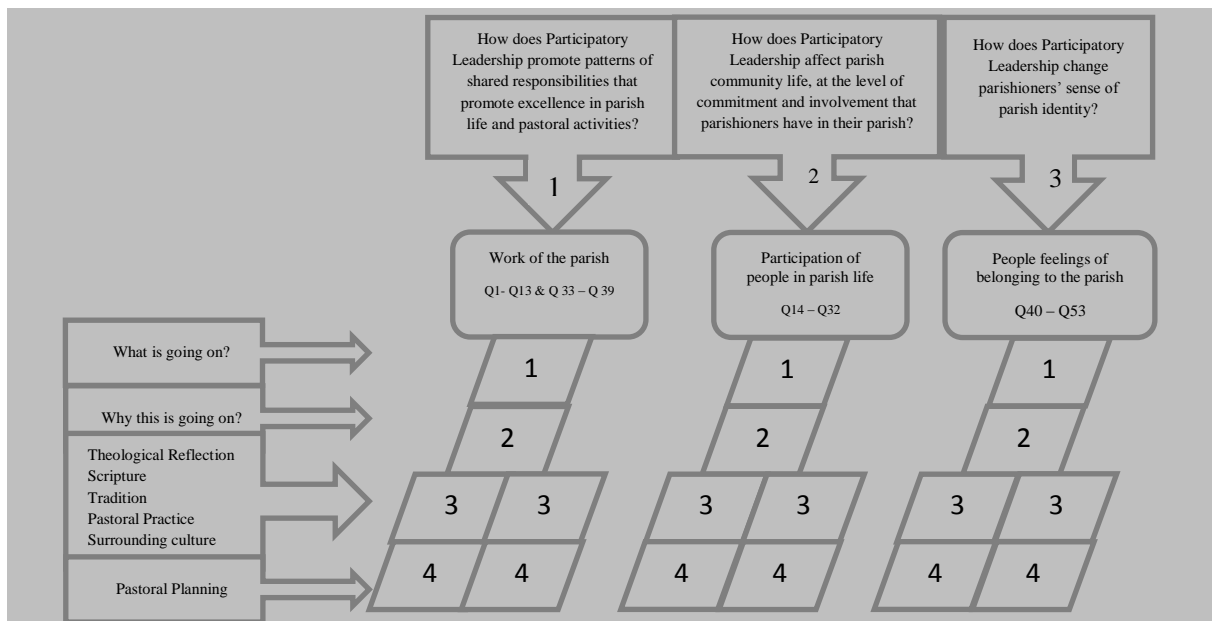
- Outreach representing: St. Vincent De Paul Society Outreach
- Family life representing: Angels in Peace, Marriage couples, Padres y Madres orantes, Rosary makers, Baptism, Annulments, and Vocation cup

The Third group consists of the following representatives of ministries

- Community life representing: Feast day celebration, Special events hospitality, Sunday hospitality, and Blood Bank drive
- Stewardship representing: Stewardship, Public relations, Parish directory, and Communications – webmaster
- Cornerstone group
- Finance Committee

The schedule of sessions is shown in Figure 6

Figure 6.



Schedule of sessions

A Participatory Action Research approach (PAR) will be used in the research. It consists in the collective commitment to investigate a problem, generating knowledge

through a cyclical process to solve problems in benefit of the people involved. PAR envisages a collaborative approach to research that engages subjects as equal participants in the process (McIntyre 2008, 1-4). The meetings will follow the model of the pastoral circle proposed by Holland and Henriot (1983).

Insertion process (Session one)

Each of the groups will analyze the data in-depth, trying to answer these questions: What is going on in the concrete situations to which the data refer in these areas? What is known about this issue within the community? What is the experience in the community with these specific practices? Who are most affected and who benefits from these practices, and how? It is anticipated that these discussions will require a minimum of two meetings and a maximum of three, but this will be up to the group, following the standards set in the literature of processes such as these. Once these things are clarified, the group will proceed to the second step.

Social analysis (Session two)

This is the space for exploring concrete challenges and tensions discovered in the first step of the pastoral circle. The group will try to respond to the underlying “why” questions: What are the tensions or challenges within these situations and practices? Why are these situations or practices happening as they are? Why do things continue? How are larger social structural relations within the parish or larger society at issue in these tensions? To what degree are these issues, contradictions, or even conflicts, ones that flow from church traditions and norms? To what degree are they simply local institutional practices?

Theological reflection (Session three)

In this phase of the research, the information obtained from the previous step will be correlated with Scripture, tradition, pastoral practice, and the surrounding culture. The group will try to determine how their experience and understanding of their faith informs the realities being studied. How could faith respond to these situations? How could practices be faithful to scripture in loving God and our neighbor? Is SKD responding to the mission and the vision not only of our parish but from the Gospel? Are the practices informed by the tradition of the church? Are these practices culturally influenced? Are these practices a response to different socio-economic and socio-cultural differences? Through a hermeneutical process, the group will try to determine the ethical aspect contemplated in the practices. Concepts of mutuality and of Christian love for one another understood as “equal regard” (Browning 1991, 187) will be critical in this process, which corresponds to the normative question of practical theology as suggested by Osmer (2008), which includes the following aspects: theological interpretation, ethical reflection, and good practice (2008,161).

Pastoral planning (Session four)

The goal of this final phase is to develop strategies to implement the practical priorities for parish life as suggested by the data and in light of the work of the group. Care will be taken to develop a careful strategic approach that achieves the desired outcome and avoids unintended consequences.

Summary of the Sessions of the Pastoral Circle: Questions number one through question number fifty-three of the survey

After finishing all sessions, all the recorded sessions were transcribed and processed. All the information produced is the results of the massive data analyzed and processed. The

results are presented in an orderly manner for each of the survey questions according to the four steps of the pastoral circle,

The work of the Parish – questions one to fifteen and questions thirty three to thirty nine

Question number one of the survey: How well does the parish do the following?

Meet your spiritual needs

What is going on?

Although this question is subjective, 60% of the parishioners answered positively. Spiritual needs can meet in very different ways for the group of parishioners that responded positively. Spiritual satisfaction can be met by coming to Mass, by saying the rosary, or through participation in a ministry. Definitely SKD is doing something good that cannot be explained by the question alone.

Why this is going on?

Fifty-nine percent of the people who worship at SKD express that their spiritual needs are very much fulfilled. Thirty-four percent of the people say that in some way that their spiritual needs are fulfilled. Only 6% express little fulfillment and 1% with no fulfillment at all. People feel that their spiritual needs are fulfilled in a great part through the celebration of the Eucharist. However, it is difficult to explain why because of its subjectivity. SKD parish makes the parish experience likable and makes the people identify with SKD and want to come back every weekend to worship, despite limitations of space and parking. SKD does many Masses compared with other parishes that have better structure and more priests.

Theological Reflection

This response is interpreted in the light of the Gospel: SKD is giving the message of Jesus and at the same time is fulfilling the general mission of the Church, which is to Evangelize. People feel that their spiritual needs are fulfilled, but it is very subjective. Spiritual needs can vary according to each individual's perception. However, what is true is that SKD is bringing God into their lives through different means including the Mass, prayers, sacraments, or community involvement. People tend to feel through community that they belong to a larger group. Parishioners feel comfortable to ask spiritual and religious questions. People appear not to be afraid of being judged or to be ostracized from their groups. In the process of exchange people tend to find God in the each other.

SKD's practices are similar to a Catholic parish that is very dynamic considering the level of participation that SKD parishioner's exhibit. The ministries respond to the work of the Church. SKD's practices are designed to benefit and not harm anybody; they are not discriminatory, and they are not mandatory. People who follow these practices are exercising their free will. These practices are designed in the ethical dimension to do good for the person who participates in those practices, and it is a free choice. SKD's volunteers bring their own talents in a free manner to fulfill spiritual needs that make them feel good; otherwise, they would not participate. Jesus said in the Scriptures "Come follow me" (Lk. 18:22, Mk. 10:21, Mt. 19:21). He invited people to come, and many did, but many of them did not. When people deal with questions of ultimate truth, after a thorough discernment, they find that it would be foolish to decide not to follow Jesus; and that decision is an exercise of free will that God gave when he created humankind. People who do not choose

Jesus are choosing wrongly because they are not deciding for the ultimate good, but instead they are choosing for a lesser good or for evil.

Pastoral Planning

This question provides a frame for broader discussions. The focus should be on the people who reported that their spiritual needs are fulfilled, but they are not committed to the support of the parish.

Question number two from the survey: How well does our parish do the following?

Warmly welcome people to the parish

What is going on?

Welcoming is not only a greeting at the entrance of the church. It is very important because is the first impression it leaves on people attending Mass. But in general, it is the way to treat people; this has made this community a warm and welcoming place to be. People return even with the limitations in our temporary facility. People surveyed express that they feel good coming to worship at SKD. The warm welcoming is connected with the sense of community.

Why this is going on?

People feel welcome at SKD. Visitors state that they are happy that they came. The actual setting of the church where everybody faces each other helps promote a warm and welcoming feeling. The moving to the new building, needs to contemplate the creation of spaces where people can socialize. The 12 noon Mass is very special; everybody knows each other and people feel the sense of community as a living organism. Parishioners have a good

time and that is good. They are spending time with their family not blood related but church related.

Theological Reflection

The tradition of the Church tells to be hospitable with everybody and especially to the strangers. SKD has to be open with one another, and the community has to embrace the people in need, and shelter the people who have no home, so when a stranger comes he or she needs to feel that he or she is not a stranger. In the Scriptures, Jesus takes care of everybody, so SKD as a church must reflect that. Here in SKD we attempt to greet everyone. If somebody is new at SKD, it is hoped that someone has greeted the visitor before Mass starts. This is a tradition in SKD that started at the beginning of the parish, and it is kept alive because it makes people feel good and welcomed.

Pastoral Planning

In order to establish a welcoming and committed parish, usher's training must be effective. They must learn to recognize new people who are participating for the first time at SKD. Ushers should follow written procedures established for them. Consistency by the ushers is very important in the welcoming of all parishioners. SKD should make bi-monthly welcome meetings for new people.

Question number three: How well does our parish do the following?

Form young people in their faith

What is going on?

Formation in faith for SKD's young people is delivered in two ways: through the receiving of the sacraments and from the participation in the youth group activities. Parents should support their children, but some do not come to Mass and instead send only their

children. It is a perception of a disconnection between the youth and the parish. They could take charge of the 6:45 Mass and participate as a group.

Why this is going on?

SKD does not support youth as it should. All activities are adult oriented. SKD needs to invest in their youth because they are the future of our church. SKD needs to integrate them and make them feel that they are welcome in the parish, that SKD is their home too, that they can socialize here, make friends, enjoy conducting their activities, and that they can grow up to be mature adults with a strong faith. SKD needs to connect the core of faith with young parishioners lives translating into a language easily understood. The best way is to make those connections with the current culture and develop a metaphor that speaks to young hearts.

Theological Reflection

Youth formation is reflected not only in the teaching of the catechism of the church but also in how they live out their faith with other youth. That implies that they have a space where they can express and feel free to ask questions. If SKD does not provide them the answers, they will find them in other places. SKD needs to develop something appealing to young parishioners and at the same time something that is in accord with the traditional teaching of the church. SKD must speak to the hearts of the youth by providing spaces where they can share their thoughts and get good feedback without judgement. In this process, SKD cannot diminish the mystery and the power of the sacraments. It is in the sacraments where the grace of God is given through the Holy Spirit, and youth need to discover this connection with God's mystery; it is a process, and SKD will get there. The youth director is working on a pastoral plan to guide SKD's youth. SKD unlike some other parishes treatment of youth

ministry, it offers on a volunteer basis. SKD with all its limitations is trying to develop a good youth program for its kids. SKD is living in a new paradigm. The old norm was that if a family is Catholic they would be Catholic. The old norm does not work anymore. SKD's children receive better religious education at the parish level than children studying in many Catholic High Schools. Parents often send children to Catholic Schools not to study religion but to get a good education that gives them better access to the best universities in the country.

Pastoral Planning

SKD is going to have a pastoral youth plan with activities developed over the year. The youth director needs to promote the youth activities, offering youth meetings for first year college students. SKD needs to commit its Pastoral Council support the activities of the youth group. SKD needs to make a commitment to support the youth group activities. If SKD does not commit, when the time comes to develop programs, it will not give priority to their kids. SKD needs to give them a real space. The SKD's pastoral council voted whether to support youth activities and it passed by a unanimous agreement to give this issue a high priority.

Question number four: How well does our parish do the following?

Bring a sense of holiness to worship

What is going on?

Seventy-three percent of the respondents rated very high on this question, but still, there are 21% indicating that SKD can improve. Hispanic parishioners find holiness not only in the liturgy but also in the encounter with the others whom they translate as family. Most of their families live outside of the country. This sense of holiness is also influenced by the fact

that SKD is one of the few parishes that distribute the Precious Blood of Christ. The implementation of kneelers for the receiving of the Eucharist has also increased and resulted in a greater sense of reverence to our liturgies. Seventy percent of the people use the kneelers. It has been explained very clearly that the use of the kneeler is optional and nobody has to feel obligated to use them.

Why this is going on?

In general, 73.5% responded that worship provides them with a sense of holiness. However, 81% of people attending the Sunday Spanish noon Mass express a great sense of holiness at that Mass. This Mass is said to be the noisy Mass, but here the respondents said the contrary. At this Mass, everybody is talking and socializing; however, as soon the Mass starts, the worshipers quiet except for those in the vestibule. The door of the vestibule remains closed to avoid the noise. People who really feel that SKD's liturgies bring to their lives that transcendental connection with God can explain the high percentage. They find this in the celebration of the Eucharist, in the proclamation of the Word of the Lord, in the preaching, in the sharing of the Bread and the Cup, and in the community of faith.

Theological Reflection

SKD celebrates Masses in a small rented facility, and people in high numbers are saying that they find a great sense of holiness here. This awareness could be expressed in the sharing of the music, celebrating of the liturgy and the interaction of the community. They feel that they are part of a family. SKD offers communion under both species (The Body-Consecrated Host and the Blood-Consecrated wine) and the congregants seem to appreciate that. Theological and ethically, in everything SKD does, the tradition of the church emerges and shines.

Pastoral Planning

SKD needs to work to maintain unity in its diverse community to preserve its sense of holiness. SKD has a challenge of moving to a new house of prayer. It needs to maintain the warmth of this community; it will have a different layout so the need to create spaces for socialization and spaces for people to express their religiosity is an imperative. SKD as a community comes to Mass to receive the sacraments and that should guide its sense of holiness.

Question number five: How well does our parish do the following?

Provide good music for worship

What is going on?

SKD has a new choir director; she sings and plays the piano and keyboard. She knows how to organize choirs and is working to do so. She sings solos during communion time and she has demonstrated that she does it very well. She is very good at teaching and preparing the children. Our sound system is ten years old, and it is due for replacement. SKD will have a much better sound system in the new facility. She shall sing more songs that everybody knows to promote participation. She has done well in connecting the music with the liturgy promoting the holiness of the moment. SKD's goal should be to have a choir for each Mass, even though it will take a great commitment of people's time to participate in the most important liturgies of the year such as Christmas and Easter.

Why this is going on?

People express a positive view regarding the music for worship. The music director has connected the liturgy with the music, promoting the sense of holiness in the liturgy. She

is organizing choirs with all the limitations of a sound system that is overdue for change. This ministry will improve dramatically when SKD move to the new facility.

Theological Reflection

Music is a way of praying. Music is enriching for the spirit. Music is part of the Church's tradition, and the whole Mass can be singed. The music engages the people, Protestants understand this, and they invest a lot in their music ministry. SKD has to deal with scarce resources. Most people participate in the singing; however, the least participation in singing occurs during the 6:45 Sunday Mass. One of the causes might be the language barrier as there are many Hispanics attending that Mass.

Music brings God into people's lives; it makes one feel more spiritual and inspire congregants to pray. SKD sings appropriate songs that match the liturgies and the tradition of the church. In the ethical reflection SKD find that its music is appropriate and it is a good practice of the parish.

Pastoral Planning

The choir director needs to sing in a lower note, allowing people to participate. SKD needs a repertoire of music that most of its parishioners know so they will sing. The choir needs more meditation songs during communion time so people can feel a more holy moment. SKD must promote more participation in choirs. The sound system is going to be new in the new church and the limitations that exist today will no longer be a problem. The songs will be projected so that the congregants can sing without having to use printed songs.

Question number six: How well does our parish do the following?

Link preaching at Mass to daily life

What is going on?

The linking of the preaching to daily life refers to how the homily helps people to live a Christian life every day. Every Mass has a different population and the preaching is never the same. There is a structure, but definitely, it is a new adaptation for every Mass. The way people receive the homily is very subjective. In SKD, homilies are putting the facts into context. That means to review the specific culture and the time and situation they confront. After that, the message is translated into our own time. Not doing this, the risk is great to give false information to the people. In that process, SKD delivers the teaching, the explanation, and the announcing of the Gospel.

Why this is going on?

Overall, 56.8% express that homilies speak to their daily life. SKD has a very diverse population and many cultural differences. Thirty-one and eight tenths percent expressed some connection in the preaching with the daily life occurrences. Overall, 88.6% of the congregants like the homilies.

Theological Reflection

The priest delivers the homilies. He follows scripture and translates the context of what happened more than two thousand years ago and bring it into the context of today's living. Priests have to be careful with the correct interpretation. That is why the need to care for every word said during the homily is extremely important. People like connections because they can make the link with their daily life problems. For people, this is crucial because they come to Mass to find a way of coping with their daily problems. If they can find

help during the preaching, they will feel that Mass was worth attending. There is also a connection of what is said, and the disposition of the people is to hear the message.

Congregants involved with the Small Christian Communities come to Mass prepared with the Sunday's readings, and they listen more attentively to the preaching because they had prepared their hearts to listen to the proclamation and the explanation of the Gospel. It is very different to preach to a Friday Emmaus (initiation of retreat) than to a Saturday night Emmaus after confessions; this occurs because participants are open to the Holy Spirit and are ready to receive his Word. There is a component in the Gospel that needs interpretation. The priest is the instrument, and through his personal preparation and the work of the Holy Spirit, he is ready to deliver a homily. Regarding the theological interpretation, it can be said that preaching is connected to Scripture, and it proclaims what the Catholic Church believes.

Pastoral Planning

Eighty percent of the parishioners like the preaching and how it connects with their real life. Therefore, at this time there is no need for changes.

Question number seven: How well does our parish do the following?

Promote vocations to the priesthood

What is going on?

The use of the vocation cup is to create an awareness of the shortage of priests. SKD is not doing a good job because this program is disorganized. SKD should not give a vocation cup with the Virgin of Schoenstatt because it creates confusion, taking away the focus and the awareness of praying for vocations.

Why this is going on?

SKD does not do a good job here and it is disorganized. Often people do not return the cup to the Mass where they took it, creating a problem because of the presence of two cups for one Mass.

Theological Reflection

The Church desperately needs more priests. People from other continents are not facing this shortage of vocations. It seems that the secular culture lived in North America affects this shortage. At this pace, the ADOM will have to import our future priests because the death rate is higher than the ordination rate. Every year there are fewer priests to attend a growing Catholic population. The growth is because of immigration and not of conversion. Often, the culture of the people pushes children to be successful and to have money. For sure, the priesthood does not lead to riches. Therefore, the priesthood is not a value in the family anymore; it is not considered as an alternative way of life. The vocation cup promotes prayers for vocations within the family. Unfortunately, people pray for other kids' family. Many pray that some will listen to the call, however, they do not pray for their own children because they already have a plan for them. The call is there, and God still calls servants to serve as priests, religious and consecrated life. Theologically SKD is doing something to promote vocations, but is far from being positive in this regard. SKD needs to recover the family pride to have a priest in the family. It also needs to recognize that two decades of sexual scandal have affected the number of people who will pursue a religious vocation. The theological reflection is that the Church needs priests, and SKD tries to promote this value in the family. The Blessed mother should not be handed with the vocation cup because of the confusion that it creates.

Pastoral Planning

SKD needs to preach vocations from the pulpit. SKD needs to pray for vocations as a community and, as a community, should recite a community prayer. SKD needs to separate the Blessed Mother from the vocation cup so it not generates confusion. SKD should invite the vocation director of the Archdiocese to give a talk to its children regarding vocation awareness.

Question number eight: How well does our parish do the following?

Manage parish finances.

What is going on?

There are no complaints regarding parish finances, but SKD's communication can improve. SKD can give more information in a simple language that everybody can understand. Detailed information about finances can be presented to the PPC for their information and discussion.

Why this is going on?

SKD provide information weekly and with an annual financial statement through reports in our bulletin. People know that SKD is running at a deficit because of the information that they receive. The weekly contributions are short. SKD is running this parish as a business with budgets and periodical evaluations. SKD have not been able to tackle the shortage contribution problem because SKD is always asking money for something. When the construction of the new building is finished, SKD will explain clearly to the people about financial commitment. Parishioners need to understand the necessity to support the regular expenses and the loan that SKD is going to incur to pay for the construction of the building.

Theological Reflection

The Bible has many references about money, particularly regarding tithing. SKD use the money that is collected to run the parish with all the programs that are involved. SKD has a community because it sustains a community. A responsible way of expenditures is necessary and people need to be informed where the money is spent. SKD communicates this through the parish statements, so everybody is informed. SKD has a budget that is approved by the finance committee, and this committee has periodical meetings to review the financial performance compared with the budget. This budget responds to SKD's mission and vision; however, the big problem is that SKD runs a deficit. Therefore, SKD cannot do much. People know of the deficit but still they do not give as they should. SKD needs to motivate parishioners to return a portion of their income to the church. It is a problem of education. Our theological reflection is that SKD needs to be responsible with the money of the people. SKD does a good job in practice; however, SKD's parishioners need to know how SKD manages its deficit and take ownership of this problem and contribute more.

Pastoral Planning

People need to be educated in supporting the church at the parish level. SKD did a study to address the situation that is waiting for implementation. This study will tackle the shortfall of the first collection; six dollars is what it cost to run Masses per family. The implementation of this report will be as soon SKD move to the new facility. Every pastoral group that receives money from the parishioners should present a report, indicating the use of the money received. These reports need to be of public knowledge, publicized in the church bulletin, e-bulletin, and website. SKD will have in the future other sources of income: carnival, bingo, lunches. These will be implemented in the new facility; this will help the

parish to absorb the new cost to operate. A proposal for a permanent fundraising should be presented by the correspondent committee. As soon as SKD move to the new facilities, SKD will develop a campaign to address this situation. This campaign will be based on being a steward and the responsibilities that it implies.

Question number nine: How well does our parish do the following?

Listen to the people.

What is going on?

SKD listen to its parishioners' concerns and SKD's attempts to respond to those concerns. Half of the parishioners feel that today there are channels of communication. This has been a process. The process of changing pastors generated a great deal of confusion and a divergence of opinions regarding the building of the new facility. A great number of parishioners were worried that they could not express their opinion. That is why the implementation of the town hall meetings made it possible to get things started. The second problem found is that SKD did not have a formal vehicle for parishioners to express concerns. There was no parish pastoral council. Today, a new pastoral council has been appointed. This new PPC is empowered with decision-making. Its members are able to make decisions with the different ministries under their control. The third way that has facilitated the improvement of communication was to allow personal interviews with parishioners and the pastor. SKD's parishioners today feel that they have a voice that can be expressed over these three channels of communication. This survey also helps SKD to listen to the people because they have expressed their opinion in all matters of activities in our parish.

Why this is going on?

There were not good channels of communication; SKD has tried to fix this problem with this survey, with creating the parish council, with having town hall meetings to listen to the parishioners, and with opening spaces for direct communication with the pastor. In that sense, people could express their worries and needs.

Theological Reflection

This is one of the key drivers of congregational engagement. SKD is listening to the people from the bottom up, creating channels of communication, and the PPC gave voice to the people. Theologically SKD has given voice to the voiceless in a vertical institution; SKD is trying to create horizontal structures to try to make people participate actively in the decisions that affect their lives. This survey is a proof of listening to the people, and decisions that emanated from the results reflect that SKD is listening. In participating in the decision-making process, parishioners feel that they have been heard. They commit to the parish and they develop a sense of belonging, this is not a parish; it is their parish. Pastorally and ethically, listening to the people is a good practice because it gives a voice to the parishioners.

Pastoral Planning

SKD needs to disseminate the information regarding parish council, functions, and members. Continued communication and education makes all aware of how we work in this parish. SKD needs to install and present the members of the parish council at all Masses. The SKD's pastor and the PPC will meet with different groups, empowering the pastoral council members. People know that they have the power to decide and that they do not need to come to the pastor to solve their problems. Place a "Chart" in the vestibule showing the "ORG

CHART” with pictures, phones, and emails of all members helps to inform parishioners about the parish council and its functions. Parishioners can use this communication channel to express their concerns regarding parish activities.

Question number ten: How well does our parish do the following?

Build trust within the parish

What is going on?

This is the third key driver of parish congregational engagement. Fifty-six percent of the parishioners expressed that SKD have built trust among their parishioners. Trust can be expressed in different ways: trust that administration uses monies for the right purpose, trust that their children will be protected from any harm in the different groups, and trust that counseling protects intimacy.

Why this is going on?

Good communications create trust. People are seeing the construction of the new building and trust has improved dramatically.

Theological Reflection

Trust is earned; it is not a given concept. SKD builds trust in good listening; SKD needs to build trust in the delivering. SKD needs to present the results of this research in a positive way to get all parishioners involved. The dissemination of information is very important because the more the people know, the more they will participate in the implementation of the results. Building trust is a good practice; it is very hard to earn and very easy to lose. SKD is a parish that works from the bottom up, not from the top down. Parishioners need to know that SKD understands them, and is able to respond to their concerns.

Pastoral Planning

Building trust is contemplating for a future, one after SKD moves and settles in its new location. The survey will be repeated with appropriate modifications after moving to a new facility. Everyone needs to be aware that the parish pastoral council meetings will evaluate all of the decisions that SKD is now making. Therefore, those meetings are going to be evaluations meetings. SKD must reflect more on some decisions, and it should change others. This process needs to be continually evaluated. SKD will continue evaluating, deciding, implementing, and re-evaluating again. It never comes back to the same point of departure because it is a transformation process. SKD is transforming itself, and it is changing. SKD is allowing new things to happen which must face evaluation. SKD is a parish who works from the bottom up, not from the top down. The survey is the opinion of SKD's parishioners. This is bottom up decision-making. SKD and the parish pastoral council represents parishioners, and the PPC as a body is making decisions enlightened by the information that it has obtained from the survey. SKD is listening to the people and the PPC is making decisions considering what the people think in an effort to properly address their concerns and needs. The result in the survey regarding this question is that SKD is doing a good job.

Question number eleven: How well does our parish do the following?

Reflect our parish mission and vision

What is going on?

The Catholic identity is built into SKD's practices and rituals. SKD's mission and vision are reflected in our practices because they are embedded. People might not verbalize

or not know it, but in practice, they live our parish mission and vision. SKD's parish mission and vision were designed reflecting on the life of Saint Katharine Drexel.

Why this is going on?

SKD's activities as a parish are in accord with its mission and vision. They are embedded in its practices, but SKD should communicate it better. It represents its identity; parishioners identify with SKD because they feel connected to that identity.

Theological Reflection

Here in SKD the mission statement comes alive. As an example, the youths are serving in the summer camp. Theologically they carry out the mission of the church with evangelization, and the ethical part is that SKD is faithful to the mission of the church because that is what we do in SKD.

Pastoral Planning

The parish pastoral council will approve the feasibility of a new group or ministry; new groups of ministries have to submit an application for approval. The PPC should have a form designed for submission for everyone who wants to start a new ministry. This form should contain the name of the new ministry, how many people expected to participate, its purpose, objective, and goal. Furthermore, it should include what specifically the group is going to be doing, how the group will integrate itself with other ministries, and, how this ministry will benefit the life of the parish.

The PPC approved unanimously the motion to add a 5th priority to SKD's mission statement. It would be to support the evangelization of the Church. In addition, The PPC approved removal of the period of five years in SKD's parish statement of vision and

mission, and it was proposed to include an open one. The PPC approved this motion unanimously.

Question number twelve: How well does our parish do the following?

Provide strong parish leadership

What is going on?

This is the sixth driver of congregational engagement. Eighty-eight percent of the people think there is strong leadership in the church. At the beginning of the implementation of the Participatory Leadership experience in SKD, every group and ministry of the parish had no clear direction. SKD changed the way decisions are made, empowering the people through the pastoral council so that they can solve situations at their level, eliminating many that come to the pastor's office. Today the same activities are taking place, but there are no conflicts between groups and ministries. Everybody is heading in the same direction. People think that there is a strong leadership in the parish. This leadership is the collegial group of the pastor, parish staff, and various committees and groups that have the power to solve their conflicts.

Why this is going on?

People tend to interpret leadership as the work of the pastor. SKD has been doing things differently to change this perception. It has changed from a vertical organization to a horizontal one. SKD has created channels where leadership is exercised through the empowerment of the parish pastoral council and the various committees and staff.

Parishioners need to be re-educated in this sense because they are used to seeing the pastor as being the center. This change takes time.

Theological Reflection

Running a parish is not the work of one person. Leadership is the work of the Holy Spirit prompting everyone in the parish to function as a communal organization that runs the parish. The leadership is in the ministries, the staff and the community. Leadership that only comes from the pastor is destined to fail because there is no communication and no interaction with the people of God. A leader is one who inspires people to get involved and guide parishioners to participate in the life and the work of the church. The leader is one who has the vision of the parish and communicates that vision to motivate and empower people to share that vision. The leader promotes people to take responsibilities and participate in decisions that affect their lives. In every ministry, there is much planning to do and many decisions to make. People are able to make those decisions because they are empowered to do so. They do not need to go to the pastor with every little detail. People are committed because they are empowered. Here in SKD, the vision is clear, and the parish has a good mission statement and a strong goal: build the new house of prayer. All of this has contributed to strong leadership and people can feel it. SKD is a church with direction and clear goals and the knowledge to achieve them. Theological reflection about this is that SKD guides parishioners to participate in decisions. SKD is empowering them and is returning to parishioners a right given by God: that they make decisions that affect their lives.

Pastoral Planning

This leadership question is the ninth in priorities for parish driver engagement. When parishioners feel that there is a strong leadership in the parish, they are more willing to make a connection to the parish. Therefore, it is good for the life of the parish to have leaders. SKD should have more communication about the work of the parish pastoral council and about

what kind of leadership has been implemented here in the parish. Leaders need to serve more. They need to lead genuinely, having Jesus as a model, and they need to be seen as real servants. Leaders of the parish council need to engage and energize the leaders of the ministries that are under their responsibility.

Question number thirteen: How well does our parish do the following?

Warmly welcome people when visiting the parish office

What is going on?

SKD staff try to serve everybody who walks through the door. The SKD's staff like to serve the parishioners and most of the time they leave with a positive outcome. Eighty-seven percent of parishioners, who responded to this question, say that they have a good impression, but there is always room for improvement, especially if the SKD's staff is working with parishioners.

Why this is going on?

At this moment, SKD is very limited in its infrastructure. SKD does it best with the limitations that it has. In the near future, SKD's staff will provide a better service in a more adequate environment.

Theological Reflection

People walking into the office observe a spiritual atmosphere present. The office people serve the members of this parish with strong conviction, appropriately guiding them in the right direction to solve their questions. When people come to the office, they have a spiritual need. They are looking for something, a service of the church or spiritual support. Or they are facing a crisis in their life. The parish office is an extension of the SKD's church and the SKD's staff is there to listen to the needs and tribulations of its parishioners.

Pastoral Planning

The service that the SKD's staff provides in the parish office today will improve in the new facility. SKD's offices will have a better layout, with a reception area to attend to people who come to the Church. Moreover, SKD will better communicate with a new electronic phone system for 80 lines. SKD's staff should explore the possibility of late shifts to ensure availability to people who cannot come during regular office hours.

Question number thirty-three: How effective is this parish communication?

Parish bulletin

What is going on?

SKD's parishioners express a high percentage of effectiveness (sixty-two percent) of the parish bulletin; however, the number of leftover bulletins is a problem. SKD's ushers have two problems. One is in the distribution because parishioners do not take the bulletin at the time they entering the church. Many people leave at the same time and sometimes there are people standing and blocking the space where the bulletins are placed. Bulletins cannot be seen and, therefore, remain on the table. The other problem could be the bulletin's design. People are not interested because it is not appealing. What is noted is that people do take the bulletin when special celebrations such as Christmas or Easter are announced.

Why this is going on?

The bulletin is well done, but it needs refreshing. Much information is put into the bulletin because SKD is a bilingual parish, and the bulletin is printed both in English and Spanish.

Theological Reflection

As a theological reflection, SKD communicates God and that is a good practice. In the bulletin always offers formation, scripture readings, events of the parish, and information on the different ministries. As an ethical reflection, SKD needs to be responsible with the communication to inform people correctly. Proper and true information builds trust.

Pastoral Planning

SKD is changing the company that publishes the bulletin. The SKD's staff will review the format and display information about ministries in a more appealing way. SKD should offer proper distribution racks so that people will know exactly where they can find the bulletins. In South America, there are no bulletins, so culturally the Hispanic community is not used to reading a bulletin. Therefore, SKD will need to educate people from the pulpit to get the bulletin to keep informed about the Church's activities. Ushers should handle the distribution of the bulletin after Masses.

Question number thirty-four: How effective is this parish communication?

Parish e-mail messages

What is going on?

SKD's groups have their own e-mail and their own database. This situation creates a big problem in communications. SKD is in the process of consolidating all of the e-mail addresses. The parish staff is using software "Constant Contact." All the groups and ministries need to transfer the e-mail base to the control of the parish office. SKD needs to be more exposed to the social media because of its future in communication. SKD would like an employee who will update our web page, Twitter, and Facebook every day.

Why this is going on?

The parish office still needs much work to consolidate a unique database that should be handled by them.

Theological Reflection

Same as question thirty-three.

Pastoral Planning

The parish office is actualizing the e-mail database, using software “Constant Contact,” and handling the e-bulletin.

Question number thirty-five: How effective is this parish communication?

Parish website

What is going on?

SKD launched a new website. It is beautiful and friendly to use. The idea was not to make it complicated, but peaceful. The website can be identified by SKD’s colors. SKD’s staff updates the website almost every day with new pictures and at least once a week with all of the announcements of the parish. The website has the capability of accepting on-line contributions, which has not been implemented yet. SKD’s staff needs human resource power and cannot always delegate it to volunteers because confidentiality issues. SKD’s staff is considering making an application for smart phones and tablets to implement the schedule, alert, message, and picture changes/updates.

Why this is going on?

SKD must inform the people about the new parish website. Only 35.5% take advantage of this tool. SKD must implement the on-line giving to secure their financial stability.

Theological Reflection

Same as question thirty-three.

Pastoral Planning

SKD needs to do a better job in promoting its website. The parish staff needs to create a procedure to allow the ministries to publish their information. All information will need to be screened by the parish office because of the sensitivity of information and the fact that all information represents the church. SKD parish staff needs to finish the implementation of the online donation system. It will be more effective to collect the weekly contributions from parishioners who leave for vacation. A proposal to make the procedure workable on the website will be presented to the PPC.

Question number thirty-six: How effective is this parish communication?

Signs in parish offices and worship space

What is going on?

The SKD's vestibule is overloaded with information. SKD does not have enough space. The Communications committee hung a television in the vestibule to show advances of the building construction project. SKD has much work to do in this regard.

Why this is going on?

SKD needs to organize signage with the help of the architects committee.

Theological Reflection

Same as Question thirty-three.

Pastoral Planning

The architect will design in the future building the signage. The new signage will be elegant and organized. SKD will have a bulletin board in the new church and all the announcements will be placed there. All announcements will need the approval of the office.

Question number thirty-seven: How effective is this parish communication?

Parish financial statements

What is going on?

SKD reports a yearly statement with its finances to all its parishioners. SKD does not receive any questions about this. Seventy-nine percent find it useful. However, parishioners do not understand anything about the report. The parishioners know that every week that the operating costs are in the red. SKD is borrowing from the building fund to cover the operating costs, which will be part of a loan. The Archdiocese of Miami knows SKD's financial situation and knows that the parish will have a better future once she moves to the new church. The ADOM is informed because they can see parish's balances through the computer accounting reports. The ADOM also receives the periodical financial reports regarding the building fund.

Why this is going on?

SKD needs to simplify its annual parish financial statement so that most people can understand the report even if they do not understand basic accounting principles.

Theological Reflection

The theological interpretation is that SKD needs to be transparent with the resources that she receives from our parishioners.

Pastoral Planning

The financial committee will present a new financial statement-reporting format. It will be presented to the parishioners during a Mass. Once a year the ministries who collect money will make a presentation about the use of the money collected for that ministry. The PPC agrees that all ministries will participate in the preparation of the annual budget. The finance committee is in charge of the preparation of the annual budget.

Question number thirty-eight: How effective is this parish communication?

Information about the construction project

What is going on?

Eighty-eight percent of the parishioners consider themselves well informed. The tour of the site that parishioners did was an excellent way to get well informed of the advances in the construction, and the communication committee tries to keep them informed with periodical updates.

Why this is going on?

It is important to keep the parishioners informed about the progress of the project. Keeping them informed motivates them to continue making payments on their pledges. SKD has kept them informed through the pulpit announcements, bulletin, TV, and the website.

Theological Reflection

SKD is building the new house of prayer that has united us as a community of faith. People commit their financial support to make possible the new facility that will allow the parish to work better. SKD's new location will help to have a better presence in the city of Weston. SKD has been a parish without its building and now will have a space that will allow doing better the work of evangelization.

Pastoral Planning

SKD needs to keep people informed in any possible way regarding the finishing of the building. The PPC needs to meet with the cornerstone committee to prepare the moving to the new church.

Question number thirty-nine: How effective is this parish communication?

Information about church groups, programs and activities

What is going on?

People seem to be informed about the parish activities and the groups. SKD updates this information in the webpage, but still must improve methods of communications. The better she keep the parishioners informed the better she can serve them.

Why this is going on?

Parishioners like to be informed because they want to participate. SKD needs to do a better job; the groups should generate their own information to make it public. The website will be an excellent channel to publicize information.

Theological Reflection

Keeping people informed about the church groups, programs, and activities is good because, through the work of the parish, we communicate God.

Pastoral Planning

All SKD's ministries and groups should support each other. One of the works to do together is the ministry fair. This is going to be discussed in one of the next questions because the survey contemplates a stewardship question.

Participation of the People in Parish Life – questions number fourteen to thirty two

Question number fourteen: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Special Children Masses

What is going on?

In SKD, the children's Masses are designed for the children to participate. Its purpose is not to bring the family together, but to make a connection between the pastor/parish and the children. SKD is not doing this very well. SKD needs to improve our communication between all the participants. The role of everybody has to be clear and this ministry must be considered very important.

Why this is going on?

SKD does this Mass for the children, not for the family, to create conscience between the children, the pastor, and church.

Theological Reflection

Theologically, SKD has to teach the children the Catholic faith. SKD must have a children's Mass in English every month. Having a permanent children's Mass on Sunday morning will build a family Mass. SKD could train children as lectors, and she can offer a children's choir. This would be a great way to teach the children the faith; moreover, the homily will be specifically prepared for them. This Mass should be in English because children understand better this language since they are schooled in English. The children age will be 5 to 12 years of age. Having a children's Mass in English only would leave out many children who come to Spanish Mass with their parents. The PPC needs to reflect longer on this issue, and find this good practice that benefits the children.

Pastoral Planning

The SKD's parish should continue the same format of once a month 10 a.m. children Mass in English, and 12 noon children Mass in Spanish. SKD needs to support this ministry so they can do this better.

Question number fifteen: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Children's Liturgy of the Word during regular Masses

What is going on?

There are no guidelines for this ministry. This ministry began with the first pastor as a men's ministry. This ministry needs more coordination and guidelines to assure consistency in the information that is given to the children. In the new church, children's liturgy will be performed in the area of the kitchen because the Chapel might be the crying room during the weekend Mass schedule.

Why this is going on?

This is a space for children who are familiar with the environment and with other children. They can interact instead of being quiet and still. The children understand the Gospel and create a connection with the liturgy. It is also important for parents because they can listen to the readings and the homily without distractions and know that their children are well. The children are learning what their parents are unable to explain very well.

Theological Reflection

Our theological reflection is that SKD serves the purpose of evangelizing the children. It is good practice that should be more consistent.

Pastoral Planning

In the new facility, children's liturgy of the word during regular Masses will be held at the chapel. A vote of the parish council elected that there would be no crying room until we have portable rooms. This caused much discussion, and it was agreed to the creation of an Ad-Hoc committee to decide and implement the way the chapel will serve this ministry and to determine whether the cry room could be used during the weekend Mass schedule.

Question number sixteen: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Preparing children for First Communion

What is going on?

SKD parish has a program to prepare children for First Communion. Parents want their children to receive first communion, but they do not want to participate in the program. Most of the parents do not support their children in the preparation process. The program is running well but the parents do not bring their children to Mass.

Why this is going on?

For many people, bringing their children to prepare for First Communion is a tradition that runs in the family. They rely on the church to prepare their children for first communion. Fortunately, many people are willing to volunteer helping in this preparation. SKD has eighty volunteers that function as catechists who help the religious education program.

Theological Reflection

This is part of SKD's evangelization mission. This year there were 165 first communicants. There were three celebrations of first communion Masses over the weekend.

Children knew the whole Mass, they knew all the songs for the Mass, and they showed great reverence during the whole celebration. The kids were great, and they were very organized. This is a good practice of our parish, which involved many volunteers and much work.

Pastoral Planning

SKD should be prepared for the move to the new facility where religious education ministry can expect a significant numbers of children who want to receive the sacrament of First Communion. The new facility could be a challenge because we are going to need more volunteers. The PPC should support all our ministries to be teachers of religious education. The volunteers should come from the ministries with the most committed people.

Question number seventeen: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Preparing children for Confirmation

What is going on?

SKD's program for Confirmation is a two-year preparation. The teachers do not follow a standardized syllabus and have too much room for improvisation. Religious education needs to teach the students what the sacrament of Confirmation is, in a very thorough way.

Why this is going on?

SKD offers continuous religious education for children at all levels. The sacramental classes are full. The space is the limitation. SKD has a very large young population because parents want their children to continue their religious education. These parents rely on the church for this preparation.

Theological Reflection

This is part of SKD's mission: teaching the children to receive the sacraments. Children come without knowing anything, which is good because they learn about the faith. Technology has presented a problem in how we teach them. Today, many children rely on their phone or the Internet to learn. They are developing another kind of intelligence, but they are losing much of the social skill important in their development. SKD needs to develop a better way to teach this graphic generation, who are visual and relate to things they see. SKD has to have an infrastructure that supports that kind of visual education. Religious education ministry should be prepared to receive more children for next year's confirmation classes. SKD needs to support children's social interaction because children are social people. Catholic faith is based on the love of Jesus and the love of brothers and sisters. SKD cannot lose the second part. Catholics express their love for Jesus in our love of brothers and sisters.

Pastoral Planning

SKD needs to be prepared for the new facility. Religious education ministry could have more children who want to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. The challenge would be to get enough teachers for all classes or to consolidate classes within bigger rooms. Teachers should develop skills to teach these children to socialize as part of their curriculum.

Question eighteen: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Children's religious education in general

What is going on?

The Religious education ministry noted that, here at SKD, there is a gap after the formal sacramental classes. The children come to prepare for First Communion but not for regular religious education. They come back for the sacrament of Confirmation.

Why this is going on?

SKD does not have enough space in this current building. Religious education ministry closed the 3 p.m. classes because of the problems with cars and drop off. SKD could easily accommodate 800 children at full capacity.

Theological Reflection

Religious education is important because it prepares children in the Catholic faith. There is a disconnect after communion because most communicants do not come back for the preparation for confirmation, and, when they do return must learn the basics.

In a theological reflection, religious education is very important. It is the only way that SKD's children can keep our religious practices. In an ethical way, religious education teaches children morals and values of the Catholic religion.

Pastoral Planning

Religious education needs to find ways to interest the children to return for regular religious education classes after First Communion. One way could be to send a letter informing parents that children who do not attend regular religious education classes have to attend one-year remedial classes. This will level them with the children who attended the

regular program and then they can continue their regular two years preparation for confirmation. The pastor will have a meeting with the parents of the children that are going to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion to explain its seriousness and significance of religious education for their children.

Question nineteen: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Youth Ministry Programs

What is going on?

There is a disconnect between the youth group and the parish. SKD's youth group is re-structuring. A new youth coordinator was hired. The new position started as part-time, but SKD really needs a full-time person; however, our budget constraint does not allow the position at this time. The youth coordinator is going to present a pastoral plan. Youth are not involved in parish life and there are no activities for youth. Young members should be involved in one Mass so the parish can feel their presence. There are many activities with youth involvement that parishioners are not aware of. Youth participate in retreats and meet in groups on a weekly basis according to age. The 6:45 pm Sunday Mass should be a youth Mass to make their presence better known, developing the connection that is missing within the parish.

Why this is going on?

Replacing the former Youth Coordinator took longer than it was expected, causing a rupture and a disconnection between the youth and the parish. This rupture is being fixed by the new Youth Coordinator who is re-connecting the youth with the liturgy and with parish activities.

Theological Reflection

In the theological reflection, SKD found that the youth group is good for children. SKD needs to integrate the youth in the church and its liturgies. Youth cannot function as a separate entity but must develop the sense of belonging to the parish as a parish group. They need to have formation, not in the format of a regular class but as a forum where they can express their concerns and be in a safe place to get the right information. The youth group connects with the parish but needs to keep the sense of mission.

Pastoral Planning

The pastoral planning to serve our youth here at SKD will contemplate two areas: formation and activities. First, youth must have formation not in the format of a classroom setting, but as a forum where they can propose questions and receive proper answers. In this forum they should not be afraid to ask questions. This forum will serve to encourage and secure a place to find answers. Second, they are going to have activities according to their age and will be expected to participate in the Mass. It is the parish desire to create a fun environment: programs such as going to recreational parks, going to the movies, and attending the World Youth Day with the Pope in two years. These activities will also involve ways to raise funds to finance their trips. The new coordinator will be submitting a proposal for youth activities. In addition, the youth coordinator will prepare a plan to explore the possibility of the youth participating in the Sunday 6:45 pm Mass, preparing the music and participating actively in the liturgy.

Question number twenty: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Family life programs

What is going on?

It is important to define family in order to have a clear idea of what programs are good for implementation. SKD currently has the feast day celebration, dinners, picnics, and the presentation of Keep Christ in Christmas. People value activities where the whole family can participate. SKD had an incredible participation in the feast day celebration. The perception of the programs is different for all parishioners; the perception of whether an event is important to them depends on what stage of life their family is located. Most 5:00 p.m. Saturday Mass people like to go to Mass and afterwards go to dinner with friends. Some Small Christian Communities, share their gatherings as a family, with children having their own gathering and the adults reflecting on the Word of God. At the end everybody gets together to share dinner. For young families, it is very important to participate with their children in the rituals and symbols of the Catholic religion because that defines and imprints their identity as Catholics. For those who become lax Catholics, this identity allows them to come back to church, particularly when they are by themselves. This occurs especially to young adults at the time that they are in college. People like family programs because they socialize and the people of the parish often become part of its extended family. The children that are growing in SKD see other adults as their uncles and aunts. By the time the congregation moves into the new facility, SKD should implement a cafeteria to serve coffee and donuts and regional foods in order to provide more time for socialization for the people

who attend the Sunday Masses. In conclusion, SKD has family programs but they are not as consistent as they should be. Parishioners want to establish more and better family programs.

Why this is going on?

People are interested in family programs because they keep the family together, and for the Hispanic parishioners, it provides a sense of family that was often left back in their countries of origin. SKD has an opportunity here and she needs to do more for family life. Since the community has expressed their desire to socialize in church, SKD should implement many programs such as breakfast, lunches, and monthly birthday parties.

Theological Reflection

SKD needs to reach out to people. Family life programs provide good examples of living their faith as a family. SKD will have better opportunities to develop programs that involve the whole family when we have more space in our new facility

Pastoral Planning

Community life and family life will meet with their pastoral groups that are under their umbrella and will propose family programs to be reviewed by the Pastoral Council, evaluating the feasibility for implementation once in the new facility.

Question number twenty-one: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Marriage enrichment programs

What is going on?

The only program at SKD for marriage enrichment is “Pastoral Matrimonial” and it is in Spanish. SKD has many young couples who will be married over the next few years, but she does not have programs to help them in their formation. SKD does not have anything to

offer divorced people. SKD does not want to alienate anyone. SKD has the annulment ministry. They should promote more this possibility for divorce and re-married people. Emmaus retreats offer an opportunity in time of confession. The problem is that some priests dismiss people when they know that divorced people are coming to confession. They lose an excellent pastoral opportunity.

Why this is going on?

SKD has a Spanish married couples ministry, designed for married couples in good standing with the Church, which is a spiritual program. SKD does have many marriage problems in the parish that are not being addressed. SKD needs to get to the couples that are having difficulties and bring them in touch with the well-established couples so that they can help each other. They want more of these programs to improve their marriage and to solve difficulties in marriage.

Theological Reflection

Marriage has been from the beginning of creation. Jesus blessed marriage with his first miracles at the wedding of Cana in Galilee. SKD needs to educate children of values of marriage to defend the attacks against this divine institution. SKD just have one program in Spanish, and it is for couples that are in good standing in their marriage. This ministry needs to help people whose marriages are facing problems. They need to prepare new couples who want to get married. They need to educate couples in family planning. There are many things to do in marriage enrichment programs. SKD needs to prepare leaders to lead these programs. A priest can help, but this is a lay ministry.

Pastoral Planning

The marriage enrichment ministry will propose ways to help divorced couples, marriages in trouble, and new couples who want to get married.

Question twenty-two: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Bible study opportunities

What is going on?

SKD's parishioners have expressed the need to have more Bible study programs. Fifty-four percent indicated an interest in attending Bible study classes. SKD offers Bible study classes, but the space is not appropriate. SKD is not going to have more space in the new facility because of the lack of meeting spaces. SKD can solve this problem with a portable building for ministries, but it will cost \$350,000.00 and SKD do not have the money. In summary, there is a need for more Bible classes.

Why this is going on?

Committed people want to learn more about their religion. SKD's homilies are scripture oriented and that entices people learn more about the Scripture. People who participate in Small Christian Communities also would be motivated to participate in Bible Study classes.

Theological Reflection

From the theological point of view, it is good to know the scriptures because it is God's Word. From an ethical point of view, the knowledge of the scriptures will help people to make right decisions. This is a moral good. Knowing the scripture will lead a person to good practices.

Pastoral Planning

SKD has two programs of Bible study in Spanish going on in the parish. SKD will have a Bible study program for leaders or people who want to become leaders next year.

Question number twenty-three: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Adult formation programs

What is going on?

The Right of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) is different from adult faith formation. RCIA is for adults who have not received the sacraments. The focus is in the people's reception of the sacraments and their need to understand them. RCIA initiates them in the faith and prepares them for the reception of the sacraments of initiation. Adult faith formation is the reinforcement of the knowledge that practicing people have about their religion and faith. The Emmaus retreat and the Small Christian Communities make people aware of their lack of knowledge. There are high numbers in the survey indicating need for more adult formation programs. Definitely, the hunger is there. SKD needs to implement something to respond to that need.

Why this is going on?

People want to prepare themselves in the knowledge of their faith. They want to be prepared to teach their children and to have the capacity to respond to their questions.

Theological Reflection

From a theological point of view, formation will lead to better preparation in the knowledge of the faith. That gives people a better understanding of why they do the things as Catholics.

Pastoral Planning

The Rite of Catholic Initiation for adults is an important vehicle for faith formation. This parish needs a Spanish RCIA and an English RCIA. The Hispanics of the parish represent about 80% of the parishioners. SKD needs to find somebody to cover the Spanish RCIA.

Question twenty-four: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Adult volunteers for programs serving children and teens

What is going on?

SKD has a good base of people who would like to volunteer if the parish gives them the opportunity. Emmaus ministry provides a good source of volunteers. In reality, SKD should match the skills of the people with the things that they like to do and the things that they do well. If the parish implements this philosophy, SKD would have the happiest volunteers in the world.

Why this is going on?

People at SKD want to participate, but they aren't offered a great variety of opportunities.

Theological Reflection

People who volunteer is fulfilling his/her role as a Catholic given to them in baptism. SKD's parishioners want to serve because they want to commit themselves as practicing Catholics. In the ethical reflection, SKD finds that everyone who volunteers does so because he/she wants to deepen the knowledge of Jesus in lives through service to neighbors. SKD needs to find what each volunteer can offer and match him or her with the parish needs. If

SKD does this, the parish will have a happy volunteer who can build or participate in a ministry as a disciple of Jesus.

Pastoral Planning

A person in charge of the volunteers is proposed. This person will be a member of the parish council. This new ministry would be in charge of the evaluation of new volunteers with the sole purpose of matching their natural and acquired skills, to the needs and ministries of SKD. The Parish Council approved this proposal. SKD appointed a member of the council for this position. He or she will be in charge of volunteers and will apply the tools (software) to strengthen the ministry for volunteers, emphasizing the role of discipleship.

Question twenty-five: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

What is going on?

More Hispanics come to the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament than Anglos. Exposition takes place all day Thursday. Ninety percent of the people questioned expressed interest in the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. People who usually attend are those who have no younger children. This high percentage indicates that people are very conscious regarding the Eucharist and the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament; SKD is a Eucharistic community. It is good for people who want to spend more time in adoration and contemplation to the Holy Sacrament.

Why this is going on?

SKD's parishioners come to adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. They have expressed that for them it is a great need to share time in adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament. They come because they want a spiritual relationship with God.

Theological Reflection

Catholics come to adoration as a sign of great respect for the Eucharist and as a way of contemplative prayer that is in accord with the tradition and the faith of the Catholic Church.

Pastoral Planning

SKD has a member of the parish appointed to be in charge of this ministry. There is a schedule and a sign-in book to be sure that the Holy Sacrament is never left alone. The pastor proposed a long-term goal of having a perpetual adoration in a special chapel to be built in the final Church.

Question twenty-six: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Emmaus Retreat

What is going on?

SKD's Emmaus retreat ministry organizes retreats, and they are successful. The parish has two retreats in English and four retreats in Spanish. A women Emmaus English retreat is going to do its own retreat next October.

Why this is going on?

Emmaus retreat is a conversion retreat. People want to change, and most men are motivated to attend the retreat by their spouses. Emmaus retreats also get many people

involved in the retreat as servers, and they have the opportunity to give back the gift that they have received.

Theological Reflection

The Emmaus retreat evangelizes people who have been distant in the church or have strayed from the church. As an ethical reflection, attendance makes many feel that they need to change their lives and experience a real transformation. Upon completion of the retreat, they are ready to be part of an active church. SKD needs to provide something more for the fourth day experience. The parish needs to put them to work in service as a disciple. It is a good retreat, but the parish needs to deal with the way leadership is exercised in Emmaus retreat.

Pastoral Planning

Emmaus retreat at SKD is an important instrument of conversion for people who come or do not come to church. For this reason, the PPC decided to increase the number of retreats offered each year. This will prepare us for when the parish moves into the new facility. SKD is going to grow and some people might return to SKD from surrounding parishes. The English Emmaus retreats for women and men are trying to re-group, and the parish should offer all of the support in any way possible so they can be successful in their effort to re-establish the Emmaus retreats in English.

Question twenty-seven: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Small Christian Communities

What is going on?

Here at SKD, there are old and new Small Christian Communities (SCC). The old ones have stagnated. They do not multiply and consequently, they do not grow. They just reflect on the Lectio Divina. The heads of this ministry are educating the leaders and co-leaders in leadership on how to lead a SCC. The new SCCs are very successful, and they are multiplying and fulfilling its purpose. SCC promotes belonging when they are well oriented. Parishioners find a place when they can share their faith and grow in their faith. SCCs participate in missions and serve others because of their reflections. This is a vital part of the new evangelization and has proven to be successful in the Pentecostal Church and the Evangelical denominations.

Why this is going on?

Half of the SCCs here at SKD are stuck because they do not want to multiply. It is very important for a SCC to multiply to spread the sense of mission and the meditation of the Gospel as a means to live their faith. There is a great need and Emmaus' people have an opportunity to join these SCCs. People who attend SCCs experience a feeling of fulfillment, and they feel closer to God when they read and reflect on the Scriptures.

Theological Reflection

The SCCs serve the plan of God through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. SKD needs to work hard in the SCCs. The apostles used this model at the beginning of the early church. The SCCs must have a clear concept that they are part of SKD; otherwise, they could

wind-up being a group of volunteer people that they want to grow in their faith separated from the church. SKD needs to prepare leaders that reflect this theology. This practice is good, but SKD need to deal with recommendations in the organization and the planning.

Pastoral Planning

SKD as a parish supports the formation of new SCCs. The parish is working with the leadership of the SCCs to provide effective tools to lead their communities. The heads of this ministry are also working on the multiplication of the SCCs. They are reinforcing the concept of leadership and have implemented a set of talks about leadership for all the heads of the SCCs. Parishioners who participate in the SCCs are the most attentive people at the time of the Gospel and the homilies. They come to Mass not to avoid a mortal sin, but to worship and enjoy fellowship in the process of formation.

Question twenty-eight: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Detention Ministry

What is going on?

This ministry is the fourteenth driver of congregational engagement. This growing ministry needs more structure but is doing things well because most of the parishioners who participate in it are very committed to SKD. It is a very important ministry, and it is a service opportunity for the parish. It is one of the corporal works of mercy.

Why this is going on?

Parishioners at SKD want to do something. They want to get involved. People who participate in this ministry are fully connected to the parish, the archdiocese and the Catholic

Church. This is going on because people are committed, and they want to serve in the prison ministry.

Theological Reflection

This ministry is one of the drivers that show the people to be committed. It is a good practice because it brings God to the people who cannot attend church. In the ethical reflection, it is good because it is one of the works of mercy.

Pastoral Planning

SKD as a parish is going to promote this ministry. It is a little complicated to get permits to visit the prisons. Sometime clearance can take a couple of weeks and sometimes months. SKD has the most committed people in the parish working in this ministry. SKD is going to open this ministry to the whole parish.

Question twenty-nine: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Respect life projects

What is going on?

SKD does not have projects for respect life. The Knights of Columbus conduct this ministry but outside the realm of the parish.

Why this is going on?

Catholics understand the need to support life as a sacred gift, which is a part of a Catholic's basic beliefs. Life is understood in all stages, beginning at conception and ending in natural death.

Theological Reflection

Human bodies belong to God and are the temple of the Holy Spirit. It is a moral wrong to violate the sanctity of life. SKD needs a leader to get the parish involved in this ministry.

Pastoral Planning

SKD is going to appoint somebody for this ministry. SKD is going to promote this as a ministry of the parish by advertising these activities to the parish community.

Question number thirty: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Social Justice Projects

What is going on?

SKD does not have any social justice projects. The parish has outreach ministries such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the outreach ministry. St. Vincent de Paul Society is very active in helping people in need around the Weston community. The outreach ministry is in charge of the quarterly recollection of the food pantry that is given to the poor.

Why this is going on?

People support justice. They relate to this project because they want justice.

Theological Reflection

SKD takes care of the poor because that is part of the tradition of the church. The parish tries to help people in need. People here are very generous when the parish asks for money for specific causes, always responding to and exceeding the expectations.

Pastoral Planning

Next year, once the parish is settled in the new facility, SKD will call for a town hall meeting. The parish as a community should identify problems of the community: drug and alcohol abuse, sexting, or bullying. The Parish as a community will decide what problems it must engage.

Question thirty-one: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Celebrating our annual parish gala

What is going on?

It is the major fundraiser for SKD parish. The purpose is to sell tickets to the people who are going to eat and dance; however, the profit comes from those who can bid at the auction.

Why this is going on?

It is a fundraising activity and a social event. People like to dress up and attending something formal. This activity supports the operational work of the parish by covering the shortfall that is generated in collections.

Theological Reflection

It is good practice; it is our major fundraiser of the year. SKD does it because she profits from the event. At the same time, people from SKD socialize in a Catholic environment of brother-sisterhood.

Pastoral Planning

The SKD's community needs to support our annual gala in any way possible. This is a priority for the parish to cover its financial obligations.

Question thirty-two: How interested are you in this activity or ministry for yourself or your family members?

Celebrating our parish feast day

What is going on?

SKD has an annual feast day where the parishioners celebrate one Mass with the whole community. The feast day is a beautiful space for socialization and that creates identity and community. The parish celebrates the feast day nearest the feast day of St. Katharine Drexel. The whole community participates in the celebration. Parishioners have food and a beautiful day of family sharing within a community of faith.

Why this is going on?

For SKD's parishioners it is a family event. People like to be with a group where they can socialize with all parishioners free from financial restraints.

Theological Reflection

SKD celebrates this beautiful day as a community. It is the perfect Sabbath. It is the best practice because we share as the big family of God. Everybody loves this day.

Pastoral Planning

This is a wonderful ministry. SKD as a parish supports this ministry because it builds community. It is a beautiful day and allows all members of the parish to get to know each other and to make connections among them. SKD will celebrate the next Feast Day at the new facility. It is going to be wonderful.

People Feelings of Belonging to the Parish – questions forty to fifty-three

Question number forty: Please express your agreement or disagreement:

I feel closely connected to my parish

What is going on?

People are connected to the parish because they have a strong sense of community. They are more connected to the pastor than to the bishop. This connection is the most important for a successful parish. Ministries grew up with no connection to the parish. The building of the new facility has brought them together. It instills purpose to support the building of the new house of prayer. The theme of the church campaign was simple: “Be part of God’s plan and leave your children a legacy.” Identity is being identified with your parish as your parish. The new building could affect the community because it will be a different layout.

Why this is going on?

There is a sense of community and people feel at home. They feel connected because they belong to the parish and they get involved in parish life. When people get involved, they become responsible parishioners. There is connection in the religious sense that is reinforced in the social sense; people come to worship and for socialization. They find a safe place for socialization in a religious environment. People socialize with others who share the same values. They find here an extension of the family that they left behind in their countries. For many Anglos joining the parish offers involvement. There is a cultural difference. The research created a predictive model of parish engagement. The drivers indicate that people are more likely to be engaged when they know the parish mission and vision. Knowledge builds trust within the parish, forms youth in faith, and helps to engage all.

Theological Reflection

Involved parishioners feel more closely connected to the parish. SKD's practices are faithful to the Tradition of the Church and cultures, both American and Hispanic. Multiple elements invite people to feel the parish as their home. The parish is like the early Christians: parishioners work together, suffer together, and journey together. For the Hispanic population the sense of belonging is more important because they find here a community that embraces them. The reflection of the PPC links this sense of community with Scripture. Similar to the Israelites in Egypt in the Exodus, here at SKD, parishioners have left their countries and they are here now. Parishioners are here for a reason: they have a sense of mission. SKD has the same structure of other parishes, but it is different here. Parishioners have a sense of belonging not found in other places. In SKD, there are clusters of people acting like family. This has happened because of the influence of two ministries: Emmaus and the SCCs. People start knowing each other and now relate as family. These two practices have allowed us to build community in a very particular way, building bridges and strong bonding in a very short period. People who go to Emmaus or participate in SCCs understand what it means to have a relationship with the church. The theological reflection is that people in a sense find God and a family. This is a good practice.

Pastoral Planning

I feel closely connected to my parish is one of the connectors indicating the sense of belonging to the parish. Emmaus and SCC have promoted this. SKD needs to find better ways to support the connection to the people who are willing to serve. The parish should capitalize on the desire to engage new parishioners and find new opportunities for people. That is in accordance with the new ministry that the PPC has created, "Volunteer Ministry."

This ministry is going to use an especial software to determine the strengths of the people who want to serve as volunteers. The goal is to point match people who want to participate as leaders, to the best ministry.

Question forty-one: Please express your agreement or disagreement:

I feel connected to the Archdiocese

What is going on?

There is not a good perception of the people regarding their connection to the Archdiocese. Parishioners are more connected to the pastor than the bishop. There is a lack of the bishop's presence in the parish except when the bishop comes to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Archdiocese seems to approach the parish only to ask for money. The Parish and the Archdiocese seem to be two different entities.

Why this is going on?

People care for the bishop only for the sacrament of Confirmation. They do not feel a supportive presence of the bishop. They hear from the Archdiocese, only through the Archbishop's Charities - ABCD to ask for money. There is a poor communication from the Archdiocese and a lack of presence of the bishop.

Theological Reflection

The parish complies with everything that Archdiocese mandates. The parishioners feel disconnected from the Archdiocese because Archbishop has been rarely here. Theologically, SKD does whatever is right to acknowledge that the parish is part of the Archdiocese. However, because there is no auxiliary bishop, this negative perception will not change in the short term.

Pastoral Planning

SKD did not make known the extent of what the Archdiocese has done to make the building project become a reality. Parishioners feel that they have made our parish life miserable. The ADOM wants to be sure that we will be able to pay for the debt. It costs more to build here in Weston than in other places because of the earth costs to prepare for building. SKD must make people aware of the support we have received from the archdiocese to make possible the building of our house of prayer. SKD can invite the Archbishop to the parish for celebrations and include his homilies and other writings in the website. SKD must make the presence of the Archdiocese more visible so people can connect to the Archdiocese.

Question forty-two: Please express your agreement or disagreement:

I feel connected to the Catholic Church

What is going on?

There is a high connection with the Catholic Church: Pope, Rome, Traditions. SKD is very connected with Vatican.

Why this is going on?

People are connected with the Catholic Church. Parishioners chose SKD parish because it fulfills their needs. They move to other parishes when they do not feel connected with their pastor. People who complain about money or other issues often move to other parishes. Generally, they will complain again in other parishes because they will face the same realities in other parishes. Other parishes have the same need to cover their expenses and to pay their debt. The problem can be identified as a cultural problem. People need to understand that they must support their parishes to cover their expenses. There is no government financial support. If Catholic would tithe according to the scriptures, parishes

will never talk or ask for money. SKD talks about money only to keep this parish operating. If the parish does not talk about money it would have closed a long time ago, and SKD will never build her house of prayer. The people complaining about money often have not made their pledges, and the people who commit to their pledges are fulfilling them.

Theological Reflection

People have strong feelings with the Mother Church. They feel very connected with the Vatican and the traditions of the church.

Pastoral Planning

There has been an incredible rejuvenation for the church after Pope Francis' election. People are very excited about the Vatican again. The Pope is all over the media, and he's really moving people. The social media report what he says because the people are listening to him. He is getting into the people's hearts. People are interested in what he has to offer, and they feel very connected to the Catholic Church and the Pope.

Question number forty-three: Please express your agreement or disagreement:

I know our parish mission and vision

What is going on?

The parishioners know the mission and vision in an implicit manner. It is embedded in SKD's practices. Over the years ministries have been established, stewardship has been promoted, youth ministry has been developed in a strong way and a strong identity of SKD has been established. Even though the parish has no building, there is no mention about the building in the mission statement. The mission statement is embedded in SKD's practices. The vision to build the new house of prayer would aid accomplishing SKD's mission

statement. This vision brought the community together. The parish needs to educate the people on how parishes run in the US.

Why this is going on?

Most of the people know that the parish has a mission statement. They are in some way connected to this statement with their experiences. SKD's parishioners live the mission and vision of SKD because that statement is embedded in our practices.

Theological Reflection

Theologically SKD's parishioners live the parish mission statement. It is embedded in the parish life. Living SKD's mission statement, the parish is fulfilling the work of evangelization of the church.

Pastoral Planning

This is the most important driver to be connected with the church. The PPC rose the period of the mission and vision from five years to a constant mission, and added a fifth priority: to evangelize. The parish needs to promote and support its mission and vision. SKD needs to publicize it. The parishioners know the parish mission and vision because they live it in SKD's practices. SKD needs to suggest this statement be placed in a visible space in their house so they can learn in words. SKD needs to engage people so they feel this is their house, It is very important to work in every way possible to filter this statement to all the parishioners. It is a work from all the people who are committed to the parish.

Question number forty-four: Please express your agreement or disagreement:

I try to be involved in parish life

What is going on?

There is a great rotation of parishioners. This is due to young professional families. The parish turnover affects the level of commitment and involvement that is developed over the years. Religious education is helping, but a parish school will be a plus. The people involved in religious education regularly are not always regularly involved in parish life. The parish does not have a strategy for recruiting new families. Planning is hard.

Why this is going on?

Thirty-seven percent of the respondents are ready to commit to be involved in parish life. SKD does not have the adequate facility right now. The newly built parish will have more opportunities to offer. Emmaus people are willing to commit because they feel the love of God and how much God has done in their life. They want to give something back and they are willing to commit. Some are willing to get involved but have not found something appealing. Perhaps SKD has not offered anything that they are willing to commit to.

Theological Reflection

Theologically, being involved in parish life can be expressed in a wide range of activities. Parishioners can be catechist, extraordinary minister, lector, sacristan, altar server, rosary maker, or volunteer in the office. They can participate in one of the committees, sing in the choir, be an usher, or participate in one of the missions or any other activities that the parish promotes. So being involved is trying to participate in the life of a parish in an active manner. Parishioners who get involved are part of the community, and they gain a sense of belonging. People want to be involved to practice their faith and serve. The parish has to

have a clear mechanism to connect the people who want to serve and to be able to them to be involved. SKD needs to help people define their skills they can bring and where they can use it. In that way, parishioners' gifts are appreciated, and they are put to work.

Pastoral Planning

The PPC has created the Volunteer Ministry. This ministry will implement an assessment tool to focus on the strength of the skills of the volunteers to guide them where they can feel involved and in addition fulfilled. SKD's goal is to get more parishioners involved in parish life. The stewardship committee will implement a welcoming committee, and they will have a welcoming session once a month to explain to the new parishioners about all the activities and the ministries that make up SKD. The parish will place a rack with all of the ministry information and will design a parish brochure to be placed in all public places in Weston.

Question number forty-five: Please express your agreement or disagreement:

I would attend healing Masses if they were celebrated more frequently

What is going on?

Eighty percent of the people responded to this question in the survey that they would attend if the parish offers more healing Masses. This is not only for the physically ill, but also for people who need a spiritual boost in their life, a refreshment to continue their journey.

Why this is going on?

People do not differentiate the last rites over the sacrament of the sick. These healing Masses promote a better knowledge and understanding of the sacrament. People try to avoid this sacrament because they relate it to death.

Theological Reflections

Priests distribute the Holy Oils of the Sacrament of the Sick during these healing Masses. It is a beautiful practice in the parish. People come to feel the touch of God and feel peace in their lives. They come because they need a boost in their life; sometimes they are discouraged or facing real problems and need something that helps them. Parishioners can feel the presence of the Holy Spirit working through the anointing. It definitely is a good practice at SKD, and the parish needs to make room for more celebrations like this. The first healing Mass was very spiritual even though the music ministry was not present. Music will be provided for future healing Masses so people can meditate during the anointing.

Pastoral Planning

The last healing Mass was beautiful, and there was a good turnout. It was a humble moment, a holy moment. SKD provides this service at least twice a year. The music ministry should be involved and bring one more priest to assist with the anointing. One priest is not enough for the anointing because three hundred people for one priest takes too long to complete (two hours and a half).

Question forty-six: Please express your agreement or disagreement:

We need a Spanish Mass on Sunday night

What is going on?

There is no commitment from people at the 6:45 pm Sunday Mass. The majority of those attending are Spanish-speaking parishioners who note Spanish as their first language. People prefer to worship in their maternal language. It is hard to express spirituality in another language. Half of parishioners who attend the 10:00 am Mass are bilingual speakers. There are a large number of children and youth who attend the 6:45 English Sunday Mass,

and they are more comfortable attending that Mass in English. If the Parish changed this Mass into Spanish, it could easily upset the English-speaking parishioners who attend this Mass. The 6:45 pm Mass is an overflow Mass; the last chance Mass of the weekend. People want to get in and get out; they want a quick Mass. People are asking for a Spanish Mass. The Parish needs to accommodate the English Mass to fit both Masses on Sunday evening. This issue will require more discussion.

Why this is going on?

Families with teenagers like the last Mass because they can sleep late. Attending this Mass allows parents to attend children's sport activities and come to the later Mass. A large number of parishioners from the 12 noon Spanish Mass would attend a late Spanish Mass. People would like a late Mass because they want to worship in their native language.

Theological Reflection

The need is very clear and strong; people are asking for a late Spanish Mass on Sunday. Theologically, the Parish should attend this need of the people of God according to our ability to do so. Moreover, people need to receive the sacraments in their native language, the language that speaks to their hearts. People come to the 6:45 pm Sunday Mass, but they do not participate because of the language barrier. Theologically the PPC feels that a great number of people who are attending that Mass do not understand the homily, and they are losing a very important part of the Mass.

Pastoral Planning

SKD created the 6:45 pm Mass on Sunday to attract a younger audience. This Mass was celebrated Sunday at 5:00 pm with a regular attendance of 100 people. When Mass was switched to 6:45 pm on Sundays, the participation jumped from 100 to 400 people. It became

an overflow Mass; the last Mass available in town. This Mass is celebrated in English and all younger parishioners speak English as their first language. Older parishioners would like to switch this Mass to Spanish because they feel more comfortable participating in their native language. This Mass will remain in English and the format will change to attract younger parishioners as it was primarily designed. The youth group should prepare the music and be a part of the choir; the older youth or youth leaders should do the lectors and Eucharistic ministers, and the parish should have pizza night or some event for youth to stay after Mass for socialization and making the parish a place for their meetings.

Question number forty-seven: Please express your agreement or disagreement:

We should increase our parish support for the poor in Haiti and Peru

What is going on?

People support giving to Peru and to Haiti because it is a good cause. The need is real and the parishioners respond. It needs a little improvement to better communicate the physical support that the parish does in those places.

Why this is going on?

People are aware of the poor and they want to help because they can identify with the people of Haiti and Peru. The English speaking community identifies better with local needs. They prefer to increase the support of the poor and needy of the Belle Glade community.

Theological Reflection

Theologically SKD is doing the mission of the church helping the people in need. People who go on a mission to Peru or Haiti return from these missions with a total different perspective. They go to give but returned saying that they received more than they can give.

The parish should increase this support and extend this experience to the whole community of SKD.

Pastoral Planning

SKD should increase the participation of parishioners in the missions. The parish has to make missions a parish ministry. SKD needs to publicize them more from the pulpit and increase English-speaking parishioner's participation. Each mission requires twenty-five people. Two presentations could be made from the Haiti and the Peru missions. The mission to Haiti will be in January to see the feasibility to provide water to the village of Zabo and to inspect the building of the multipurpose building. The mission to Peru is in July.

Question forty-eight: Please express your agreement or disagreement:

We should increase our parish support for the poor in Belle Glade, Florida

What is going on?

People support this cause because they see as the local support to the brothers and sisters in need.

Both the English and the Hispanic speaking parishioners support this mission. SKD has a number of programs to help the poor such as the rice bowls, the backpacks, the food pantry, and the toys for Christmas collections.

Why this is going on?

Same as question forty-eight.

Theological Reflection

The English speaking community provides more support for the help for the Belle Glade's mission. It is good to have a good balance of the mission work. If a person from the

English speaking community could lead the Belle Glade's mission, it should be fantastic. Theologically, this is the same as question forty-eight.

Pastoral Planning

Belle Glade is about a two-hour drive from the church. The parish can organize one-day missions to Belle Glade and create an awareness of the need of the poor in that area. Parishioners can serve and attend to the people of that area in their needs.

Question forty-nine: Please express your agreement or disagreement:

My Faith informs my political views

What is going on?

This is a cultural issue. Anglos express their political views while Hispanics are indifferent. Most of them do not vote so this issue makes no difference to them.

Why this is going on?

The preaching of Jesus invites people to follow him. That belief should inform parishioners' political views. Political views should be a reflection of a person's faith. The Hispanic population is not interested in politics because many of them are not citizens.

Theological Reflection

Politics should be based according to God's law. In theory, faith should inform parishioners' political views; however, there is nothing clear when about politics. The work of the church is to explain a clear position of the church and leave the people to make their own decision according to what they believe is right.

Pastoral Planning

The Parish has to expose the view of the Catholic Church to enlighten the parishioners and provide more information to them so they can cast a responsible opinion.

Question fifty: Please express your agreement or disagreement:

Our parish should be a stewardship parish, where we commit to offer our time, talent, and treasure as a return gift back to God and the community

What is going on?

Parishioners at SKD are aware of stewardship because from time to time the parish reminds them the significance of time, talent, and treasury. However, sometimes they feel this is optional if they give their time they do not have to commit monetarily. A high percentage of parishioners have a sense of what stewardship is, but they struggle to commit in all three areas. SKD does not have a very active stewardship committee, and the parish has not implemented many programs to educate people in stewardship. People who start giving their time and talent have a sense that they belong to this parish and may start providing monetary support to the parish at this time. This question is correlated with the mission and vision of the parish, and there is much hope that someday everybody will give time, talent, and treasure.

Why this is going on?

People here at SKD would like to commit if they can find an opportunity that is appealing to them. The parish is not giving this opportunity to participate. They have not found the match for them to commit. This question is correlated with question eleven: mission and vision, with the numbers are very close. The volunteer ministry has an opportunity to match the ministries that the parish is offering with the parishioners' will to commit and participate.

Theological Reflection

Stewardship is a way of life. Time, talent, and treasure are very important concepts in stewardship because everything belongs to God, beginning with the gift of life. Catholics should return to God everything as a gift. In some parishes, parishioners are asked to commit ten percent of their salary (tithe). If that concept would be applied, SKD would never have to talk about money ever because everything would be paid. Tuition in school, no fee for weddings or funerals, everything would be covered with the contributions of the parishioners through tithes. Stewardship concept is based on returning to God part of his gift to build the Kingdom. This is a concept that needs to be reinforced continually to SKD's community. The stewardship committee is very important because its role is very essential in the life of our parish community. Theologically, what God has given to people as a gift, people should be returning to Him as a gift of appreciation from them.

Pastoral Planning

The pastor and all ministries have to create an awareness of supporting the church and the concept of revitalizing stewardship. The stewardship committee must propose plans to reinforce this concept in all our activities. If stewardship is a way of life that promotes benefits for parishioners and the parish, SKD's goals should be to instill this concept to all parishioners. As the first step, the PPC must also support the reintroduction of a new parishioner welcoming committee.

Question fifty-one: Please express your agreement or disagreement:

It is important to attend Mass each week

What is going on?

Eighty-nine percent of our people who attend Mass express that it is important to them. Eight and five tenth percent believe that it is somewhat important. The parish base will always come back every Sunday because Mass has a value for them. SKD serves an average of sixteen hundred people every week. When the parish moves into the new church, SKD can probably see an increase to twenty-three hundred people every week.

Why this is going on?

Adults attend Mass in the language in which they are comfortable. The Hispanic parents take their children to the Spanish Masses. Some of these children speak better English than Spanish because they attend school in English and only speak Spanish at home. Homilies are delivered in adult language and children and teenagers tend to disconnect themselves because they do not understand. This problem is aggravated due to the fact that some parishioners have a language barrier. This poses a very important question: is SKD properly educating children in Catholic religion? The Parish should create something appealing to children and youth so they get involved in the liturgy.

Theological Reflection

Theologically, parishioners attend Sunday Mass because they need God in their lives. Parents have to find creative ways to make their children want to commit to attending Mass. Parents have to be an example for their children. It is very important for their children to see that, no matter what is going on in their lives, their parents still attend Mass.

Pastoral Planning

SKD must develop programs to explain to the people the importance of Mass. They can be from the pulpit and especially for parents that have their children in religious education. Another way of invitation for people to come to Mass is going door-to-door to invite our neighbors to Sunday Mass. SKD's major concern and effort has to be directed toward the youth. Many kids attend Mass until the age of sixteen years old. After sixteen, they can often choose not to go. When they leave home for college, they often do so without the conviction and the knowledge that they need to understand why it is so important to attend Mass every Sunday.

Question fifty-two: Please express your agreement or disagreement:

Parents of children and teens should bring their children to Mass every weekend

What is going on?

Parents at SKD agree that they should bring their children to Mass. However, when there is a conflict with school activities they often choose not to bring them to Mass. Often it is very difficult to get teenagers to attend Mass. Children with parents who participate in cell groups or Emmaus come because their friends attend. People who are not committed to church will have their priorities in the school.

Why this is going on?

This question is correlated with question fifty-one. Parents want to participate in Mass together as a family. People like to pray in their native language. Therefore, SKD has to find a balance for every family and in turn the family needs to find that balance in their family.

Theological Reflection

Same as question fifty-one.

Pastoral Planning

All the committed people of SKD parish should emphasize the importance of Mass. All the heads of the ministries should have in some way talked to their people about the importance of Mass. SKD has resources and literature to explain the Mass, especially to youngsters because they are the future of the church. Religious education instructors should organize a talk to the parents explaining to them the importance of attending Mass on a weekly basis. Go on a mission from door to door to invite people to attend Sunday Mass and finally get the youth involved in Mass by giving them responsibility.

**Question number fifty-three: Please express your agreement or disagreement:
Religious education is more important for my children than any activity from
school**

What is going on?

Same respond as question fifty-two.

Why this is going on?

Parents at SKD agree that religious education is important but if there is a conflict between religious education and an event at school, they will go to the school. The children are under much pressure to attend and they can get in trouble with the school if they do not go to the school activities. The children's loyalty will be with their sports teammates and their school. The last Sunday Mass at 6:45 pm helps sincere families to practice their faith and to attend school and sports activities with their children.

Theological Reflection

SKD needs to be creative to find a balance to assist the parents and children.

Theologically parents know the importance of religious education, but they are not ready to fight for it. Some of these children speak better English than Spanish because they attend school in English and only speak Spanish at home. Same response as question fifty-two.

Conclusions

Conclusions about themes that arise over the pastoral circle meetings

The PPC has focused on the predictors of engagement to develop the new pastoral plan for SKD. According to this statement, the vision and mission of the parish should be widely publicized. Even though this vision is embedded in SKD's practices, SKD must remind old parishioners and educate new ones. Communications play a very important role to convey this message. The Parish Pastoral Council is the mechanism by which decisions are made and communication spread. Communication allows knowing where SKD is and where the parish is heading, leading its members to transformation. The pastoral circle promotes involvement at the parishioner's level, and offers thoroughly deep reflection on SKD's religious practices. The PPC working in the pastoral circle gives voice to the parishioners and transforms the pastoral council in the voice of the people.

SKD needs to explain to their parishioners the vertical relations and horizontal relations that are functioning in the parish. SKD is now a mixture of vertical and horizontal organization. People still have the tendency to come to the head of the parish to express their problems. The right channel is to go to their representative in the PPC. SKD must disseminate the information so that, all parishioners would know how to address their problems and to whom they need to go.

SKD parish is a bi-lingual community, which is what made SKD so special. Anglos are a minority in SKD, but they show a strong sense of identity with the parish. Parishioners are very proud to belong to SKD; they show much commitment to the parish. SKD's challenge is to get more people involved. The PPC found that there is a connection between a warm welcome with a sense of community. Therefore, SKD needs to develop a new recruiting strategy with emphasis on welcoming and hospitality. People move to other parishes because they have expressed that they do not like to worship in a warehouse. This is something temporal until the parish moves into our new facility.

Ministries at SKD are one of its strengths, but must not work as an independent organization with the limited agenda. Currently, serious space problem exists. SKD will resolve this problem with the acquisition of the modular building that would give 2,600 sq. feet of meeting space. This modular building is for the use of religious education, for ministries, and for all new volunteers that would come to the parish. The ongoing campaign "Fixture, Furniture, and Equipment" will help to provide resources for this project, whose cost are estimated at \$350,000.

Every Mass in SKD is different with a different composition. The 6:45 pm Sunday Mass is an overflow Mass, and it is the last chance to get to Church on late Sunday. People have expressed the need for a late Spanish Sunday Mass because they like to worship in their maternal language. This new Mass needs more analysis because it requires another priest, music ministry, sacristans, and lay extraordinary ministers of the communion. Additionally, re-schedule Sunday late Masses with a possible new Spanish Sunday Mass at 8:00 pm.

The building of the new house of prayer has brought the community together. Everybody in the parish is involved in this project. There is the question of how the new

building will affect the composition of Masses. The PPC assumes that some people will return to the midday Sunday Spanish Mass because there will be 500 hundred more chairs, and the parking will not be a problem. SKD is a transient parish. People rotate every three to five years, especially young families. This situation affects the commitment in the parish. Therefore, a short time program to educate the people is necessary, especially for those who comes to the United States for the first time and have no idea how the Church works here in America. Newer members may need to know the differences in the governmental support that other churches receive in Latin America and the separation between Church and State that exist here in America.

Response to the first Research Question: How does Participatory Leadership promote patterns of shared responsibilities that promote excellence in parish life and pastoral activities?

Participatory Leadership is utilizing the talents that parishioners' possess. Everyone has a special talent and when the parish promotes that in participation, she takes advantage of his or her ideas. That body of collective ideas will come closer to the right answer to resolve problems in the parish or to create programs that benefit parish life. That is the advantage of Participatory Leadership. Furthermore, when people participate in the decision-making they become a part of the solution and they share the responsibility to support the success of the collective decision. These processes generate structures that support decisions that collectively are being taken in achieving the ultimate goal of excellence.

People who participate actively in the decision making process are investing part of themselves and their ideas. They care for them, support them, look out for it, and remain

loyal to those decisions because they are part of them. The leader has to delegate authority to the group in pursuit of excellence.

Asking people their opinion in matters of the parish activities creates patterns of shared responsibilities when we consulted parishioners in regards of thing that concern them. When it is time for the elaboration of the pastoral planning, parishioners are involved in the decision-making because their voice is heard through the PPC. Participatory Leadership empowers parishioners, to share responsibilities. Members feel that ownership leads them to responsibility. Participatory Leadership is managing from below because the parish is listening to the parishioners. This is a new way of conducting the business of the church. SKD is creating a sense of shared responsibilities where everybody is committed to the outcome. It is a communal commitment.

The promotion of patterns of shared responsibilities is a consequence of the participation of a diverse number of parishioners that gives everybody a better understanding of the life of the church, its work of evangelization and the responsibility that parishioners assume when they take ownership of the parish. A responsible parishioner is involved in the life of the parish through Participatory Leadership.

Response to the Second Research Question: How does Participatory Leadership affect parish community life, at the level of commitment and involvement that parishioner have in their parish?

Participatory Leadership creates the awareness that parishioners belong to a parish and SKD promotes participation among their parishioners. Sometimes, it is hard to commit to the parish because people do not know what is involved, but once they do, they are no longer a part of the problem but a part of the solution. Participatory Leadership generates

opportunities to participate and make commitments in the work of the parish and in the mission of the church. It creates a sense of community by allowing one to see themselves as a member of the parish, working for God. It gives parishioners a Catholic identity. Parishioners reaffirm that they are somebody for God and for the people that they are serving.

Parishioners have expressed their desire to participate and get involved in parish life. They want to live as a community of faith with people who share common things. They want to share their ideals, their beliefs, and to experience a community of believers with common needs and difficulties. They want to learn how to cope with problems in life and to live their faith. Giving the opportunity to the people to express their concerns and needs will produce a great impact in commitment and involvement.

Through Participatory Leadership SKD is empowering parishioners to make things better, allowing them to participate in the life of the church and enrich the life of the community. Parishioners feel motivated to participate because of an invisible but strong structure of belonging that is translated in ownership of parish. The role of communication is vital in this process. The communication must travel in two ways between the religious and the laity establishing a common denominator. The more this communication is fluid the more a sense of ownership will be established, because parishioners' ideas are heard and implemented. The Holy Spirit illuminates these communications because the parish is communicating the work of God. When the parish gets people to work, parishioners not only feel that this is my church, but "we are the church." Parishioners feel that they are the body of Christ, and they want to care for it and work for it. In the end, empowering parishioners gets them involved and committed to participate in the life of the church, enriching the community of faith.

In conclusion, the more parishioners participate in the work of the church, the more satisfaction they get from the parish; the better organized they are the better they can serve. SKD helps families to grow their children and, in the process, they are developing a Catholic identity. Therefore, Participatory Leadership affects parish community life at the level of commitment and involvement that parishioners have in their parish.

Response to the Third Research Question: How does Participatory Leadership change parishioners' sense of parish identity?

People like to come to church because they feel that they are part of this community. People come to Mass by choice and they are here most of the time. These people have made a connection with the parish; hence, they are engaged. These people represent an asset to the parish. SKD has given the parishioners a fantastic experience of community. People are attracted to SKD and the numbers in the survey are validating these conclusions. When people first come to the USA, they have no family, or when they move from another state because of work, they feel socially isolated. If they are religious men or women, the first thing that they do is to seek the Church, and this process has transformed SKD parish into a center of social activity. People come here to relate to each other in a safe environment. After Masses people stay in church for a prolonged period. People find in SKD their extended family that they left behind. They find here activities for all the family. The parish provides ministries for everything and the youth have developed a strong group. Parents will go where the children want to go. Families committed to SKD have transformed their lives and found new friends. Their social lives revolve around the social life of the church. SKD is doing something well and should capitalize upon this success and replicate it for the benefit of other parishes.

Participatory Leadership opens up opportunities for people to commit and to do more for the parish by generating identification and a sense of belonging to the parish. Implicitly education lets the people know how to participate and how to get involved.

Participatory Leadership opens a channel of communication in both ways: horizontal and vertical. This new way of communication, helps the people increase their sense of participation and belonging. People who participate in the decision making of the parish will support that decision because it comes from the bottom up. Through the PPC, the parish is giving a voice to the parishioners: they can express their needs, and now these needs are PPC's concern. People's opinions are important, and they are addressed in the PPC.

In that sense, Participatory Leadership is a transformative experience because it increases the parishioners' personal level of participation and commitment. Parishioners are transformed by this experience because they have moved from a vertical structure to a mixed one where the horizontal communication feeds the vertical communication and all concerns are addressed at the proper level. People who participate in the PPC are empowered to make decisions, and they are proving that more participation leads us to a stronger sense of identity.

Participation reinforces identity, creating a strong bond between parishioners and the parish, concepts that Participatory Leadership promotes.

CHAPTER SIX: RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter will analyze the transformational experiences of the members of SKD PPC who participated in the research study. They will bring their experiences in the effect of Participatory Leadership in Parish life, their impression regarding their participation in the pastoral circle, and their reflection of parish practices and parish need for a pastoral plan. They will bring their views in terms of Participatory Leadership and its effects on feelings of parish belonging and parish engagement. The SKD PPC will bring their assessment of the effect of Participatory Leadership and the effect in the sharing of responsibilities in pursuit of excellence in parish life. Moreover, they will render their opinions in matters of Participatory Leadership: how it affects parishioners in terms of commitment and involvement in parish life, and how it promotes identity among parishioners, how it works within the parish and how it fosters a sense of belonging to the parish. Finally, the effects of Participatory Leadership will be analyzed in light of the ethical and ecclesiological considerations.

Transformational Experiences in Participatory Leadership

This section brings the perspective of the people who participated in the research. The members of the PPC contributed in both phases of the research. They were an active part in the second phase, participating in the pastoral circle and the planning session on Participatory Leadership. The PPC's members answered an evaluation questionnaire (Appendix IV) at the end of the research sessions. Seventeen people were involved in the sessions; however, only fourteen returned the questionnaire. There were seven questions, some requesting support with a passage from the Bible to relate the work of the PPC in a theological manner.

The first questions: Has Participatory Leadership changed your perception about how a parish should work? What kind of Bible passages best reflect what we have done? Please elaborate. A wide range of answers provided greater understanding of the concept of Participatory Leadership.

Participatory Leadership broadens the experience of participants changing their perception of how a parish should work. One of the research members noted this: “The Participatory Leadership exercise has definitely broadened my perspective as to how a parish should work.” Participatory Leadership moves a parish from a strictly vertical structure to more horizontal structures. He/she remarks this aspect of Participatory Leadership: “I thought of church leadership/governance as more vertical and to some extent inaccessible to laity.” He/she further notes how participation leads to transformation: “for me, it was a transformational experience to be able to contribute to how parish activities are planned.” He/she also highlights how Participatory Leadership gives voice to the parishioners: “it was certainly a big responsibility to speak for hundreds of fellow parishioners.” Moreover, he/she emphasize the role of the PPC interpreting the parishioners’ will to inform parish decisions resulting in a stronger leadership to set out for parish success: “in a sense, we were being interpreters of our parish’s will. By leveraging parishioners’ opinions to inform parish decisions, the leadership of our pastor gets stronger and our parish is set for greater success in fulfilling its mission to evangelize.” The passage of the Bible that best supports this affirmation is Proverbs 11:14.¹⁴

Participatory Leadership gives voice to the parishioners, and this voice allows parishioners to participate in the decisions that affect their lives, this is expressed by one of the participants in the research: “yes, it is important that the people have a voice, a say in the

¹⁴ For lack of guidance a people falls; security lies in many counselors.

life of a parish.” He/she further adds, “Participatory Leadership allows the people of the parish to have that voice.” Moreover, he/she remarks that parishioners have gifts received from the Holy Spirit to share for the good of the community. He/she writes: “the community is the body of Christ, everyone is important; everyone has gifts that can be used for the wellbeing of the entire community.” This is echoed in the Scripture passage from 1 Corinthians 1:10.¹⁵ Moreover, he/she remarks that participation in the decisions that affect the life of the community is quoted several times in the Old Testament (OT): “There is a number of quotes in the OT where the people are consulted so they can decide on their destiny.” The passage of the Bible that describes this is in Joshua 24:15-16.¹⁶

Leadership involves influence. The attitudes and behaviors of leaders affect others around us. Everyone is subject to change and improvement through the inter-relationships of SKD and fellow parishioners. Leaders must recognize and accept this fact to exercise better their mission and to help others to know the love of Christ. Most parishes have a centered pastor model as a structural way to conduct business; in this regard, one of the research team member’s opinion stated: “the Catholic Church has always worked with a vertical structure where the pastor makes all the decisions concerning parish life.” The pastor alone made the decisions and he communicates them from the top-down: “He communicates this to the staff, different ministries and the faithful.” This central leadership model implies that the pastor is in charge of everything and parishioners follow his decisions. He/she shared: “This implies that the pastor, in addition to his pastoral duties is aware of the multiple little administrative

¹⁵ “I urge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose”

¹⁶ “If it is displeasing to you to serve the LORD, choose today whom you will serve, the gods your ancestors served beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose country you are dwelling. As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.” But the people answered, “Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods.”

details that undermine his time and drain his energy.” Further, he/she states: “Participatory Leadership brings a new and different concept. It promotes the parishioners’ expressions of their worries and ideas. The PPC collects and presents these parishioners’ expressions for discussion in the development and planning of the activities of the parish.” This participation lightens the workload of the pastor as this research member expresses: “This not only brings together the views and wishes of the parishioners, but the parish priest can focus more fully on his pastoral work.” The Scripture passage from Ephesians 4:16¹⁷ relates to highlighted this idea. Another research participant shares this idea as it is expressed as: “Participatory Leadership allows the pastor to re-focus in his core ministry, which is being close to the parishioners through the sacraments.” He/she adds, “... this allows the pastor to delegate administrative responsibilities to the laity, especially, dedicated ministries and councils within the parish.” The verse of the Bible that reflects this point is Acts 6:2.¹⁸

Participatory Leadership works for effective democratic communications, providing a framework to allow an efficient way of parish work. One of the research participants articulated this: “Participatory Leadership has provided the theoretical framework to offer that understanding of an efficient way of parish work.” He/she further writes, “the passage from 1 Corinthians 12:12-31¹⁹ shows a solid image of the way a parish should operate.” He/

¹⁷ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body’s growth and builds itself up in love.

¹⁸ So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, “It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table.”

¹⁹ As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. Now the body is not a single part, but many. If a foot should say, “Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body,” it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. Or if an ear should say, “Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body,” it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended. If they were all one part, where would the body be? But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I do not need you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I do not need you.” Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary, and those parts of the body that we

she adds, “following the analogy of the body the most essential component to having the body function properly is effective communication from each part.” This communication allows proper function of all parts, especially in a realm where parishes operate. They need effective communication to achieve a common goal, where all parts are of equal importance and everybody works to build up the Kingdom of God. He/she states, “Participatory Leadership when applied at its best offers us the tools to function as a parish where all are important and indispensable to accomplish the mission.” Participatory Leadership changes the pastor-centered model, into a concept of an articulate body. One of the members of the research group expresses this as follows: Participatory Leadership “provided an alternative model to compare and contrast against the more traditional pastor centered model.” He/she further comments: “in my opinion, most people-myself included – believe that the pastor-centered model is the prevailing model in most parishes.” He/she argues, from a biblical point of view, the pastor-centered model reminds the biblical patriarch style prevalent in the readings of the Old Testament. He/she writes, “a vertical structure, where a patriarch makes most of the important decisions, which are then passed-on to the rest of the group.” Participatory Leadership articulates vertical and horizontal structures into an organization where communication is the integrative factor. He/she describes this: “the Participatory Leadership model brings to mind St. Paul’s notion of “One Body” made up of many parts

consider less honorable we surround with greater honor, and our less presentable parts are treated with greater propriety, whereas our more presentable parts do not need this. But God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part that is without it, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another. If [one] part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy. Now you are Christ’s body, and individually parts of it. Some people God has designated in the church to be, first, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers; then, mighty deeds; then, gifts of healing, assistance, administration, and varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work mighty deeds? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts.

working together. This is expressed in 1Corinthians 12.”²⁰ Another research participant shares this opinion as follows: “traditional parishes are centrally managed by a pastor who decides everything based on his own perception.” He/she further writes, “Participatory Leadership is a call from our pastor to people to participate, to make things better together, and to complement him. It is a great idea; it is what good leaders do: welcome good help.”

Participatory Leadership promotes the sense of community belonging that involves the entire parish as expressed by one of the participants in the research study: “Participatory Leadership promotes a sense of community belonging that engages the entire parish.” The best passages that support this affirmation are in Acts 2:43-47.²¹ This is re-affirmed by the opinion of another research team participant who writes about the importance of participation in parish life, “I always thought that participation is critical and much more in our spiritual life. God invites us always to participate, even though salvation is individual, we live our faith in community, and it is in the community of faith where God’s plan is developed.” He/she further adds, St. Paul reminds us of this in Philippians 2:3-8.²² Moreover, 1 Peter 5:2-4²³ tells us which should be our attitude in the community, especially in parish life. Another

²⁰ Same as note 19.

²¹ Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one’s need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

²² Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but [also] everyone for those of others. Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, she humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

²³ Tend the flock of God in your midst, [overseeing] not by constraint but willingly, as God would have it, not for shameful profit but eagerly. Do not lord it over those assigned to you, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is revealed, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

research participant who writes as follows complements this affirmation: “Participatory Leadership creates a sense of deeper involvement in parish daily life.”

Participatory Leadership generates a synergy of ideas that uses people’s talents to the service of the community with a quality that is impossible to achieve by one person. One of the research members describes this: “we have demonstrated the value of working together to include a broad range of ideas.” The best passage of the Bible that describes this affirmation is in Romans 8:31.²⁴ Another member of the research team reinforces the idea that Participatory Leadership promotes teamwork. At the same time, it serves as an instrument to facilitate communication, opening channels that allow listening to parishioners in an effective way regarding the problems and concerns of the community. He/she describes this as follows: “as a community, our goal is to join forces as a team, using the maximum potential of skills provided to us by God, acting through our members on behalf of the community. As leaders, we have to listen to our community and make things that align with their expectations.” The Bible’s passage in 1Corinthians 1:10²⁵ and Ephesians 4:16²⁶ reflect the above mentioned. This concept of teamwork that is highlighted in Participatory Leadership, using the talents of parish’s members for the good of the community, helps priests to cover a wide range of managerial skills that they have not been trained for. They have to deal with this reality every day. One member of the research expresses this as follows: “Bishops put a significant degree of authority and responsibility on the pastor for effective functioning of a parish. Seminarians are not taught any particular forms of management.” He/she further adds, “Therefore, most pastors manage from the top down.” He/she further explains that Participatory Leadership allows the talents of the parishioners to flourish. It is a model that

²⁴ What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

²⁵ Same as note 15

²⁶ Same as note 17

has not been broadly effectively used in the church. He/she assert that in 1 Corinthians 12:12-31²⁷ St. Paul reminds Christians that they cannot have a true community unless each of them shares in its life, placing their talents at the service of others.

Participatory Leadership is inclusive, allowing representation of all the members of the community in the PPC. This allows the different groups that constitute the parish to express their points of view in decisions that affects their lives. One of the participants of the research expresses this as follows: “everyone’s opinion is valid as they represent different groups in the church.” Genesis 1:27²⁸ reflects the above. Therefore, Participatory Leadership allows representation of every one of the different groups in the church.

Participatory Leadership is a way of life where you need to adapt and live according to its principles, giving you a new vision about how parishes should work. It is seen in the expressions of one of the research team: “I have a vague perception in how a parish should work. However, after being involved with the different events, groups and activities, has made me realize how intensive and dedicated you need to be to accomplish the different assignments.” He/she further adds, “since all this work is voluntary and they need to be incorporated in your daily life.” Therefore, Participatory Leadership is a way of life.

The second question that each of the members of the PPC reflected upon deals with the application of the pastoral circle and the effects of leadership in the parish. The questions posted are, “has the participation in ‘The Pastoral Circle’ transformed your perception of leadership in parish life?” What kind of Bible passages best reflect what we have done?” They responded with various ideas and insights. These ideas allow formulating some important notions about the pastoral circle and the parish leadership.

²⁷ Same as note 19

²⁸ God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

The Pastoral circle highlights the service that the PPC brings to the community, dealing with parishioners' problems and formulating possible solutions to these problems. One of the members of the research team expresses this: "The Pastoral circle is essential, as its root word signifies, pastoral," he/she further stresses that service is the reason of the pastoral circle as it is the PPC: "when we say pastoral circle and pastoral council what we are intending to say with the adjective pastoral? In my understanding we are referring to service." He/she further adds, "I see the adjective pastoral as referring to a council that understand its mission as service and to a circle a methodology of working that should facilitate the act of serving." He/she states that service is to render to the needs of parishioners, "the pastoral circle has aided us in seeing the necessities of the parishioners so that we may better serve them." The passage of the Bible that best reflects this is Mark 10: 42-45.²⁹ Another participant in the research team agrees with the above mentioned: "from the beginning of creation, God invites man to participate in his plan of salvation." He/she further writes, "In Mark 10:42-45³⁰ we can see that the same Jesus invites us to be leaders within the service." He/she states that God presents Himself as a model of leadership: "it makes clear how the leadership model should be. It is from this model that our church's foundation is established. God manifests Himself as one and indivisible "team" in the revelation of the Holy Trinity."

²⁹ Jesus summoned them and said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

³⁰ Jesus summoned them and said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

The pastoral circle promotes that the vision of the church reaches all levels of the life of the parish. One of the participants in the research team manifests this: “it seems very important to bring the pastoral vision at all levels of the parish. The pastor cannot permeate the pastoral vision at all layers in the parish.” Pastoral Leadership allows this vision to reach all levels of parish life. This has a double effect: one side of the parish knows the vision that leaders convey to guide parishioners where the parish wants to be, the other parish side sees well-intentioned parishioners’ agendas, in advancing their ministries, impede the needs of the parish. He/she remarks, “I think there have always been parishioners who want to help the priest in his work, sometimes bringing their own agendas. This model of Participatory Leadership would help leaders have a clear line of where the parish should go.” This vision is captured in 1 Corinthians 1:10.³¹ On another note, the pastoral circle might not work in parishes that are not willing to have open discussions and have no leadership model that allows participation of parishioners in core decisions in the life of a parish. One of the participants in the research expresses this: “the participation in the pastoral circle does not change my view of parish leadership because every parish has its own chemistry. I see this reflected in the Psalm 107:6.”³²

The pastoral circle works by shaping ideas and modeling solutions in a spiral way, transforming people who allow the circle to work on them. One of the participants in the research expresses this: “I noticed that my ideas were refined and polished, (and sometimes also debunked for good) through the exchange with my fellow parishioners and our pastor.” He/she further reflects on the personal effect that the pastoral circle has in his/her life, “I believe this kind of exchanges not only makes our parish better, but also makes us better

³¹ Same as note 15

³² In their distress they cried to the LORD, who rescued them in their peril.

individually, as Christian Catholic, men and women.” The Bible passage that best reflects this kind of leadership is in Proverbs 27:17.³³ Another research member complements this thought as follows: “participation in the pastoral circle has been an extraordinary opportunity to experience the process first hand.” He/she adds, “rather than a transformation of perception it has afforded me the chance to experience how a different leadership style can be implemented in a parish setting.”

The pastoral circle allows reviewing a wide range of ideas for the benefit of the community moving from a one-man operation to different points of view. One of the research’s participants expresses this: “instead of being a ‘one man operation’ the parish is bound to be a more participative structure where different points of view and priorities might be heard and discussed.” This approach breaks the cycle of small groups or individual spiritualities to impose their agendas into the life of a parish. He/she expresses this as follows: “that opens the opportunity to be cohesive and coherent and to avoid the temptation of having ministries in the Church that become isolated, like small kingdoms.” The best biblical passages that reflect this are Exodus 18:21-22.³⁴ Another participant in the research reinforces this concept: “God supplied us with talents to utilize them for the best of all.” The Bible’s passage that best reflects this is in Psalm 46:2.³⁵

The pastoral circle allows a better understanding of the concept of Participatory Leadership, calling men and women in good standing with the church to support the pastor in the administration of the parish. One participant expressed this in the following statement:

³³ Iron is sharpened by iron; one person sharpens another.

³⁴ But you should also look among all the people for able and God-fearing men, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain, and set them over the people as commanders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. Let these render decisions for the people in all routine cases. Every important case they should refer to you, but every lesser case they can settle themselves. Lighten your burden by letting them bear it with you!

³⁵ God is our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in distress.

“the pastoral circle has helped me to understand that in order to help the pastor, a representation of laity in the leadership is needed to help carry the load of the parish.” These lay people appointed to help the pastor need to be in good standing with the church. He/she further adds, “the verse of the Bible’s passage that reflects this point is in Acts verses 6:3,³⁶ that shows that this group or council not only should be in good standing with the church, but most importantly, respected and recognized by parishioners.” One of the participants in the research team complements these thoughts pointing out the responsibilities and the seriousness of being in a leadership position, and the special characteristic of a leader who leads by example. He/she explains this as follows: “when you lead a ministry, the perception of your position needs to be taken seriously.” He/she adds, “I had to deal with many people and each had a different perception in how to do things.” He/she further writes, “I learn that you need to treat everyone the same way as you would like people treat you, with respect.” He/she states, “you need to set by example and pay special attention on your actions inside or outside of the church, no matter where you are, you represent your parish.”

The pastoral circle allows participants to express different points of view, even personal motivations that could be contrary to the participatory model promoted by the pastor. Participatory Leadership could help transform this situation. One of the participants expressed: “the pastoral circle indeed has changed my perception.” He/she further adds, “I have discovered that, despite that our pastor is promoting an inclusive and open style where more people can participate and use their skills on behalf of the parish, there are people who believe in smaller groups (less inclusive).” He/she further states, “Participatory Leadership should help to transform this situation, which is ultimately the Lord’s wish, as clearly said in

³⁶ “Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task.”

Proverbs 16:9.”³⁷ Another research participant reinforces this though stating: “the outcome of this practice should be a cohesive ministry life, reflecting the mission and vision of our parish.” He/ she adds, “I can relate this answer to the Gospel of Mathew in verses 20:26³⁸ and in Philippians 2:3.”³⁹

The pastoral circle encourages responsibilities at different levels of the structure of the parish. One of the research participants’ opinion is as follows: “the significant change that I have noticed is the distribution of the responsibility for each of the church ministries spread out over the overview of various pastoral council members.” He/she adds, “this first effect is fewer people seeking the pastor’s attention for approval and direct input on all matters taking place in the church.” He/she further adds, “The PPC agendas run more smoothly with less committee discussion taking place.” He/she states, “we see in Luke 22:35⁴⁰ that in all we do, we must trust Jesus that He will supply for all our needs.” Another research participants’ opinion reinforces this thought. He/she stated, “the pastoral circle has brought about a commitment level unlike any I have ever seen. Everyone wants to participate and have their ideas heard.” The verse’s Bible that supports this statement is from Acts 6:2-7.⁴¹

³⁷ The human heart plans the way, but the LORD directs the steps.

³⁸ But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant

³⁹ Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves

⁴⁰ He said to them, “When I sent you forth without a money bag or a sack or sandals, were you in need of anything?” “No, nothing,” they replied.

⁴¹ So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, “It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task, whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” The proposal was acceptable to the whole community, so they chose Stephen, a man filled with faith and the Holy Spirit, also Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas of Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles who prayed and laid hands on them. The word of God continued to spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly; even a large group of priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

The third question that each one of the members of the PPC has reflected upon deals with SKD' practices. They were asked: has a thorough reflection of our pastoral practices in the parish allowed us to develop a better pastoral planning? What kind of Bible passages best reflect what we have done? They answer with various thoughts that allow advancing the understanding of the Participatory Leadership concept and its effects in pastoral planning.

The reflection in our pastoral parish's practices leads us to emphasize the need for a pastoral plan. The identification of problems and priorities require us to produce and execute a pastoral plan. One of the research participants exposes this: "It has helped to identify our issues and the need to have a plan." He/she remarks on the importance of the identification of critical areas and the need to outline a plan for implementation and control: "we have identified critical matters and areas for improvement." He/she further adds, "Outlined resources and actions needed to get matters resolved, timing for execution, responsible parties, and a control process to measure progress." Proverbs 21:5⁴² supports the need for such a plan.

A pastoral plan should come from the priorities generated by the reflection on the pastoral practices of a parish. The parishioners' views are an important argument to consider at the time of a pastoral plan's elaboration. One-research participants' opinion is as follows: "Pastoral planning should come from the practices agreed upon by the PPC in accordance with the information received from the community." Acts 15: 4-9⁴³ provides the support for

⁴² The plans of the diligent end in profit, but those of the hasty end in loss.

⁴³ When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church, as well as by the apostles and the presbyters, and they reported what God had done with them. But some from the party of the Pharisees who had become believers stood up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and direct them to observe the Mosaic Law." The apostles and the presbyters met together to see about this matter. After much debate had taken place, Peter got up and said to them, "My brothers, you are well aware that from early days God made his choice among you that through my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness by granting them the Holy Spirit just as he did us. He made no distinction between us and them, for by faith he purified their hearts.

the above statement. The thought of another research participant reinforces this idea: “pastoral planning comes from addressing needs and priorities identified in our parish. The PPC address the needs being conveyed by parishioners and the prioritization of them.” The verse of the Bible that reflects this point is in Acts 6:1⁴⁴. Another research’s participant shares this point of view: “I think this methodology can help us do a more authentic read of the needs of the community.” He/she argues that after the identification of the needs, the next Christian step is cross this information with Jesus’ life: “It is only in the parallel of the life of Jesus that we can develop better pastoral planning.” He/she reflects upon Ephesians 4:15-16.⁴⁵

A pastoral planning based upon the reflection of parish’s practices promotes better relations within the parish. One of the research participants’ expresses this idea: “we have asked our parish families to inspire us to create a plan to promote better relationship within our church.” He/she reflects on the Scripture passage from Isaiah 5:19.⁴⁶ Another participant in the research team expresses that communication is very important in this regard because from there, participation at all levels begins. He/she stresses, “Communications are vital and encourages to participate.”

This reflection on parish practices helps create a situation where people can perhaps better discern the movements of the Holy Spirit to inspire the PPC as it generates a pastoral plan in contemplation of the fullest well-being of the entire community. One of the research participants generated this concept: “engaging in a review of how we operate has led to

⁴⁴ At that time, as the number of disciples continued to grow, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.

⁴⁵ Rather, living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body’s growth and builds itself up in love.

⁴⁶ Let him make haste, let him speed his work, that we may see it; on with the plan of the Holy One of Israel! Let it come to pass, that we may know it!

several good ideas that we are currently implementing in our pastoral planning.” He/she reflects upon the Scripture passage in Romans 8:38-39⁴⁷. Another research’s participant shares this idea: “I believe that our pastoral practices have allowed us to be better prepared and communicate more thoroughly than before we began the process.” He/she further adds, in the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians 4:1-15,⁴⁸ “he invites them to become a mature community, capable of being led by the truth, and of building itself up through love.”

The composition of the PPC is comprised of a multidisciplinary team of all levels of backgrounds that enriches, and benefits the creation of a good pastoral plan. One of the research participants has formulated this concept: “what we have done is engage a multidisciplinary team with different backgrounds, experiences and talents that represents our parish to put together a plan in collaboration.” He/she further adds “by doing this, the final plan is definitely much better than what it could have been without this exercise.”

Finally, he/she adds, “the Bible passage that, in my opinion, reflects this is Ephesians 4:11-12.”⁴⁹ Another research’s participant shares this impression: “we were breaking down and analyzing in depth things that work and our weakness.” He/she adds, “a team of professionals with different skills and perspectives did this.” Further, he/she adds, “this diversity of talents

⁴⁷ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

⁴⁸ I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore, it says: “He ascended on high and took prisoners captive; he gave gifts to men.” What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended into the lower [regions] of the earth? The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ, so that we may no longer be infants, tossed by waves and swept along by every wind of teaching arising from human trickery, from their cunning in the interests of deceitful scheming.

⁴⁹ And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

and experiences made us reach thoughtful conclusions and a good pastoral plan.” He/she notes that this pastoral plan is in the process of implementation, according to the priorities established on it. 1 Peter 4:10-11⁵⁰ reflects the above mentioned.

One of the participants in the research team argues that this exercise is a good implementation of the concept of Pastoral Leadership and the effect is the elaboration of a good pastoral plan that collects the pastoral needs of the parishioners and brings responses to these needs. He/she writes, “I believe that the review process which recently took place in the parish was both well documented and thoroughly analyzed.” He/she adds, “I feel it was an excellent implementation of the Participatory Leadership model resulting in a pastoral plan that is responsive to the needs of the community.” Finally, he/she adds, “The thorough reflection process in the quest for a better pastoral plan points to the renewal of mind mentioned in Romans 12:2.”⁵¹

The fourth question posted to each one of the members of the PPC tries to articulate the effect of Participatory Leadership in matters of belonging and engagement. The question that they answered is, “do you feel that Participatory Leadership will generate a deep sense of belonging and engagement among parishioners?” What kind of Bible passages best reflect what we have done? They answered to this question expressing a variety of ideas that clarify the effects of Participatory Leadership in parishioners’ feelings of belonging and engagement.

⁵⁰ As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace. Whoever preaches, let it be with the words of God; whoever serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen

⁵¹ “Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.”

Participatory Leadership assigns roles to parishioners to better use their talents and gifts for the well-being of the community of faith. The effect is that parishioners increase their sense of belonging and engagement because they are an active part of the community of faith. One of the team's research members expresses this as follows: "I think that the strength of Participatory Leadership lies in the fact that it gives proper role to members of the parish." He/she adds, "each member is shown that they have talents that are necessary for the construction of a stronger and more Christ-like community." Further, he/she adds, "Participatory Leadership allows people to put their talents and gifts to the service of this common goal." He/she states, "this increases the sense of belonging and engagement." He/she explains: Galatians 3:26-28⁵² "mirrors the truth that we all are one in Jesus, equally capable of serving each other with our different gifts and talents. This view, then does not oppress anyone but rather it uplifts them and empowers them."

One of the participants emphasizes that Participatory Leadership, for success, has to provide plenty participation of all parishioners with the freedom to offer ideas. He/she argues, Participatory Leadership needs to be implemented without boundaries and with ample participation of all parishioners, with the freedom to provide ideas (to resolve matters) and implement them. He/she writes, "Focused on what they can do, what they can add, the benefit they can bring. If we do so, then Participatory Leadership will actually have served its purpose." Galatian 3:28⁵³ bring this sense of openness in the community. Another participant of the research team reinforces the concept of belonging as follows: "The bigger the community, Participatory Leadership becomes more necessary." He/she states, "so that most

⁵² For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

⁵³ Same as note 52

feel the commitment and responsibility to be an important part of something big like our Catholic Church.” He/she further comments, “Christianity is a pursuit of holiness. It is a promise that is ours and the call is to get it.” This is mirrored in Philippians 3:12-14⁵⁴. One of the research team participants complements these thoughts: “I think we should involve as many people as possible in leading different programs.” He/she adds, “that way the parishioner is committed and by spending time with each other, will form a deep bond with other members of the parish.”

One of the top priorities mentioned continuously for a successful implementation of the Parish Leadership model in parish life is communication. Without it, engagement and commitment will not be effective and cannot increment. One of the research team highlights this: Parishioners need to know “who we are and what we do.” The Bible passage that reflects this is Mathew 5:15.⁵⁵ Therefore, the PPC needs to use all communication channels to inform all parishioners about Participatory Leadership. This will allow to effectively implement the model of Participatory Leadership in parish life. The result will be an increase in the levels of engagement and commitment among the members of the parish. The needs of good communications is re-enforced by another research team member: “assuming that people know what the PPC is intended for and that they are being listened, I believe that it will generate a deeper sense of belonging and engagement in the parish.” Further, he/she states, “the Church is not a building or an organization, the Church is the people united in the faith we profess to Jesus.” Moreover, he/she adds, “people have necessities, ideas, feelings

⁵⁴ It is not that I have already taken hold of it or have already attained perfect maturity, but I continue my pursuit in hope that I may possess it, since I have indeed been taken possession of by Christ [Jesus]. Brothers, I for my part do not consider myself to have taken possession. Just one thing: forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God’s upward calling, in Christ Jesus.

⁵⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house.

that they need to be presented and considered. When this happens, in most cases, they will feel that they have a voice and the sense of belonging will rise up.” The biblical references that support the above are Acts 4:32-37,⁵⁶ Maccabees 2:27-30.⁵⁷ One of the research’s participants shares this thought, “if we are able to listen to our parishioners from the ministries we represent, respect the channels of communication created through the PPC, and get back to them in an organized manner, will definitely create a sense of belonging and engagement to all parishioners.” Another research participant commented on the need of communications saying, “PPC’s responsibilities in a Participatory Leadership model is to transmit the information to all the ministries, and these in their turn, pass the information to all parishioners.” Further, he/she adds, “in this way the parishioners can be fully integrated into the life of the parish.” He/she writes, “when somebody has no sense of belonging to the parish, two things could happen. First is that he/she does not mind being integrated or second he/she minds but does not know how to integrate.” He/she states, “by functioning in a Participatory Leadership, organizational information and parish activities are increasingly widespread and it becomes clear how each parishioners can contribute, join the parish, and hence, better his/her relationship with God.” He/she farther adds, “Over time, the knowledge of the parish and the transforming power of the Gospel makes that a sense of belonging emerges, caring and working for the good of the parish and living an authentic faithful life

⁵⁶ “The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all. There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need. Thus Joseph, also named by the apostles Barnabas (which is translated ‘son of encouragement’), a Levite, a Cypriot by birth, sold a piece of property that he owned, then brought the money and put it at the feet of the apostles.”

⁵⁷ “Then Mattathias cried out in the city, ‘Let everyone who is zealous for the law and who stands by the covenant follow me!’ Then he and his sons fled to the mountains, leaving behind in the city all their possessions. At that time many who sought righteousness and justice went out into the wilderness to settle there, they and their children, their wives and their animals, because misfortunes pressed so hard on them.”

become the norm.” Ephesians 4:11-12⁵⁸ shows that all members have something to give in the building of our parish community.

Participatory Leadership generates in parishioners a sense of belonging and engagement to the parish. It strengthens their spiritual life and their faith. One of the research participants expresses this idea as follows: “the different ministries are coming to their representatives in the PPC with proper concerns and needs, not just to be discussed with the pastor, but also as a church, making their issues a concern for all the parishioners.” He/she explains that this will bring growth not only in the numbers of members of the parish but also in the faith of the parishioners. He/she remarks that the verse that best reflect this point is Acts 6:7.⁵⁹ He/she states, “that makes engagement of parishioners evident in the shape of growth of their obedience to the faith.”

Participatory Leadership is a way of expressing relationship within the body of Christ, encouraging parishioners to become more active members by sharing God’s gifts in the building of the community of faith. One of the research participants referring to Participatory Leadership says: “it produces joy to be able to serve our Lord by helping improve our parish’s life.” He/she further adds, “and by contributing our time and talent we feel part of the Church.” He/she remarks, “so, it is impossible not to feel more involved.” Correspondingly, he/she adds, “through Participatory Leadership we also gain a stronger sense of identity and unity and a motivation to do more for our parish.” He/she explains why, “This is the result of strengthening our belief as Catholics by building upon each other’s

⁵⁸ And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

⁵⁹ The word of God continued to spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly; even a large group of priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

ideas in our discussions.” Psalm 133-1⁶⁰ and Hebrews 10:24-25⁶¹ bring the theological interpretation to the above. This thought is re-enforced by another research participant’s opinion, referring to the sense of belonging produced by the application of Participatory Leadership model among parishioners. He/she remarks, “it already has had that effect. Everybody wants to be part of the winning team that is having joy. The more joy we have, the more people want to be part of it!” The best passage that reflects this is 2 Peter 1:5-11.⁶²

Another member of the research team highlights the engagement process: “from a broad perspective, the key concept in the development of a sense of belonging is to help parishioners feel part of those who belong to Christ.” He/she further adds, “having achieved this “greater” objective, we can concern ourselves with the sense of belonging at the parish level.” He/she explains which factors influence the sense of belonging in an individual, “the sharing of responsibilities, the pursuit of excellence as member of a team, as well as an increased sense of identity are all factors which are intimately related to an individual’s sense of belonging.” He/she comment, “the important notion of belonging to the Father through Christ reminds me of His prayer in John 17:1.”⁶³ Another research participant complemented this thought, “we become part of an assembly working together towards God’s will.” He/she reflects on Acts 11:26 “for a whole year they met with the church and taught a large number of people.”

⁶⁰ “How good and how pleasant it is, when brothers dwell together as one!”

⁶¹ “We must consider how to rouse one another to love and good works. We should not stay away from our assembly, as is the custom of some, but encourage one another, and this all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

⁶² “For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, virtue with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with devotion, devotion with mutual affection, mutual affection with love. If these are yours and increase in abundance, they will keep you from being idle or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

⁶³ I revealed your name to those whom you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

The fifth question posted to the research team deals with shared responsibilities and their effect in excellence in parish life. The question posted to the research team is as follows: According to your experience, do you agree with the following statement? “Participatory Leadership promotes shared responsibilities that generate excellence in parish life.” Please elaborate why? They answered with various statements that help us to understand the relationship between shared responsibilities and the effect in the excellence of parish life.

Shared responsibilities mean delegation of specific functions and empowerment; whoever has the responsibility of specific functions, tasks or programs to run also has to have the power to create, implement and control. In parish life, three major areas are the pastor’s responsibilities. The first is the administration of the temporal things of the parish, the second is the liturgy, and the third is the pastoral life of the parish, which includes religion education, pastoral groups, ministries and outreach programs. In the liturgy area, pastors cannot perform their duties without the collaboration of many people to enhance the liturgies. The other two areas are more susceptible to sharing the responsibilities of the pastor, which include temporalities and pastoral life. Pastors call parishioners to collaborate in all areas of the life of the parish to better serve the people of God in search for excellence. One of the participants in the research team captures this idea: “we have a large lively parish and our pastor can only do so much by himself. He is actually overworked.” He/she states, “So by sharing responsibilities through the Participatory Leadership, the parish not only is able to accomplish more, but it also comes up with better solutions.” He/she explains why, “because it now takes into consideration the parishioner’s needs and engages a multidisciplinary team into its planning.” One of the participants in the research’s team accompanies this idea referring to the relationship between Participatory Leadership and shared responsibilities as

one of the generative forces of parish excellence. “I agree, as we are in a position of leadership we need to share the different responsibilities among each other to generate good understanding.” He/she adds, “therefore, create a healthy harmonious environment.” He/she further comments, “At the same time, the leader should share the responsibilities of the group by delegating assignments.” He/she remarks that this will build up people’s confidence. Another research’s participant complements this as follows: “Participatory Leadership certainly generates shared responsibilities, if we are willing to step down and make other parishioners shine.” He/she further remarks, “it promotes excellence if we are humble enough to accept we are better when we work together for the common goal and not against each other.” Another research team enhances this as follows: teamwork always generates success in any endeavor. “Participatory Leadership fosters teamwork and in turn generates a better parish.” Another research team participant offers his/her insight clarifying the concept of sharing responsibilities and excellence in parish life: Participatory Leadership surely promotes shared responsibilities, “because the leadership is not seen as an individual “priest only” responsibility but as collective effort under the guidance of the pastor to achieve a common goal.” He/she adds, “that is what we have seen in building our new house of prayer: the talents of so many people put together toward a goal.”

Participatory Leadership supports its life in the way the PPC’s members open up to participation and in the agreements taken by them. They are to participate, promote, and disclose all decisions, agreements and activities from the top to the bottom reaching all levels of parish life. Therefore, all leaders under the supervision of members of the PPC can take informed decisions at their level of authority. These decisions must be congruent with the greater goals established by the PPC in search for excellence in parish life. A member of the

research team illustrates this aspect of Participatory Leadership and the generation of shared responsibilities, “I agree with the notion that Participatory Leadership promotes shared responsibilities.” He/she adds, “this is an inherent trait in organizations where leadership is allowed to “flow” freely through its layers, instead of the traditional “top-down” direction of flow found in most organizations.” Further, he/she explains, “there is an increased sense of engagement and ownership among parishioners when they feel that they effectively participate in the daily life of a parish.” He/she further adds, “the multiple levels of engagement and ownership required to implement Participatory Leadership in the parish inevitably promotes the sharing of responsibilities.” He/she further comments, “the enhanced motivation brought about by the Participatory Leadership model is certainly a driver for achieving excellence in any parish task.” One of the members of the research team highlights this thought: “the PPC’s members should support each other and work with the pastor to meet the challenges and resolve issues that may arise in the parish.” He/she remarks, “if they work together and convey a consistent message to the parishioners, the faithful will respect decisions taken.” Further he/she emphasizes, “everyone will walk in the same direction which will lead to excellence.” Another research’s participant complements this concept: “this process encourages a common goal. Our expectations increase if we participate in the ownership.” One of the research’s participants enhances the concept of participation: “when working in areas where we are good and we are familiar in what we do, it is likely that we achieve excellence.” He/she further asserts, “all this is possible through the invitation to participate, always valuing each member of the community.” In the same line of thought, one of the members of the research team agrees with the shared responsibility concept: “Participatory Leadership promotes shared responsibilities because we are telling the

community ‘we have all these issues and we want you to resolve them at your level.’ You will take care of them not the PPC, you will decide on behalf of the entire community.”

Participatory Leadership teaches parishioners another way of parish organization that educates the younger generations. One of the research participants elaborates on this idea: “By parents being engaged in parish life, their discipleship and apostleship gets transferred to their kids, family and neighbors.”

The sixth question asked of the research team deals with commitment and involvement in parish life. The question is as follows: According to your experience, do you agree with the following statement? “Participatory Leadership promotes parishioners to commit and get involved in parish life.” Please elaborate why? The research team answers this statement, elaborating a series of points of view that help us to advance our understanding of Participatory Leadership and the effect in parishioners’ commitment and involvement in parish life.

Participatory Leadership breaks the cycle of a small group of individuals who end up being volunteers in all parish activities. This is possible because it opens up the participation of more people who want to commit and be involved. One of the participants highlights this situation: “my experience is that most people who do get involved in parish life already have a propensity or a disposition to become involved in the first place.” He/she adds, “only a relatively small group of individuals truly got involved in the different activities. He/she emphasizes, “regardless of the event, the people involved were essentially the same individuals from one activity to the next. He/she further comments, “on the contrary, the process of Participatory Leadership does enhance the motivation of those who are already committed. This, in turn, drives them to reach out more intently to other parishioners to get

them involved.” He/she stresses, “This appeal is far more credible (and convincing) when people are able to understand that participation in the life of the parish is not simply a vague call to “become involved,” but that it is actually part of a parish’s operational model.”

Another research participant reinforces the concept that Participatory Leadership model promotes involvement and belonging in parochial life: “It will, as long it does not create boundaries, but creates an environment of full and open participation.” This full and open participation allows the PPC to listen at all levels of parish life. Thus, decisions emanated from this organism promote parishioners involvement and commitment in parish life. These thoughts are complemented by another research’s team participant: “the more one participates in the different events, programs or activities, the bigger is the commitment and the involvement with the parish life becomes part of your life.”

Participatory Leadership listens to people’s opinions and ideas. This promotes people’s commitment and involvement in parish life. One member of the research team expresses this insight, “if any parishioner has an idea, and this idea is taken into consideration, that person would feel immediately identified with the parish.” Further, he/she adds, “parishioners identified with their parish would care for what is happening in the parish. They would take ownership of the parish and would get involved in different parish’ activities or ministries.” He/she stresses the importance of communications in this process, “the members of the PPC need to inform the leaders of the ministries and pastoral groups under their supervision regarding decisions taken in the PPC.” Further, he/she adds, “They in turn should collect concerns and take those concerns and opinions and bring those concerns to consideration in the PPC.”

Participatory Leadership promotes identity most especially among the members of the PPC and from there to the whole parish. One of the research participant's expresses this idea as follows: "the exchanges with fellow parishioners and our pastor definitely make me feel more connected and co-responsible for our parish's destiny." Another member of the research team reinforces the notion of commitment and involvement generated by Participatory Leadership. The direct effect that parishioners experience when they participate in parish's life is identification. This assertion is as follows: "they can identify themselves as part of the community with a voice and opinion that is listened to and respected. They are real people participating in the affairs of the parish." Another research member complements this statement as follow: "when parishioners get involved, they show their gifts and talents to make them available to the community." This opinion is complemented by another research member, "people have a desire to be heard especially when they believe that their thoughts and ideas will be listening to." One of the research participants adds some insights to these ideas as follows: "the mere act of getting together to discuss our parish's problems, as well as its strengths, gave me a sense of belonging." He/she argues that you are not part of the problem but the solution; you move from criticizing things that you do not like to becoming an active parishioner who can bring solutions to the problem.

Participatory Leadership promotes people to participate in parish life. In the process of participation, parishioners make commitments to various groups and get involved in parish life. Leaders need to support this process at all levels. They have to live in their own life the concept of participation. They have to be open to new ideas and different opinions. Therefore, Participatory Leadership requires from all parishioners changes in attitudes, from the top to the bottom. This is a major limitation of Participatory Leadership because it is

dealing with people's personalities, individual characters and individual needs. It is very important for the successful application of Participatory Leadership model that leaders of the parish will be committed to live with this new openness. They need to lead by example, promoting participation at all levels in parish life. One of the members of the research team formulated this concern: "it certainly can promote commitment from parishioners if we are willing as leaders to show them this new methodology in our own actions." He/she further adds, "if people see us operating this way they should be empowered to step up and do the same." He/she affirms, "we should be willing to step down and let them propose new ideas and projects. It goes with a great deal of humility to understand other people can be leaders as well and have a lot to contribute as well." Another member of the research team reinforces this concept as follows: "the commitment at the end has to be translated into a life of obedience to God." He/she argues that the living testimony of those who participate in parish's leadership would bring more parishioners to commit to the life of the parish. Another parishioner complemented these thoughts as follows: "anytime when parishioners see their fellow parishioners enjoying a ministry, they are excited to be part of it and want to join in, especially if it looks outwardly like joy."

One more member of the research team noted that parishioners who experienced a conversion retreat, such as "Emmaus," or are instructed in their faith in religious education or the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (R.C.I.A), are more prompt to commit themselves in parish life.

The seventh question responded by the research team relates to Participatory Leadership and identity among parishioners. The question posted is as follows: According to your experience, do you agree with the following statement? "Participatory Leadership promotes

identity among parishioners.” Please elaborate why? They responded with many ideas that help members understand the relationship of participation and the sense of identity

Identity among parishioners is derived as a natural consequence of shared responsibilities; one of the research participants elaborates this: “identity is a subsequent step. The same dynamic that promotes the sharing of responsibilities and facilitates the pursuit of excellence also operates to reaffirm identity in an organization.” He/she further adds, “this applies equally to individuals as well as to groups.” Another research participant has reinforced this concept. He/she argues that parishioners experience an increase of their sense of identity when they are part of the solution of problems that affect their lives. He/she states, “yes, it does promote identity because the more we let people become involved in the parish issues and then make them accountable to resolve them.” He/she further adds that solutions that people bring forth should be in accordance with the parish goals: “as long as they reach the community’s purpose” these actions create identity. He/she writes, “they feel a true part of the parish” finally he/she concludes: “I am sure that Participatory Leadership will promote more identity.” One research team participant complemented this idea. He/she argues that Participatory Leadership

participants to know other people’s thoughts and ideas. This opens the door to an increase sense of involvement in parish life. He/she notes, “this process has the benefit of increased involvement in the parish life by knowing their neighbor’s thoughts and ideas.”

Listening affects the process of building identity among parishioners, who express their concerns and inputs in matters of parish life and expect their voices to be heard. The PPC has the responsibility to deal with those concerns. It does through the respective channels that the parish structure provides to facilitate the process of communication. The

PPC is a parish's organism that promotes leadership at all levels in parish life. The unity and the example of the members of the PPC are vital for the success of these processes. One of the research participants argues that the PPC set an example of its members when they act as a cohesive group in unity and love toward a common goal. Moreover, if they are listening to parishioners and make their ideas count, it becomes an open invitation to participate, and thus, create identity. Another research member reinforces this concept highlighting the importance of the PPC in its promotional role of leadership among parishioners, "the parishioners should see the PPC as one group that promotes leadership in the church, and should feel welcome to approach any member." Further, he/she stresses the importance of the PPC in building true unity to support the concept of Participatory Leadership at all levels of parish life: "it is important that we have and reflect true unity of Participatory Leadership among each other and at the same time set an example for the parishioners."

Participatory Leadership promotes a self-worth among parishioners that makes the effort of its implementation worthy to carry out. One of the research participants describes this: "it promotes identity with the parish, recognition amongst parishioners and a sense of self-worth that makes the effort worthwhile." Another research participant reinforces this concept affirming that Participatory Leadership promotes identity noting that participation is a quality in Christian life. He/she notes "yes, bearing in mind that we are Christians and we should behave as such." Thus, Participatory Leadership reaffirms our Christian identity. Another research participant notes that our discussions in the PPC provide an opportunity for exchanging ideas and learning from one another and from our pastor. He/she notes, "The unique opportunity to engage in these conversations help us gain a better understanding of the position of our Catholic Church on certain topics." He/she further adds, "All these

learnings help us grow stronger in our Catholic identity.” Another research participant has complemented this idea: He/she argues that Participatory Leadership promotes identity among parishioners because it sends a strong message that lay people have a strong role in the life of a parish, a role which would be impossible for just a pastor to fulfill within community. Lay people through participation reach all boundaries in the community.

Participatory Leadership: The work of the Parish

Parishes exist as local communities for the purpose of Evangelization.⁶⁴ All their actions are focused on the proclamation of the Gospel and to give the faithful a place of hope and light to live and grow their faith while living in this world and preparing themselves for the life eternal in total union with God.⁶⁵ The work of the parish fulfills a twofold mission in this regard. The first is the administration of the temporalities (all the material goods that the parish has to do the work of Evangelization); the second is the work of Evangelization.⁶⁶ This is the most important work because it is Jesus’ commandment to announce it to every creature that He is Lord,⁶⁷ that He forgives sins,⁶⁸ that in Him there is life eternal⁶⁹ because of His death on the cross and His resurrection from the tomb.⁷⁰ People need to return to Jesus’ teaching and live holy lives according to his divine will.⁷¹ This mandate is countercultural. People do not believe in many truths announced in the Gospel and sometimes they worship as a tradition but not as a conviction. This conviction is the result of

⁶⁴ Canon Law regarding pastor states that the word of God is to be proclaimed to the entire people living in the parish; instructing the lay people in truth of the faith, through the preaching of a homily during Sundays and day of obligations; and through catechetical instruction; especially, providing religious education for children and youth. The message of the Gospel needs to be proclaimed even with the help of the Christian people to reach to the people who do not practice their religion or do not profess the true faith. The pastor has to make the center of parish life the sacrament of the Eucharist (c. 528 §1, §2).

⁶⁵ Cf. Romans 8:14-39

⁶⁶ Cf. Mark 16:15,16

⁶⁷ Cf. Philippians 2:11

⁶⁸ Cf. 1 John 2:12

⁶⁹ Cf. John 3:16

⁷⁰ Cf. Luke 24:45-47

⁷¹ Cf. 1 Peter 1:16

a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ, and developing a personal relationship with him. This has brought the need for a new evangelization. Martin (2013) states that the new evangelization was brought about by Pope John Paul II. In 1993, he called for a renewal of the evangelized, that is, to re-evangelize the de-Christianized Christian western nations. He cited as the primary reason for this new evangelization the collapse of the Christian society. Pope Benedict XVI continued this belief by institutionalizing the new evangelization by creating the “Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization” and choosing “The New Evangelization” as the theme of the October 2012 World Synod of Bishops (Martin 2013, 11-20). Pope Francis, since the beginning of his pontificate, demands an evangelization out of the walls of the Church to the outskirts of the marginalized and the people who have gone astray from the Gospel (Francis, Angelus 10/12/2014). Hater (2001) argues that the new evangelization is an ongoing activity of the parish that requires a balance between the proclamation of the Word of God, the celebration of faith through worship and the service render to the community and the world (Hater 2012, 90). Wuerl (2013) notes the new evangelization is an important theological task. It will require the teaching and explanation of fundamental Catholic theological belief that have no meaning for most Catholics. Thus, he writes, “concepts such as incarnation, resurrection, redemption, sacrament, and grace – core themes of theology used to explain our belief in Jesus Christ – have little meaning for the practicing Catholic and the fallen-away Catholic in a culture where rationalism prevails” (Wuerl 2013, 77).

This work of the New Evangelization is not viable without the participation of committed parishioners. Participatory Leadership opens the channels to make it possible by generating identification and a sense of belonging to the parish. Winseman (2006) affirms

that the local church is vital for the spiritual formation of the individual and the hope for the world. He asserts that the key to parish success is engagement. He further explains that an engaged congregation is a community of faith that is ready, willing and able to produce the fruits that God is calling them to do (Winseman 2006, 7-12). Participatory Leadership enables the community to make parish life thrive. It drives people to fulfill in a better way their spiritual needs. It makes people feel welcome, not only at the entrance of the church, but acceptance as human beings while journeying in their spiritual lives. People can make friends while extending their social network in a parish that embraces them. Winseman points out that people need to feel welcome and wanted, “but if those who are coming do not feel valued or wanted, they find their way out just as easily as they found their way in” (25). Communication is one of the core values in Participatory Leadership. Participatory Leadership communication is bi-directional, both horizontal and vertical. This helps to clarify expectations and let parishioners know what is expected from them and how they can participate in parish life. Furthermore, parishioners know very well how to address their concerns, points of view, and disagreements. This is possible because clear channels of communications are established for this purpose. Participatory Leadership transforms the way parishioners participate and commit themselves to parish life. Participatory Leadership is a call to parishioners to participate, to make things better together, and to bring their individual skills in service to the community. Participatory Leadership reflects the teaching expressed in 1 Corinthians 1:10: “I urge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose.” Also the teaching is expressed in the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians 4:16: “from whom the whole body, joined and held

together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body's growth and builds itself up in love.”

Participatory Leadership: Parishioners' Participation in the Parish

Since Vatican Council II, lay people are more involved in parish life responding to their baptismal priesthood call. Gaillardetz (2008) points out that *Lumen Gentium* §10 affirms, “The entire community of the baptized are consecrated into a royal priesthood.” This makes the baptized a living sacrifice who present their lives as a sacrificial offering, living, holy and pleasing to God, bearing witnesses to Christ and testifying about the reason of their hope of eternal life (Gaillardetz 2008, 185). He further asserts that according to *Lumen Gentium* §32 all the baptized, no matter their position in the Church; they enjoy equality in the building up of the Body of Christ. Thus, all the baptized are called to holiness to follow Jesus Christ as disciples to further the reign of God (187). When the priest celebrates the Eucharist, he is exercising the ministerial priesthood, where the species of bread and wine are offered to God. Nevertheless, at the same time, the people of God are bringing their lives to the altar of the Lord. They are exercising their baptismal priesthood (188). Gaillardetz affirms that the substance of this common priesthood is discipleship, as he states: “following Christ in such a way that one's entire life becomes an offering to God” (189). The engagement and commitment of the baptized to live a holy life with the help of God's grace is the exercising of their priestly baptism (189). Dulles (2002) states that Vatican Council II gives priests shared status of disciples together with the lay people. Lay people's call of discipleship is to flourish in secular life, penetrating this sphere with the Spirit of Christ (Dulles 2002, 205). Jesus' Word and the sacraments shape lay people. The sacraments are exchanges between God and the community of disciples. God is made present and active in

these sacraments (206). Weddell (2012) argues that every Catholic has to follow three steps in fulfilling the journey of disciples; she mentions these three steps: “to be a conscious disciple of Jesus Christ, a fully initiated Catholic, and an active parishioner” (Weddell 2012, 54). The first journey comes through the Holy Spirit, following Jesus as Lord and Savior. The second is a central moment in the relationship with Jesus through the full participation in the sacramental life of the Church. The third is the commitment to participate in the life of the parish as a committed parishioner (66).

Participatory Leadership creates spaces for parishioners where they can commit to be a participant and get involved in various programs or ministries in parish life. In doing so, parishioners exercise their baptismal priesthood. They sanctify themselves on their journey as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Participatory Leadership invites people to participate in the evangelization of people who are dormant in their faith. This process should create a sense of belonging where parishioners can express their desire to participate by living as a community of faith and sharing common ideals and beliefs. Wittberg (2012) argues that the key factor in forming a parish into a distinct community is related to the common history that they share, how they understand themselves and the common hope that they want to achieve (Wittberg 2012, 115).

Participatory Leadership promotes participation of lay people to minister to other parishioners in their process of conversion and discipleship. Many parishioners who live their lives as disciples have committed themselves to a relationship with Jesus Christ. Two parish groups excel in this process of conversion and engaging parishioners to participate in parish life; they mobilize parishioners from the pews to be effective evangelizers carrying on the mission of the Church. The first group is the “Emmaus Retreat.” Lay people organize the

retreat. The retreat helps alienated Catholics to come back to the church and helps to revive faith in parishioners who were not committed to their faith (Gallagher 2007, v). The participants spend three days together in a process of reflection and prayer. At the end of the journey, the people who participated in the retreat come to the conviction to join one of the various parish groups and to live their lives as disciples. The second group is the Small Christian Community (SCC). This group plays a very important role in the life of the parish. Parishioners search for groups where they can grow-up in their spiritual journey. Parishioners try to find meaning in their daily lives problems in correlation with their faith and their belief. They try to make sense of their everyday problems in light of their relationship with God. They want to share their stories and experiences regarding their personal spiritual journey. This group has become the most important in the total number of committed people of all the programs that the parish offers, especially producing volunteers for teachers in Religious Education. People who participate in the SCC are the first to volunteer for the various programs and the needs of the parish. A large number of people from the parish participate in these small groups gathering each week in different homes. Each SCC has no more than fifteen participants. When a SCC grows to more than fifteen participants, it will start a plan to split, creating another SCC and providing the opportunity for more parishioners to participate in the SCC. Actually, the parish has thirty-one SCCs. They read the passages of the Bible corresponding to the next Sunday liturgy. They reflect on the Scripture passages using the “Lectio Divina.” After that, they have a discussion regarding what the Scripture passage says concerning their personal lives. Once the group finishes this reflection, members have time to express their spiritual concerns and personal spiritual growth, finishing with a prayer and a little refreshment and fellowship. O’Halloran (2002)

reaffirms the importance of the SCC. He stresses that people join these communities in search for meaning in their lives. Catholics want to increase their relationship with God, looking for opportunities to learn about prayer, religion, spirituality, worship and praise (O'Halloran 2002, 179). He further states that as the SCC's gathering in homes is reminiscent of the early Christians whose private homes were the place for church's celebrations (180). Furthermore, the SCC allows the participants to share their faith experiences, good or bad, clarifying their meaning and reshaping their lives. SCC provides support and direction for people who otherwise would not have somebody to listen and care (181). This is congruent with the statement of Lee and Cowan. Lee and Cowan (2003) note that SCC helps to decentralize the Church; this is observed in *Redemptoris Missio* (§51). They remark of the benefit produced in these SCCs where people get to know each other and to form bonds between. Further, they stress that the sense of belonging increases the feelings of ownership in the parish community. Furthermore, they remark that discussions in the SCC promote dialogue between people's life and the Word of God, which is very difficult in a regular size parish Eucharist (Lee and Cowan 2003, 63).

Similarly, Winseman (2006) stresses the importance of small groups in the church life, "if your church is already participating in the "revolution," you are no doubt experiencing the benefits that small groups bring, not only to the individual lives of your members, but also in the overall life of your church" (Winseman 2006, 136). He further explains that forty-three percent of the people who participate in small groups are engaged in parish life. The small groups offer opportunities to form deep relationships and friendships and to fulfill spiritual needs. They see the spiritual growth of their group (138).

Participatory Leadership allows parishioners to participate in the work of the Church. In the process of the research, the PPC agreed to create a volunteer ministry. This ministry will receive all the new or old parishioners who would like to do volunteer work. They will be encouraged to take a test.⁷² The purpose of the test is to discover their strengths.⁷³ This will allow parishioners fit better in the life of the parish. If the parish can match people's strengths with parish needs, the benefit will be incalculable because people will be happy with the volunteer position, and the parish will benefit as it covers needs that otherwise would take economical resources to develop. Parishioners will feel more committed to the parish because they are doing something that they like, and parishioners will share strengths to do those specific assignments with their abilities and skills that they have cultivated over their lives. Winseman, Clifton, and Liesveld (2003) explain that the knowledge of our strengths and the strengths of the people who work for a parish and of the people who collaborate in parish life improve effectiveness and accomplishments. They remark, "when you understand the strengths approach and put into practice, you realize that capitalizing on what you and those around you naturally do best is so much more productive than trying to "fix" yourselves" (Winseman et al. 2003, 24). In the same venue, Hiesberger (2003) stresses the importance to match talents with roles: she states that placing the wrong person for a volunteer or a paid position will create a negative impact. She notes, "volunteers who are not well-suited for their jobs become frustrated, unhappy, and unfulfilled, and the work doesn't get done as it should be. Others involved in the work can be negatively affected by the situation as well" (Hiesberger 2003, 84).

⁷² The test to be used will be "Strength finder 2" develop by Gallup.

⁷³ Winseman, Clifton, and Liesveld (2003) define strength as "the ability to provide consistent, near perfect performance in a given activity. This ability is a powerful, productive combination of talent, skill and knowledge" (Winseman, et al. 2003, 7).

Participatory Leadership: Parishioners' Sense of Belonging in the Parish

Participatory Leadership promotes a sense of belonging in parishioners through the empowerment and a sharing of responsibilities, giving parishioners a voice in decisions that affects their church life. Winseman (2006) explain that engagement in a church is dynamic and can change from engagement to becoming not engaged. Parishioners need to make an emotional connection with the parish in order to experience belonging. Parishioners need to feel that they get something valuable and that they can give something of value and that they belong and they can grow with the community (Winseman 2006, 142-143). He points out that two factors intervene in disengagement; the first is when parishioners no longer have the opportunity to do what they do best. The second factor involves three major events: one is the change of a senior pastor, second is changes in the Mass schedule and third, the changing in worship style. Fortunately, none of these events are happening in SKD at the present time. On the contrary, SKD is promoting the participation of the majority of parishioners where they can use their gifts in service to the parish.

SKD parish is committed to work diligently to promote discipleship with a clear objective to bring the majority of parishioners to participate. This is an invitation of a lifelong commitment where parishioners, through a personal commitment, follow Jesus to develop a lively, consequential relationship with Him. There is no engagement without spiritual commitment. As White and Corcoran (2013) point out “disciples are students who are growing to love God and love others as Jesus taught us.” (White and Corcoran 2013, 68). For Rivers (2005) the most powerful evangelizer is an authentic community of faith. The formation of Catholic disciples happens in a community of faith where the disciple invites others to participate in these experiences. He notes that a disciple's experience is an ongoing

process of conversion and transformation of men and women constantly through a deep relationship with Jesus. This call to ongoing conversion began with baptism where the disciple becomes a member of the community of faith called the church. Further, he asserts that at the heart of discipleship is the testimony of the experiences of being transformed by Jesus (Rivers 2005, 50-58). White and Corcoran (2013) confirm this affirmation stating: “church is in the disciple making business, because we live our faith and grow in our faith by sharing our faith” (71).

The sense of belonging to a parish begins with baptism. Catholic infants when receiving baptism, depended on their parent’s commitment to come to church and practice their religion. Even if they just return to church for the sacraments, their Holy First Communion and Confirmation, they will be marked for life. Not only because some sacraments imprint character, but also because those memories last forever in the life of a Catholic, creating identity and, therefore, a sense of belonging. The preparation for the sacraments and the celebration of them support the formation of a Catholic identity; being Catholic carries a set of belief and practices that are key elements for building a Catholic identity. This identity can be nurtured if you are a practicing Catholic or even if you are a non-practicing Catholic. The traces of identity can emerge in various situations of life. That is what a Catholic identity means for most Catholics. Hubbard (1998) explains that is in the celebration of the Eucharist that the Church fulfills its role as a church, remembering who we are and what is our call. He further adds that the Eucharist gives us the power to change “our wills, our loves, and our desires” (90-91). He further asserts that without the Eucharist Catholics will lose their identity (91). Hoover (2010) argues that for Catholics, being registered in the parish is what belonging to a parish is. He remarks that Catholic identity is

stronger than other Christians identity found in. He writes, “majority claims the faith as important in their lives, assert that they would never leave the church, and believe in distinctive Catholic doctrines and practices such as the sacraments and Mary as the Mother of God” (Hoover 2010, 177). These assertions could be enlightened with Gustafson’s (2009) declarations; he states that identity among Catholic is nurtured in the celebration of the Eucharist (94). He further remarks that the universally celebration of Mass in the whole world is a structure that allows Catholics to worship in any parish. This common structure of devotion and structure makes possible a social identity more universal than a protestant worship life (94). Baggett (2009) states that identity to Catholics relies more on the parish that they attend rather than the institutionalized church (126). According to *The Catholic World* (1994), many things support Catholic identity, especially the formation programs and the Catholic system of belief and doctrines, the moral and social teachings of the church and the conviction to be responsible for our brothers and sisters, especially the poor and disadvantaged. This belief becomes more effective when we live as part of a worshipping community (*Catholic World* 1994, 142). Monkerud (2008) argues that the sense of belonging to the universal Church is one of the strengths of Catholicism. Catholics enjoy a special connection with the Pope, bishops, priests and the lay people. They share a universal language of faith that transcends particular language or culture and they can communicate with their deceased loved one through the communion of saints (14). Furthermore, he asserts that present times require that parishes should be a place where one can find a community of faith. This might be the most important aspect for younger generations. Churches without a Eucharistic Chapel must fulfill both places of personal prayer and places of encounter with a community for sharing one’s faith. These moments of communal connection generate an

opportunity that allows connection that has not existed during liturgy and these moments enhance the sense of belonging to the parish community (15).

Participatory Leadership gives parishioners a particular kind of opportunity to live their lives as a faith community seeking to love God and neighbor. The liturgies share the love of God. When the daily rosaries are prayed, parishioners are together praying for different intentions, but in unity offering that prayer to the one who brought salvation to the world through his death and resurrection. Thursday's Adoration of the Holy Sacrament is a day that parishioners can spend time in adoration and silent conversation with Jesus in the Holy Sacrament. Those sacred moments in the presence of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar allow parishioners to go deeper in their personal relationship with God, building treasury moments of profound conversation to the one who calls us to life. Scheduled time for the sacrament of reconciliation and participation in healing Masses provide parishioners the opportunity for reconciliation and spiritual and physical healing. The evangelization programs of religious education for children and formation programs for adults (RCIA) and the study of the Scriptures open spaces for the formation of parishioners' faith. The family programs for married couples and the school for parents allows families to live marriage life to its fullness. The love of neighbor is effective with the outreach programs of St. Vincent de Paul, which provide help to our neighbors in need. SKD helps people from the community of Weston without asking if they belong to our parish. The program of food pantry is conducted quarterly. The parish sends the collected food to a county food pantry where it is distributed to the neediest people. Mission programs in Haiti and Peru open the entire community to the missionary spirit of the church. It forces parishioners to leave their comfort zone. They reach

out to the poor of the cities where there are people who need, not only our treasury, but also our time and, most of all, the Word of hope that only the Gospel can bring.

Ethical Considerations

Participatory Leadership promotes excellence in parish life. To this end, decisions and action are developed constantly. The decisions and actions have to be in accord with Catholic principles of love of God and neighbor. Therefore, an exploration of the teaching of Catholic ethic is analyzed in the light of the Participatory Leadership concept. This analysis comprehends Catholic ethic formulated since Pope John Paul II to Pope Francis.

Pope John Paul II (1998), in his encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio*, responds to the desire of all men and women who seek the truth; this letter states that research in the theoretical and in the practical fields are both important. The search for the truth is the search for good to be performed; that is acting in accord with a free will that leads the human person to the path of happiness and towards perfection. He emphasizes that this is acting ethically (John Paul II 1998, § 25). Pope John Paul II (1993) stresses in his encyclical letter *Veritatis Splendor* that “there can be no morality without freedom” (John Paul II 1993, § 34). For him, it is essential that the individual choose true values, which lead people to realize themselves fully. This allows the individual to be true to their nature (§ 34). Pope John Paul II (1998) remarks the importance of openness to values that transcends the individual: “the truth of these values is to be found not by turning in on oneself but by opening oneself to apprehend that truth even at levels which transcend the person. This is an essential condition for us to become ourselves and to grow as mature, adult persons” (John Paul II 1998, § 25).

Pope John Paul II (1993) analyzing the question of truth and freedom states that only the person who submits his freedom to the truth leads him to his true good. He affirms that

this question of the truth and freedom has been lost in the situation of the present culture that lacks conviction; only in truth man can find salvation (John Paul II 1993, § 84). In this, the Church looks with love to form a moral conscience in individuals capable of making moral decisions in accordance with the truth (§ 85). Pope John Paul II bases this assertion on the exhortation of the apostle Saint Paul: “Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.”⁷⁴ Is only in Jesus where the Church finds the response to the problem of morality. He further asserts “the Crucified Christ reveals the authentic meaning of freedom; he lives in fully in the total gift of himself and calls his disciples to share in his freedom” (§ 85). Furthermore, he states that Jesus reveals with his own life the meaning of freedom and that freedom can only be acquired with love, through the gift of self (§87). Additionally, Pope John Paul II declares that faith has a moral component that calls human beings for a consistent life of commitment. That is, faith seeks to bring to perfection the obedience of the commandments of God (§88-89). He further asserts that faith becomes confession when we become witnesses before God and men, defending moral truth, even to the point of martyrdom (§ 89).

Pope Benedict XVI (2005) encyclical letter *Dei Caritas Ets* affirms that the love of God and love of neighbor are inseparable. The love of neighbor is the way that leads us to God, and separation from neighbor is a separation from God (Benedict XVI 2005, §16). Love of neighbor transcends feeling because it is a decision that is born in the communion of the will of God and Man (§17). Man learns to see with the eyes of Jesus, giving to man not only things that they need, but also love that springs from this communion of God-man (§18).

Pope Benedict XVI (2010), in his *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Verbum Domini*

⁷⁴ Cf. Rom 12:2

observing on the affirmation from the International Theological Commission, stresses that “every human being who comes to consciousness and to responsibility has the experience of an inner call to do good and thus to avoid evil” (Benedict XVI 2010, §9). The International Theological Commission (1999) affirms that the plan of salvation originated by God the Father is realized in Jesus the incarnate Word of God who brought us the Gospel, which is the grace of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies their followers (International Theological Commission 1999, §102). Jesus in many ways stresses the ethical principle of charity expressed in the love of God and in the love of neighbor⁷⁵ (International Theological Commission 1999, §108). Jesus’ commandment of love knows no limit and is in his passion, where Jesus fulfills the law of love: to give your life for those who you love.⁷⁶ Therefore, Jesus becomes the norm for all Christian Ethics (§109). The light of faith illuminates this law of love, as it is explained by Pope Francis (2013) in his *Encyclical Letter Lumen Fidei*. He states that every aspect of human existence is illuminated by the light of faith (Francis 2013, §4). This light of faith is concretely expressed in the common good. Pope Francis remarks: Precisely because it is linked to love (cf. Gal 5:6), the light of faith is concretely placed at the service of justice, law and peace. Faith is born of an encounter with God’s primordial love, wherein the meaning and goodness of our life become evident; our life is illumined to the extent that it enters into the space opened by that love, to the extent that it becomes, in other words, a path and praxis leading to the fullness of love (§51).

Pope Francis (2013) explains that it is in this love that trustworthy relationships exist because they enrich the life of human beings. Faith not only draws human being from the realities of the world, but without a trustworthy love, men and women cannot exist together.

⁷⁵ Cf. Mt. 22:34-30, Jn 13:34

⁷⁶ Cf. Jn 15:13

Coexisting would be a matter of cold math of “conflicting interest or on fear, but not on the goodness of living together, not on the joy which the mere presence of others can give” (§51). Furthermore, Pope Francis (2013) stresses that “faith is truly a good for everyone; it is a common good” (§51). Faith not only brightens the church but also helps to build societies with a future of hope (§51).

It is in this framework of faith that brightens our practices. Through the gift of self, guided by the Holy Spirit and observing the love of God and love of Neighbor, the main pastoral concern becomes the ethical consideration that SKD’s practices reflect a way of life that is congruent with its Christian beliefs. That is, those pastoral practices that SKD identified in the present research as best practices are not only ethical, but also promote the Christian virtues that lead to holiness for the common good. SKD’s practices shape the way of life to their parishioners; the parishioners live and make decisions, because engaging in those kinds of practices will shape how they live, and how they make daily decisions according to moral ethics and Catholic principles.

Virtue ethics play a special role in the life of a minister as Gula (2007) explains it. He stresses that virtue ethics identify who we are and what we do; he notes, “the connection between what ministry needs to do to promote the reign of God and the personal strengths we need in order to pursue it” (Gula 2007, 46). He emphasizes that the minister’s effectiveness is not only judged by their skills but also by his/her integrity, that said congruence between the message and the way of life (46). Furthermore, he remarks that Christian virtue ethics is found in the life of Jesus, turning to him as a model to follow, learning how to be virtuous by imitating Jesus’ wisdom and spirit, allowing him to shape our lives to confront the moral demands of the moment. Gula remarks: “faithful attention to the character of Jesus and

creative openness to what is at hand are the challenges we face in trying to follow Jesus today” (48). Sofield and Juliano (2011) emphasize this as well; they state that Christian leaders’ should follow the model of Jesus’ leadership, developing a deep personal relationship that is obtained through a life of prayer. It is through prayer that pastoral ministers realize the deep union with God and a personal relationship with God. Jesus was a compassionate and merciful leader, who dedicated His ministry primarily to heal and to forgive. Jesus looked for the physically ill and the poor, lonely and spiritually wounded and healed them (Sofield and Juliano 2011, 2-3).

Another aspect that was considered in the research was the accountability and transparency that SKD identified in the research as financial accountability. How people respond to the people whom they are entrusting their money to carry out the mission of the church? One of the responses is that SKD needs to have a budget elaborated with the participation of all ministries. The finance committee leads this process. It guarantees that any bias in the administration of the financial parish resources is void. Furthermore, this ensures that the application of financial parish resources matches SKD’s mission statement. Performing within the constraints of the budget ensures accountability. It provides a means to show the parish where its money is being applied.

Ecclesiological Considerations

Participatory Leadership promotes the participation of the laity in the Church. This is accomplished through the creation of the various ministries that contribute to the work of evangelization. Members of the parish who are not active as well as those who have gone astray from the parish now have the opportunity to integrate and participate in the various ministries that are offered by the parish. The Church, here on Earth, united with Jesus as its

head and through the Holy Spirit, empowers the laity to participate actively in the work of salvation of the Church. For this purpose, they engage in the work of evangelization, strengthened by the gifts of the Holy Spirit to carry out this divine task. In the parable of the wedding feast,⁷⁷ Jesus calls a church that celebrates the encounter of the groom with his church, and that church with each other who participates in the wedding banquet.

Participatory Leadership provides the encounter with the other. The people involved in making decisions are called to be heard by the parishioners who are affected by the decisions, from the bottom to the top of the parish. The purpose is to create a community of equals with different assignments, all-important in the kingdom of God.

The Word of the Lord established in Sacred Scripture, plays the most important role by nourishing the people of God with the knowledge of Jesus. Vatican Council II, in its Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, established that Divine Scripture is venerated as it venerates the body of the Lord, especially in Sacred Liturgy (Vatican Council II - *Dei Verbum* 1965, §21). Vatican Council II, in its Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, names the Church as the kingdom of God present in mystery in the world (Vatican Council II - *Lumen Gentium* 1964, §3). Furthermore, the Church gifted with the empowerment of God, safeguards “His precepts of charity, humility, and self-sacrifice,” to fulfill the mission of the proclamation of the kingdom of God to all creatures (§5). Jesus, by his resurrection, had redeemed man into a new creation and has communicated the Holy Spirit making man His brother and “mystically the components of His own Body” (§7). The life of Christ is communicated to his body through the sacraments, most specifically the sacrament of baptism where “we are formed in the likeness of Christ” (§7). Is in the sacrament of the Eucharist that we are taken up into communion with Christ and with one another. The image

⁷⁷ Cf. Mt 22:1-14

that Jesus has of the Church is as His bride; as it is proclaimed in the parable of the wedding feast where Jesus is the Groom and the Church is the spouse. It is in this way that the Church communicates the work of redemption as Jesus did, in poverty and persecution (§8). It is through baptism that the faithful are incorporated into the church, reborn as sons of God, to confess the faith that they have received and it is the Holy Spirit, through the sacrament of Confirmation, who gives the faithful the strength to spread and defend the faith (§11). The Spirit sanctifies them and enriches them in virtues to make them fit to undertake the renewal and the building up of the Church (§12). Priests by virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders are bound to serve the people of God in their local community showing a truly sacerdotal and pastoral ministry to the believers and non-believers (§28). The laity by their vocation seeks the kingdom of God engaging in temporal affairs in accord with God's plan. They are called to expend their energies in the growth of the church. The lay apostolate participates in the salvific mission of the Church by being present in places where only they can communicate the salvific mission of the Church and by becoming witnesses and living instruments of the mission of the Church (§33). Further, the laity has the capacity to exercise hierarchical ecclesial functions for a spiritual purpose. This confers a significant role in the mission of the Church as it is affirmed in *Lumen Gentium*: "upon the laity, therefore, rests the noble duty of working to extend the divine plan of salvation to all men of each epoch and in every land. Consequently, may every opportunity be given them so that, according to their abilities and the needs of the times, they may zealously participate in the saving work of the Church" (§33).

Participatory Leadership promotes participation at all levels. People's lives are affected in one way or another with the decisions made in parish life. This is why the

participation of all the members of the community is encouraged through all channels of communications. It is in this manner that their voices are heard at all levels and their concerns are expressed and discussed in the PPC.

The Constitution of the Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963) states that the Liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church, but it is the summit which the activity of the Church is directed. It is the purpose of all apostolic works to come together to praise God in the midst of the Church to celebrate the Eucharist in the Lord's Supper (Vatican Council II - *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 1963, §9-10).

Participatory Leadership goals are that all the people of God should come together to celebrate the heavenly banquet that is celebrated in each Eucharist. Through this participation a deep relationship will be constructed with the constant participation of the faithful members of the parish. Pope John Paul II (2003) in his encyclical letter *Ecclesia De Eucharistia* affirms that the incorporation into Christ is the effect of the Sacrament of Baptism, the constant participation in the celebration of the Eucharist brought about the renewal and consolidation of Baptism by receiving Christ and being received by Him. In this manner, the people of God become a sacrament for humanity, fulfilling the mission of the Church, which is the continuing mission of Christ. The Eucharist is the spiritual power that allows the Church to carry out her mission. The Eucharist is the summit of all evangelization confirming the Church as the body of Christ. (John Paul II 2003, §22-23). Pope Benedict XVI (2010) in his apostolic exhortation *Verbum Domini* asserts that “the relationship between Christ, the Word of the Father and the Church” is a living relationship with each one of its members (Benedict XVI 2010, 51).

Summary

The transformational experiences of the research participants generated vast information about the Participatory Leadership concept that enlightens the understanding of it.

Participatory Leadership has a direct effect on parish life. It moves the leadership of a parish from vertical structures to a mixed model. Participatory Leadership encourages and promotes horizontal structures, giving voice to the parishioners in decisions that affect their lives. Participatory Leadership works to produce effective democratic communications. It changes the pastor-centered model into a concept of an articulate body as St. Paul's notion of "One Body" in 1 Corinthians 12.⁷⁸ Further, Participatory Leadership promotes a sense of belonging that involves the entire parish. It allows the pastor to re-focus in his ministry and delegates administrative functions to parishioners with the abilities to perform them.

Participatory Leadership generates a synergy of ideas that uses people's talents to the service of the community, providing a quality that is impossible to achieve by one person. This is possible because it promotes teamwork and at the same time serves to facilitate communication. Participatory Leadership calls parishioners to use their talents for the good of the community which allows the talents to flourish. Furthermore, Participatory Leadership is inclusive, allowing representation of all the members of the community in the PPC. It is a way of life where parishioners need to adapt and live according to its principles.

The effect of the application of the pastoral circle in leadership on the parish highlights the service that the PPC renders to the community. The PPC deals with parishioners' problems and provides alternative solutions. The pastoral circle is essentially pastoral. It promotes the vision of the church at all layers of parish life. The pastoral circle

⁷⁸ See note 19.

works on shaping ideas and modeling solutions in a spiral way. It transforms people who allow the circle to work on them. This in turn promotes them to review a wide range of ideas to benefit the parish community. Thus, it moves the parish from one-person operation to be able to review different points of view. This then generates a consensus so that decisions will benefit the entire parish' community. It encourages parishioners to take responsibility at different levels of the parish structure.

The reflections of our practices and its effect on Participatory Leadership and pastoral planning emphasize the need for a pastoral plan. Thus, the identification of our priorities as a parish become more authentic in reading the needs of the community. This reflection on the practices promotes better relations within the parish because it contemplates the well-being of the community. Communication plays a big role in the elaboration of the plan since it involves listening to parishioners and delivering the message to them. The multidisciplinary composition of the PPC enriches and benefits the creation of a good pastoral plan.

The effect of Participatory Leadership creates an increase in the sense of belonging and engagement among parishioners. This creates roles for parishioners to better use their God given talents for the well-being of the community. This then increases in parishioners the sense of engagement and belonging promoting in them to change from being passive parishioners to active members of the community of faith. Participation uplifts and empower parishioners. Communications is a top of priority for successful implementation of a Participatory Leadership model in parish life. Without it, engagement and commitment will not succeed. This engagement and belonging reinforces and strengthens the spiritual life and the faith of the people. Parishioners integrate the Body of Christ as active members by sharing God's gifts in building up the community of faith. This helps parishioners to feel they

are part of those who belong to Christ by sharing responsibilities, by pursuing excellence as members of a team, and increasing their sense of identity, all of which are components of a sense of belonging.

The effect of sharing responsibilities creates an increase sense of excellence in parish life; shared responsibilities means delegation of specific functions and empowerment to realize those functions with ample authority for implementation and control. The Participatory Leadership model shares responsibilities by delegating to the PPC's members ample authority for implementation and control. This then emanates through the different levels of parish administration, allowing ideas to flow freely through the different layers of parish life instead of the traditional top-down model. By sharing responsibilities through the PPC in the application of the Participatory Leadership model, the parish is not only able to accomplish more, but it also implements better solutions. The PPC multidisciplinary team takes into consideration parishioners' needs for better solutions and planning. Participatory Leadership fosters teamwork and in turn, it generates a better parish. It promotes the sharing of responsibilities, because decisions are now the product of a team and not only those of a pastor. This is a collective effort guided by the pastor to achieve the common goal of excellence in parish life. The sense of engagement and belonging among parishioners increases when they feel that they have effectively participated in the daily decisions of the life of the parish.

The effect of parishioners' commitment and involvement because of the implementation of Participatory Leadership model has been a positive asset for parish life. This is possible because Participatory Leadership opens up the opportunity for the participation of more people who want to commit and get involved. At the same time, it

enhances motivation from parishioners who already are committed and moves them to invite more people to participate. This promotes an environment of full and open participation, allowing the PPC to hear from all levels of parish life. Parishioners who participate engage themselves in parish life and develop an increased sense of belonging to the parish. Parishioners become participants in the affairs of the parish by sharing their gifts and talents and making them available for the good of the community. The role of the PPC's members is vital in this process. They need to lead by example, which requires from them commitment to live with a new openness and to be exemplary channels that promote Participatory Leadership at all levels in the life of the parish.

There is a positive effect of Participatory Leadership in identity among parishioners. The unity of the PPC in Participatory Leadership sets an example to the whole parish. This model of leadership promotes a self-worth among parishioners that makes the effort of its implementation worthy by reaffirming our Christian identity. Participatory Leadership clearly promotes identity among its members since lay people are invited to participate and to reach out to all in the community of faith.

In regards to the work of the parish and the effects of Participatory Leadership in parish life, it has been analyzed from the perspective of the purpose of the parish. Parishes exist as local communities for the purpose of evangelization of the baptized and non-practicing Catholics and new converts. Pope Francis demands an evangelization out of the walls of the Church to the outskirts of the marginalized and the non-practicing Catholics. Participatory Leadership opens channels by generating identification and a sense of belonging to the parish. This enables the community to make parish life thrive, fulfilling parishioners' spiritual needs. Communication is crucial in parish life, clarifying expectations

and letting know parishioners what the parish expects from them and how they can participate in the life of the parish. This is a call to parishioners to participate, to do things better and to bring their individuals' skills in service to the community.

The Participatory Leadership model enhances the participation of parishioners in parish life. Since Vatican Council II, parishioners are involved in parish life as a response to their baptismal priesthood call. They enjoy equality in the building of the Body of Christ. They are called to live holy lives according to their baptismal call. Lay people infuse the life of Christ in secular life. Participatory Leadership creates spaces for parishioners to commit and participate in parish life, exercising their priesthood baptismal call and sanctifying themselves in their journey as disciples of Jesus Christ. Participatory Leadership invites people to participate and to evangelize people who are dormant in their faith, creating a sense of belonging to the parish. Participatory Leadership encourages parishioners to minister to other parishioners in the process of conversion and discipleship. Two parish groups excel in this endeavor: the Small Christian Communities and the Emmaus parish retreat. Volunteer ministries that matches their strengths with the life of the parish will be possible by the creation of a volunteer ministry and the use of statistical professional tools.

The Participatory Leadership model enriches the sense of belonging to the parish. This is possible because through the parishioners' empowerment and the sharing of responsibilities; they have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. The parish is encouraging and promoting their parishioners to use their gifts for the well-being of the parish. SKD parish is committed to promoting discipleship among its parishioners because there would not be engagement without spiritual commitment. Baptism infuses the sense of belonging to the Church; First Communion and Confirmation are sacraments that mark the

life of the disciple and create memories that last forever in the life of a Catholic. This creates identity and, hence, a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging to the universal Church is one of the strengths of Catholicism. Participatory Leadership opens a space where parishioners grow up in their knowledge of the love of God and neighbor.

Regarding the ethical consideration, Participatory Leadership promotes excellence in parish life. Decisions and actions are developed constantly under the ethical principles of love of God and neighbor. SKD's practices are guided by the love of God and by the love of neighbor, enlightened by the gift of self-reflecting: a way of life that is congruent with the Christian values and belief. All the practices identified in this research study are not only ethical, but also promote Christian virtues that lead to holiness for the common good. SKD's parishioners who live by the parish practices have shaped their lives according to the moral ethical Catholic principles.

In terms of the ecclesiological considerations, Participatory Leadership encourages the participation of the laity in the Church through the participation in the various ministries that promote the work of evangelization of the Church. Participatory Leadership promotes encounters with others, where listening and the making of decisions creates a community of equals with different assignments, all important in the building up of the Kingdom of God. The Participatory Leadership goal is that all parishioners come together to celebrate the heavenly banquet in each Eucharist and to promote participation and discipleship among its members.

CHAPTER SEVEN: FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This final chapter will navigate the research, summarizing and discussing the finding of the study. Chapter One served as an introduction to the need and the purpose of the study and the formulation of the research questions. Chapter Two, gave a review of the pertinent literature, finding that similar studies such as this have not been made. Chapter Three introduced and structured the methodology for the research design. The research was divided in two phases: the first phase was addressed in Chapter Four called “An Intensive Research” and the second phase was addressed in Chapter Five named “An Extensive Research.” Chapter Six discussed the results of the study; and this, the final Chapter, summarizes the study, discusses the findings of the study, determines the implications of Participatory Leadership in the life of a parish and presents conclusions and recommendations for future studies.

Summary of the Study

At the beginning of the research study, the concept of Participatory Leadership was introduced. The implementation of this concept in a parish would help to clarify the feasibility, reversing vertical relationships in a parish to a model that responds to both vertical and horizontal relationships. The concept of Participatory Leadership is in the line of collaborative models of leadership identified in the literature review. Participatory Leadership empowers parishioners to participate in the making of decisions that affect their spiritual life giving them a voice. At the same time, the research conducted a thorough reflection on the practices in the life of a parish. The purpose was to determine how these practices affect the life of the parish, the participation of the people in the parish and how

both will determine the commitment of parishioners in their sense of belonging to the parish. The goal is to determine how, through the application of this Participatory Leadership model, parish life would excel and the parish would reach its full potential, thus promoting parish excellence.

The aging of many priests and attrition are superior to the number of ordinations to the priesthood. Thus, it has caused these parishes not to have the number of ministers needed to run the parishes affairs. The traditional leadership model where the parish pastor is solely responsible for all parish matters is no longer sustainable. From the literature review, it can be inferred that priests function in two realms: one as doctor of souls and the other as an administrative leader of the parish. Collaboration of lay leaders will help to overcome this reality, allowing the priest to focus in his pastoral ministry (Aschenbrenner 2002). The spirituality of a diocesan priest lives in the service and the edification of the Christian community (Rossetti 2005). Moreover, an effective pastor should be familiar with the realities of the people whom he serves (Bohr 2009). The priest has a radical communitarian form in relation to his bishop, other priests and the laity; he shares the priesthood of Christ and works for the building of the Body of Christ (John Paul II 1992).

Another concept considered in new ways of pastoral leadership is the collaborative leadership model, which empowers the baptismal call of the baptized, calling forth their gifts. This collaborative model, promotes shared ministry of the baptized and supports the pastor and the staff (Jewell and Ramey 2010). The dearth of priests has, in part, caused lay people in many instances to step up to fulfill roles that in the past only ordained ministers performed. This has created new ways of leadership in parishes. Moreover, lay people are seen in this new role of “lay ministers;” this is fulfilment of a call, known as a vocation and is a

conceptualization that still needs to be “defined” in the life of the Church (Hahnenberg 2010; Jewell and Ramey 2010; McCord 2010). Vatican Council II, opens participation of the lay people to exercise their baptismal call as the people of God, moving them from spectators to a more participatory role in the life of a parish. In the leadership model of Participatory Leadership, the pastor empowers the laity to participate in the decision-making process in the life of the parish and in decisions that affect parishioners’ spiritual life. The practical theological exploration of pastoral practices in a parish has been the purpose of the research study in order to advance the understanding of how Participatory Leadership enhances a vibrant community where parishioners have a voice and they share their gifts and talents building up the Kingdom of God.

The research question formulated at the beginning of the research was, “How does Participatory Leadership exercised by a pastor through the empowerment of the laity promote effective structures of shared responsibilities at the parish level?” To better explore the effects of Participatory Leadership, the research question was divided into three Research Questions to cover three specific areas of parish life. The first is the work of the parish, the second is the participation of people in parish life and the third is the sense of belonging to the parish. The three research questions are:

- How does Participatory Leadership promote patterns of shared responsibilities that promote excellence in parish life and pastoral activities? This question reflects upon the work of the parish.
- How does Participatory Leadership affect parish community life, at the level of commitment and involvement that parishioners have in their parish? This question reflects upon the participation of the people in parish life

- How does Participatory Leadership change parishioners' sense of parish identity? This question reflects upon the effect of Participatory Leadership in the people's feeling of belonging to the parish.

The methodology of the research design was to apply a mixed model composed by a quantitative and a qualitative approach. The research was conducted in two phases called "First Phase: An Intensive Approach" and "Second Phase: An Extensive Approach. The strategy applied was a sequential explanatory strategy. Each of the phases were independent of each other but connected by the results (Creswell 2009). The first phase collected and analyzed the numerical data obtained from a survey elaborated by the pastor in collaboration with the PPC. This phase focused on the gathering of the data. The data obtained was collected over the weekend Masses in pew with the help of the ushers. Over 1379 valid surveys were returned. The data from the survey were entered into an Excel file and then exported into the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) for tabulation. Answers to each of the questions contained in the survey were cross-tabulated with relevant demographics. A congregational engagement index was created and seven congregational engagement drivers or predictors were identified as critical and seven as less critical. All the information obtained from the first research phase was the base to enter the second research phase. The identified congregational drivers helped to elaborate the strategic plan for SKD. These drivers have served to focus on what really matters in this community of faith, targeting key areas that would make parishioners' religious experiences more fulfilling. Knowing what matters to people allows the elaboration of a strategic pastoral plan that responds to the needs of the community.

The participation of the PPC was crucial in the elaboration of the second phase of the research. They served both as the site for the research and as the research team. The second phase of the research collected and analyzed the quantitative data obtained from the first phase of the research. The selected methods were a combination of participatory action research approach and the classical pastoral circle. PAR provides a mean to evaluate the effect produced by empowering parishioners in parish life decisions. Moreover, it can evaluate how parishioners engage in a collaborative leadership and how through theological reflection they generate a body of knowledge about the practices in parish life that promote excellence in parish life. These methods applied are consistent with participatory action research combined with the classic pastoral circle. This decision was made due to the mutual affinities between these approaches. The research team followed the pastoral circle proposed by Holland and Henriot (1983). This second phase of the research was done over eighteen sessions. The PPC was divided into three groups according to the research design. Each of the groups met individually to analyze the corresponding questions pertinent to the areas assigned. These sessions followed the first three steps of the pastoral circle: the insertion process, social analysis and the theological reflection. For the last step of the pastoral circle, all the members of the PPC met on the last session of the pastoral planning; all these sessions were recorded and transcribed. These sessions produced over thirty-seven hours of recording time.

The second phase of the research was an extensive research that produced three documents:

- A pastoral plan that will guide the parish for the next three years.

- The conclusions obtained at the end of these sessions. The last ten minutes of all sessions was time reserved to answer in a collective way the three Research Questions posted, according to their participation over the sessions.
- In the open-ended questions, new themes concerning parish life were raised. They were discussed over the pastoral circle sessions.

Once all the sessions of the pastoral circle were finished, all the participants received a questionnaire with seven questions to evaluate their participation and to advance the understanding of Pastoral Leadership. Moreover, some questions asked participants to relate this body of knowledge acquired during their participation in the pastoral circle and to support their answers with related passages from the Bible. The questionnaire is shown on Appendix IV.

The PPC responses to this questionnaire helped to understand the concept and the theology of Participatory Leadership. Moreover, this leadership model applied at its best, can help parishes flourish, calling people to participate and to use their God-given talents to advance the Kingdom of God. The ethical and ecclesiological considerations regarding the application of Participatory leadership were examined.

Findings of the Study

The purpose of the study was to answer the question, “How does Participatory Leadership exercised by a pastor through the empowerment of the laity promote effective structures of shared responsibilities at the parish level?”

The PPC participated in the first and the second research phase of this research. In the first phase, the PPC helped to elaborate the questionnaire contained in the survey. They

collected questions and concerns from the community and the different pastoral groups. They were informed of the results obtained from the survey.

In the second phase of the research, the PPC tried to answer the research question reflecting upon the work of the parish, the participation of the people in parish life, and the effect of Participatory Leadership in the peoples' feeling of belonging to the parish. The research question was divided into three Research Questions to better understand the effect of Participatory Leadership in parish life. At the end of each session of the pastoral circle, the members of the research team were asked their opinions regarding each of the three Research Questions. The three groups answered these three-research questions and the results were analyzed with the individual responses obtained from the final evaluation questionnaire given to every research member of the PPC. The reasoning was to confront the collective responses with the individual responses. The purpose was to verify that the responses as a group were not influenced, eliminating bias originated by the group.

Findings of the First Research Question

To the first Research Question, "How does Participatory Leadership promote patterns of shared responsibilities that promote excellence in parish life and pastoral activities?" the conclusions are as follows:

Participatory Leadership empowers parishioners and promotes shared responsibilities. Parishioners associated ownership with responsibilities. Participatory Leadership manages from below because the parish is listening to its parishioners. Asking for opinions on parish problems, activities and possible solutions creates patterns of shared responsibilities within parishioners. When parishioners have a voice in the elaboration of the pastoral plan, they are actively involved in the decision-making because their voices are heard. Furthermore,

participation in the decision-making, creates a sense of shared responsibilities and commitment to outcome. It is a communal commitment. The pastor delegates his authority to the PPC in pursuit of excellence, negating one-leader idea and promoting a collegial idea that has been discerned through Participatory Leadership.

Participatory Leadership supports the greater good of the community. Ideas brought forth by parishioners assures decisions come closer to the right answer in resolving problems and creating better pastoral programs for the benefit of the life of the parish. Parishioners involved in the decision-making process become part of the solution. This collective decision generated foster success within the community. These processes generate structures of shared responsibilities, structures that support decisions that collectively are being taken in achieving the ultimate goal of excellence.

Shared responsibilities means delegation of specific functions and at the same time empowerment to create, implement, and control outcomes. Participatory Leadership calls parishioners to collaborate in all areas of the life of the parish. By sharing responsibilities, the parish is not only able to accomplish more, but it also creates better solutions. Calling parishioners to participate in the decision-making structure of the parish engages a multidisciplinary team that can generate a better outcome. Teamwork always generates success in any endeavor. Sharing responsibilities promotes collective decisions that support the work of the parish through the different layers of parish life. Teamwork gathers the talents of many people to work toward a common goal; this in turn generates an increased sense of engagement and ownership among parishioners. In a theological manner, teamwork mirrors the example of God who manifested Himself as one and indivisible “team” in the revelation of the “Holy Trinity.”

Participatory Leadership transforms the way parishioners participate and commits them in parish life; it is a call to parishioners to participate, to do things better, and to bring their individual skills to the service of the community. They really feel that they participate in the life of the parish, in the work of evangelization, and in the responsibilities that parishioners assume when they take ownership of the parish. Participatory Leadership supports an effective way to work in evangelization of the parish and opens channels to make this possible through the generation of identification and a sense of belonging that promotes participation among parishioners. Thus, parishioners become responsible parishioners, involved in the life of the parish. Participatory Leadership enables the community to thrive, fulfilling in a better way their spiritual needs. People feel accepted not only in the doors of the parish, but also in the community as human beings journeying in their spiritual lives.

Participatory Leadership enhances the participation of so many people becoming a driver for achieving excellence in parish life. Participatory Leadership captures the talents of many and puts them to work within areas they are familiar, making the chances of success greater. Finally, the conclusion is that Participatory Leadership promotes patterns of shared responsibilities that, in turn, promote excellence in parish life and pastoral activities.

Findings of the Second Research Question

To the second research question, “How does Participatory Leadership affect parish community life at the level of commitment and involvement that parishioners have in their parish? The conclusions are as follows:

Participatory Leadership creates spaces for parishioners where they can commit to participate and get involved in programs, ministries or activities of the parish. Parishioners who become active in the parish exercise their baptismal priesthood. They sanctify

themselves on their journey as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. The substance of this common priesthood is discipleship. This discipleship is the total offering of our lives to God. The engagement and commitment of the baptized is to live a holy life with the help of God's grace through discipleship (Gaillardetz 2008).

Participatory Leadership invites parishioners to support the evangelization of fellow parishioners that still have not made a commitment as disciples and followers of Jesus Christ. This process creates a sense of belonging where parishioners really live their lives as a community of faith sharing their, ideals and beliefs. This participation calls parishioners to minister to other parishioners in their process of conversion and discipleship. Two parish groups (The Emmaus Retreat and the Small Christian Communities) excel in this work of conversion and engaging parishioners in parish life, inviting them to participate in the different ministries, groups or activities of the parish. They mobilize dormant parishioners from the pews to be effective disciples, supporting the work of evangelization and carrying on the mission of the Church. This creates a sense of community by allowing parishioners to see themselves as members of the parish working for God and strengthening their Catholic identity in the process.

Participatory Leadership generates opportunities to participate in the life of the parish. Through empowerment, parishioners participate in the life of the church, enriching the life of the community. Parishioners feel motivated to participate, creating the invisible but strong structure of belonging, thus fulfilling their spiritual needs. Participatory Leadership relies on good communications that travels in two ways, between the religious and the laity. The more fluid this communication, increased sense of belonging and ownership occurs within parishioners.

Participatory Leadership invites participation to all parishioners who want to commit and get involved. At the same time, Participatory Leadership listens to people's opinions and ideas and promotes commitment and involvement in parish life. Parish leaders must lead by example, promoting participation at all levels in parish life. Parishioners who participate in the work of the church are more satisfied with their parish. Finally, the conclusion is that Participatory Leadership promotes commitment and involvement in parish life; this commitment in the end represents a life of obedience to God.

Findings of the Third Research Question

To the third research question, "How does Participatory Leadership change parishioners' sense of parish identity?" The conclusions are as follows:

The sense of belonging to the Catholic Church begins in baptism. The Eucharist is the Sacrament in which the Church fulfills its role. It reminds Catholics who they are and what their call is. They will lose their identity without the Eucharist (Hubbard 1998). Catholic identity is universal because the celebration of the Eucharist has the same structure worldwide. This allows Catholics to worship in any parish (Gustafson 2009). The Catholic identity generally refers to the parish that they attend rather than the institutionalized church (Baggett 2009).

Participatory Leadership promotes a sense of belonging through the empowerment and the sharing of responsibilities, giving parishioners a voice in the decision making of the parish. This in turn generates a sense of belonging to the parish. Identity among parishioners is a natural consequence of sharing responsibilities because sharing responsibilities facilitate the pursuit of excellence and affirmation of identification. Participatory Leadership assigns parishioners to better use their God given talents for the well-being of the community. It

increases their sense of belonging and engagement and their feeling of being an active part of the community of faith. This in turn originates a deep bond between parishioner and the parish, enhancing identification of the parish as “My Home, My Family.”

The Participatory Leadership model helps to create spaces that facilitates spiritual growth and a sense of belonging among parishioners, which in turn can result in an increased level of care and work for the good of the parish. At the same time, parishioners experience the transformative power of the Gospel. Participatory Leadership opens spaces where parishioners learn to live their lives as disciples through the love of God and neighbor. This integrates them into the body of Christ as active members who sharing God’s gifts in the building of the community of faith. The various ministries, devotions and spiritualities that are part of the life of SKD promote the love of God. The love of neighbor is effective through the outreach and mission programs that SKD runs. The outreach allows parishioners to get in contact with the needy. The mission program allows parishioners to offer not only their treasury, but also their time as well, sharing the Word of hope that only the Gospel brings. This promotes in parishioners an identification with their parish and with the universal Church; they feel that they actively work in helping others such as the poor and sharing the Word of the Lord and the Salvation brought by Jesus.

People like to come to a specific parish because they feel that they are part of that community of faith. Participatory Leadership fulfills an important role in opening opportunities for people to commit and participate in the life of the parish; this fulfilment generates identification and a sense of belonging to the parish. Communication plays an important role into carrying out the message of the various opportunities that people have to participate in parish activities. Participatory Leadership promotes identity and opens the

communication channels in both horizontally and vertically. Through the PPC, the parish gives a voice to all parishioners and encourages participation in the decision-making that affects their spiritual life. Listening to parishioners positively affects the process of building identity among parishioners. This process of effective communication increases the sense of belonging and engagement because parishioners have a voice; this in turn increases their sense of belonging and creates a strong bond between them and the parish. The end result foster ownership.

Finally, the conclusion is that Participatory Leadership promotes greater identity and sends a clear message to parishioners that they have a strong role in the life of the parish.

Implications of Participatory Leadership in Parish Life

At the beginning of the study, members of the PPC agreed to participate in this research study. For them, the experiences of the implementation of this new leadership model in parish life changed their perception on how a parish runs.

The PPC used the pastoral circle as a method to research SKD's practices and concluded that the pastoral circle highlights the service that the PPC renders to the community: dealing with parish problems and formulating possible solutions; shaping ideas and modeling solutions in a spiral way; reviewing a wide range of possible outcomes for the benefit of the community. In this manner, the circle promotes the vision of the parish at all levels of parish life. This allows all parishioners to have a clear vision of where the parish is going.

The pastoral circle clarified the concept of Pastoral Leadership and its call to support the pastor in running the parish and to take responsibilities at all levels of the structure of the parish. Furthermore, the formulation of pastoral planning is the product of the prioritization

generated by the reflection on the pastoral practices of the parish. This in turn produces better relationships within the parish because different groups of the parish have a say in the direction of the parish.

The PPC observed a transformation in the structure of the decision making from a vertical structure to a more flexible, mixed model composed of vertical and horizontal relations. Participatory Leadership gives voice to parishioners, allowing them to participate in decisions that affect their spiritual lives. Participatory Leadership calls parishioners to bring forth their gift to the service of the community. This collaboration unloads the workload of the pastor. This in turn allows the pastor to focus more fully on his pastoral work through the celebration of the sacraments and accompanying the people of God in their daily affairs. The opening of new relations also opens new channels of communications. Thus, Participatory Leadership works for effective democratic communications, allowing parishioners to participate. This provides a framework for a more efficient way of parish work.

Participatory Leadership changes the cultic model of pastor-centered decision-making and transforms the parish into a modern community of faith. It becomes an articulated body where all the parts correspond and are important to the body. This is an application of the concept that St. Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 12:12-31.⁷⁹ This concept in turn has a positive effect in the community, promoting a sense of community belonging that engages the entire parish. Participatory Leadership welcomes new ideas with constant conversation, generating a synergy that uses people's talents to the service of the community, a service impossible to achieve by one person. Participatory Leadership in this manner promotes teamwork using the maximum potential of skills provided to the community by God. This in

⁷⁹ Same as note 19.

turn helps most pastors to cover a wide range of managerial skills that they have never been exposed to before.

Participatory Leadership is inclusive because its call for collaboration allows representation of all the members of the parish community into the PPC. Participatory Leadership makes the parish excel, reaching its full potential. Parishioners integrate the body of Christ through participation in the life of the parish. At the same time, collaboration in the different responsibilities brings forth abundant natural gifts that help the parish to thrive. This, in turn, increases in parishioners the sense of engagement and belonging and promotes in them a transformation from being passive parishioners to active members of the parish. Parishioners feel a belonging to Christ and an increased sense of excellence in parish life. Participatory Leadership offers shared responsibilities and delegates to the PPC members' authority for implementation and control. They in turn delegate that authority to the correspondent heads of pastoral groups or head of ministries. This sharing of responsibilities then flows through the different layers of parish life. This allows the parish to accomplish more and at the same time implement better solutions.

The effect of Participatory Leadership in parishioners is an increase in commitment and involvement. The opening of parishioner participation has brought new people to become active parishioners and at the same time has enhanced the participation of committed parishioners, transforming them into promoters who invite other parishioners to participate. Thus, Participatory Leadership promotes the participation of the laity, promotes the work of evangelization, and provides more encounters with fellow parishioners. Participatory Leadership involves parishioners in the making of decisions that affect their parish life; this creates a community of equals with different assignments: all-important in the participation

in the building of the kingdom of God. Furthermore, Participatory Leadership promotes the precepts conferred to the Church by the empowerment of God enunciated in *Lumen Gentium* of charity, humility and self-sacrifice to fulfill the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Assigning parishioners a proper role in the proclamation of the Kingdom of God and giving the laity unlimited opportunities according to their abilities, to help in the work of evangelization of the Church (Vatican Council II - *Lumen Gentium* 1964).

The goal of Participatory Leadership is to support the proclamation of the Kingdom of God to every parishioner who comes to celebrate the Eucharist. Thus, Participatory Leadership builds a deep relationship with Jesus through the constant participation of the Eucharist. Through the Eucharist, parishioners are united to the body of Christ and participate in the summit of the evangelization that is the Eucharist, carrying out the mission of the Church (John Paul II, 2003).

Participatory Leadership promotes excellence in parish life under the ethical and moral principles of the Catholic Church. The empowerment of parishioners promotes their voice in the life of the parish. The decisions and actions developed are constantly under the principles of love of God and neighbor. The love of neighbor is the way to find God, and separation is a separation from God (Benedict XVI, 2005). Participatory Leadership propitiates encounters with fellow parishioners and makes the parish the place in which holy relationships exist and parishioners live their lives acting ethically in search of truth and good, which leads them to the path of happiness and towards perfection (John Paull II, 1998). The Christian practices reflected in the present research enlighten a way of life that is congruent with the moral Christian values and beliefs. These parish practices shape the way of life of their parishioners. These new ways of practices shape how parishioners live and

how they make decisions in accord with new learned Catholic morals and ethical principles. These practices are not only ethical, but promote Christian virtues that lead to holiness, which is the purpose of our baptismal call. Jesus is the norm for all Christian Ethics (International Theological Commission, 1999).

Conclusions

Participatory Leadership in a parish under its pastor's leadership empowers the laity. Such sharing deepens ecclesiological insights on decision-making processes. Practices that positively affect the flourishing of parish life not only promote parish excellence, they advance the understanding and insights of the teachings of the Post Vatican Council II Church. The effects of Participatory Leadership make it clear that they promote excellence in parish life precisely along the lines of the contemporary Catholic theological understanding of the role of the pastor and the nature of the parish. These practices foster a sense of commitment and involvement as well as an increased sense of identity among its parishioners.

Participatory Leadership works to promote shared responsibilities; this promotes parishioners to commit and to get involved, creating a deep sense of identity to their parish. This study would offer parishes with the same multicultural and multilingual composition a direction to shape parish excellence.

Participatory Leadership requires that pastors be open to sharing responsibilities with their parishioners, who can share their gifts for the well-being of the community of faith. Pastors need to become spiritual administrators; this is part of their diocesan spirituality (Aschenbrenner 2002). Pastors need to be open to welcome parishioners with solidarity and

fraternity, promoting a culture of encounter and touching lives with the proclamation of Jesus Christ (Francis 2013).

Participatory Leadership requires a PPC whose members are willing to delegate their responsibilities; this delegation in turn promotes participation among fellow parishioners. Thus, they become discernments of the gifts and the needs of the community (Pickett 2007).

Participatory Leadership transforms vertical structures of relationship in parish life into a mixed model that corresponds to vertical and horizontal structures. This opens the parish to structures that respond to a model that is in the line of collaborative leadership models. Communications play an important role that supports the delivery of the message of opportunities and involvement in parish life.

Participatory Leadership lightens the work of the pastor and allows him to focus on his ministerial and pastoral work. The pastor is able to delegate administrative work to parishioners with qualified expertise; this diminishes time consuming administrative work and frees the pastor's to focus on the work of evangelization. In this leadership model pastors enable parishioners to act in a collaborative manner (Sweetser and Foster 1993). At the same time, the pastor promotes intentional discipleship among parishioners, attracting more Catholics to participate and not alienating them from the Church (Weddell 2012).

Participatory Leadership promotes spiritual growth among parishioners, which opens participation and evangelization. The sense of belonging fosters a wellbeing of the parish a stewardship and more transformative power of the Gospel. Parishioners journey as disciples, and at the same time, they participate in social justice projects. This commitment to the presence of the parish and its' transformative role in the world, promotes justice and equality for all. Thus, Participatory Leadership not only transforms how priests relate to parishioners,

but also how parishioners relate to parishioners. Such transformation promotes a lifestyle of collaboration where power is not centralized but shared (Edwards 1997; Gaillardetz 2008).

The pastoral circle has served to help the PPC to reflect on the entire parish's practices. This reflection leads to a transformation. Parishioners are committed to grow in their faith. The thorough theological reflection assists understanding of our transformative practices. Furthermore, these practices, combined with the engagement predictors identified in the first phase of the research, helped to prioritize and formulate a pastoral plan that is in accord with the needs of the parishioners and with the continued mission of the Church.

Participatory Leadership is inclusive and calls for participation at all levels of parish life and parish groups. All ministries and spiritualities have representation in the PPC. This has generated in parishioners a sense of commitment and involvement that allows the parish to work towards excellence.

Participatory Leadership assigns roles to parishioners, allowing them to participate in the work of evangelization of the parish. Through empowerment, parishioners have a voice and they participate in the decision making in the parish. These decisions are taken in the light of the moral and ethical principles of the Catholic Church where the love of God and neighbor are constantly observed.

Participatory Leadership transforms the parish as a place of encounter where fellow parishioners can develop holy relationships; these are spaces for encounter with God and each other (Brennan 2008). People come to the parish because they feel that they are part of the community of faith. They can participate in the life of the parish and at the same time feel that the parish is their home and parishioners are their family. The parish practices that they participate in help them to shape their lives in accordance with the morals and ethics learned

in parish life and in practicing Christian virtues in the search for holiness. Thus, they not only shape themselves, but the world around them (Cahalan 2010).

Participatory Leadership promotes the Eucharist, which is the center of the spiritual life of the parish. (Paul VI 1965; John Paul II 1992).

Participatory Leadership applies Jesus' leadership characteristics (Sofield and Kuhn 1995). Participatory Leadership listens to parishioners, and promotes response to their needs and concerns in pastoral matters. It promotes the vision and the mission of the parish and transforms relationships between the pastor and parishioners and among parishioners. Furthermore, Participatory Leadership generates spaces of encounter where parishioners live their lives as a community of disciples, who observe the love of god and the love of neighbor as guiding principles. The effect produced is participation among parishioners in search of excellence.

Recommendations for Future Research

Parishes should have the opportunity to research in their own practices to determine if they are accomplishing the desired outcome. Pastoral practices are at the heart of parishes, and they reflect the life of a parish. Such practices determine if a parish is a vibrant community and promoters of commitment and involvement among its parishioners.

The pastor still is the predominant figure of the leadership model applied to a parish. If the pastor is open to leadership models that promote collaboration, he will call forth the God given gifts of parishioners and use them for the well-being of the community of faith. If pastors are not open to collaboration, in time, parishes will lose their ability to evangelize. Parishioners would move to other parishes where they can participate as active parishioners in the life of the parish.

Participatory Leadership worked in SKD parish. It requires from the pastor an invitation to collaboration; to the parishioners it requires a disposition to listen and respond to that call. The benefits that the parish experienced in applying this leadership model are worth the extra work that was required for its implementation. All parishes should be centers where parishioners experience fellowship, human warmth, extended family, and most important, the love of God in their lives: Participatory Leadership can help to carry out all.

The recommendation for future studies is that the application of Participatory Leadership, when applied in a different setting with a different social composition, still upholds all the findings in the present research study.

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APPENDIX I: CONSENT FORM

You are being invited to participate in a research study about parish life and planning. The purpose of your participation will be to provide feedback and interpretation of the data collected in the parish. The researcher is the Rev. Enrique Delgado, a doctoral candidate at St. Thomas University, who is conducting this work as part of his doctoral dissertation. There are no risks if you decide to participate in this research study, nor are there any costs for participating in the study. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but may help extend understanding of Catholic parish life and advance ministry effectiveness.

Your actual name will not be used in the research, eventual dissertation, or any other presentations or publications resulting from this work. All research records will be stored securely and only the researcher and the dissertation committee will have access to the records. Upon the completion of this study, the data will continue to be maintained by the researcher with all the protections described above. Should the data be entrusted to an external archive, your name will not be given to the archive.

Participation in research groups of this kind involves important conversations about the data as well as the parish itself. As with any conversation, it is possible that the conversations you have about the data and the parish could affect your relationship and experiences in the parish.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You have the right to withdraw your participation at any time and to refuse to participate without penalty or reprisal in any way. If you choose to participate, please sign this form below. By signing, you are also indicating that you are over 18 years of age and therefore of a legal age to participate.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about being in this study, you may contact the researcher, Rev. Enrique Delgado, at 305-206-0771 or edelgado@stu.edu, or his doctoral advisor, Dr. Bryan Froehle, at (305) 628-6636 or froehleb@stu.edu.

I promise to extend all the protections described above in full.

Signature of Researcher

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Research Project Participant

Signature of Research Project Participant

Date

Appendix II

Representatives of the Pastoral Council 2012 per Group

First Group

Worship

Adoration Blessed Sacrament

Altar Servers

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Children's Mass Eucharistic Ministers Lectors Ushers/Greeters/Traffic

Music Ministry

Sacristan

Faith Formation

Religious Education

RCIA

Bible Study

Spiritual Life

Small Christian Communities

Prayer & Life Workshop

Hijos de la Madre de Dios

Detention Ministry

Emmaus

Second Group

Knights of Columbus

Outreach (2)

St. Vincent De Paul Society

Outreach

Respect Life

Family Life

Al-Anon

Angels in Peace

Married Couples

Padres y Madres Orantes

Rosary Makers

Baptism Annulments Vocations Cup

Youth (2)

Youth Ministry

Third Group

Community Life

Feast Day Celebration

Special Events Hospitality Sunday Hospitality Special Events

Blood Bank Drive

Stewardship

Stewardship

Public Relations Parish Directory

Communication - Webmaster

Cornerstone Group

Finance Committee

Volunteer Ministry

Appendix III
Building Our Parish Future Together
St. Katharine Drexel Parish, Weston

Your participation is voluntary and anonymous. Please also feel free to skip any question you wish. The results will be reviewed by the parish pastoral council and staff, and shared with the parish as a whole.

How well does our parish do the following?

1=Not at All, 2=Little, 3=Some, 4=Very Much

1 2 3 4

- 1. Meet your spiritual needs.
- 2. Warmly welcome people to the parish.
- 3. Form young people in their faith.
- 4. Bring a sense of holiness to worship.
- 5. Provide good music for worship.
- 6. Link preaching at mass to daily life.
- 7. Promote vocations to the priesthood.
- 8. Manage parish finances.
- 9. Listen to the people.
- 10. Build trust within the parish.
- 11. Reflect our parish mission and vision.
- 12. Provide strong parish leadership.
- 13. Warmly welcome people when visiting the Parish office.

How interested are you in these activities or ministries for yourself or your family members?

1=Not at All, 2=Little, 3=Some, 4=Very Much

1 2 3 4

- 14. Special children's masses.
- 15. Children's liturgy of the Word during regular masses.
- 16. Preparing children for First Communion.
- 17. Preparing children for Confirmation.
- 18. Children's religious education in general.
- 19. Youth ministry programs.
- 20. Family life programs.
- 21. Marriage enrichment programs.
- 22. Bible study opportunities.
- 23. Adult faith formation programs.
- 24. Adult volunteers for programs serving children and teens.
- 25. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.
- 26. Emmaus retreat.
- 27. Small Christian communities.
- 28. Detention Ministry.
- 29. Respect Life projects.
- 30. Social justice projects.
- 31. Celebrating our annual parish Gala.
- 32. Celebrating our parish feast day.

How effective are these parish communications?

1=Not at All, 2=Little, 3=Some, 4=Very Much

1 2 3 4

- 33. Parish bulletin.
- 34. Parish e-mail messages.
- 35. Parish website.
- 36. Signs in parish offices and worship space.
- 37. Parish financial statements.
- 38. Information about our building project.
- 39. Information about church groups, programs and activities.

Please express your agreement or disagreement.

1=Strongly Disagree 3=Somewhat Agree

2=Somewhat Disagree 4=Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4

- 40. I feel closely connected to my parish.
- 41. I feel connected to the Archdiocese.
- 42. I feel connected to the Catholic Church.
- 43. I know our parish's mission and vision.
- 44. I try to be involved in parish life.
- 45. I would attend healing masses if they were celebrated more frequently.
- 46. We need a Spanish Mass on Sunday night.
- 47. We should increase our parish support for the poor in Haiti and in Peru.
- 48. We should increase our parish support for the poor in Belle Glades, Florida.
- 49. My faith informs my political views.
- 50. Our parish should be a stewardship parish, where we commit to offer our time, talent, and treasure as a return gift back to God and the community.
- 51. It is important to attend mass each week.
- 52. Parents of children and teens should bring their children to mass every weekend.
- 53. Religious education is more important for my children than any activity from school.

54. Are you: 1. Male. 2. Female.

55. In what year were you born:

56. Were you born outside the United States?

1. No. 2. Yes. 57. What country?

58. What best describes your marital status:

1. Never married.

2. Married in the Catholic Church.

3. Married but not in the Catholic Church.

4. Divorced. 5. Widow/widower.

59. Do you have children under 15? 1. No. 2. Yes.

60. What is your highest level of education?

1. High school or less.

2. Some university studies.

3. A university degree.

61. Are you or your family registered as a member of the parish? 1. No. 2. Yes.

62. Do you use envelopes when you contribute to parish support? 1. No. 2. Yes.

63. About how much do you or your household give to the parish each week? \$ _____.

64. What one thing do you most like about the parish?

65. What new thing would you most like the parish to do?

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Appendix IV

1. Have Participatory Leadership changed your perception about how a parish should work? What kind of Bible passages best reflect what we have done? Please elaborate.

2. Has the participation in “The Pastoral Circle” transformed your perception of leadership in parish life? What kind of Bible passages best reflect what we have done? Please elaborate.

3. Has a thorough reflection of our pastoral practices in the parish allowed us to develop a better pastoral planning? What kind of Bible passages best reflect what we have done? Please elaborate.

4. Do you feel that Participatory Leadership will generate a deep sense of belonging and engagement among parishioners? What kind of Bible passages best reflect what we have done? Please elaborate.

5. According to your experience, do you agree with the following statement?
“Participatory Leadership promotes shared responsibilities that generate excellence in parish life,” Please elaborate why?

6. According to your experience, do you agree with the following statement?
“Participatory Leadership promotes parishioners to commit and get involved in parish life.”
Please elaborate why?

7. According to your experience, do you agree with the following statement?
“Participatory Leadership promotes identity among parishioners.” Please elaborate why?