To Reform & Transform the Church

This issue of A Matter of Spirit looks at the current crisis in the Catholic Church. The Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report of last summer reopened the wound of the sexual abuse in the Church. In this issue, we will be looking not at the sexual abuse per se, but at the wider issues of the structure and culture of the Church in which that abuse took place.

Since reports of the abuse and cover-up came to light in 2002, new protocols have been implemented in the Church to prevent such abuse from recurring. While these guidelines are necessary and welcome, many questions remain about how the Church as an institution operates. The articles in this issue address some of those questions: How is it that the abuse of children could have been so pervasive and lasted so long? What is it about the structure and culture of the institutional Church that tolerated the cover-up of such sinful and criminal behavior? How did the Church’s hierarchical structure and clerical culture contribute to an atmosphere in which survivors were afraid to come forward, and too often disbelieved or silenced when they did? Where are the signs of hope and transformation? And how can the laity be part of bringing a new vision of Church into being? We hope that the articles in this issue will inspire you to consider ways in which you can be part of the renewal and transformation of the Church.

The Church

Spiritual Body & Human Institution

By Fr. Terrence J. Moran

The story is told of a group of American bishops making their ad limina visit to Rome in the 1980's, a visit which included, in addition to meetings with the Pope, sessions with the heads of the main Vatican offices. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, then head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, emphatically lectured the bishops that the Church was not a democracy. One of the American bishops remarked, if that were true, then maybe they should choose the next Pope not by voting but by picking names out of a hat and leaving the choice to God. The American bishop and the future Pope Benedict XVI each had a point. The Church, like any other human institution, is a political reality; but it is more than a political reality.
The Church has lived within nearly every human political system conceivable and has influenced and been influenced by each of them. Our bishops dress like Renaissance and Byzantine courtiers. Catholic Worker Brian Terrell notes the irony that at the Eucharist the priest dresses like a functionary of the Roman Empire that killed Jesus! The pope is an absolute monarch yet the Church has Canon Law which details the rights and duties of members and outlines due process. And many Popes have discovered that their absolute authority often is challenged by the powerful inertia or resistance of the flock. Religious orders are outstandingly successful examples of each giving according to ability and receiving according to need. Whatever political systems the Church has adopted in its long history, it has always been administered by flawed human beings and, not infrequently, by gravely irresponsible ones.

It’s important to acknowledge as well that many of the values the Church now treasures as its own, such as the dignity of the human person and conscience, the existence of inviolable human rights, the equality of women, and an abhorrence for racism, slavery and torture, all had their origins in secular political movements, and were often initially vigorously opposed by Church authority. Where was the Spirit at work in the 19th century in the United States? In secular and non-Catholic groups that worked for the abolition of slavery or in Catholic bishops and theologians who largely defended slavery as morally legitimate? Who was impelled by the Spirit in the clerical sex abuse crisis – secular journalists who listened to and amplified the voices of the victims, or the bishops who ignored and silenced victims and abetted and protected their abusers?

The Church also shares with virtually every institution in human society deep roots in patriarchy – the accumulation of power in the hands of men and the valuing of men’s power and interests over every other concern. We see the same behavior at moments of crisis in other patriarchal institutions as we have seen in the hierarchy of the Church. Corporations, the police, the military, professional athletics, and academic institutions all tend to resist public inquiry into their inner workings, attempt to deal with abuses internally in ways that preserve the reputation of the institution, silence and marginalize dissident voices, and value institutional prestige over justice and equity. Of course, these behaviors are all the more repugnant and inexplicable when they come from those who profess to be the shepherds of God’s flock.

Dorothy Day, someone not unfamiliar with the corruption of the hierarchy, said, “The Gospel provides the church with the seeds for its own renewal.” I would suggest three seeds of renewal which the Gospel provides to the Church in this present crisis:

**DIALOGUE.** It is said that it takes the Church at least a century to integrate the experience of an ecumenical council. That means that we are just a little more than halfway to integrating Vatican II. The clerical abuse crisis calls us to a revival of the ecclesiology of Vatican II expressed in the documents *Lumen Gentium: The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church,* (1964) and *Gaudium et Spes: The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (1965).

What kind of structures emerge from *Lumen Gentium’s* core model of the Church as “the People of God” who share together in a baptismal call to priesthood, prophecy, and government? How many otherwise well-informed Catholics say “the Church” when they really mean “the hierarchy?” The imagination that reflexively sees the ordained when it hears the word “Church” needs to be transformed. *Gaudium et Spes* begins with the stirring words (marred by the non-inclusive language): “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts.”

Even more remarkably, *Gaudium et Spes* affirms: “Respect and love ought to be extended also to those who think or act differently than we do in social, political and even religious matters. In fact, the more deeply we come to understand
their ways of thinking through such courtesy and love, the more easily will we be able to enter into dialogue with them,” (#28).

What marvels of healing might emerge if the Church took seriously the call of *Gaudium et Spes* to be a dialogue partner in the world rather than a tedious nag? And the call of *Gaudium et Spes* is not just to hierarchs but to all of us, to dialogue with people on the opposite side of the political spectrum as well as the annoying relative across the dining room table.

**LISTENING TO THE SPIRIT.** There are few organizations in the world that have the historical depth and geographical scope of the Catholic Church. Could the Church, with its rich contemplative traditions, join with other institutions in deep listening to the voices and stories of victims of abuse? Can we discern the movement of the Spirit in the #MeToo movement, in Black Lives Matter, in movements for indigenous rights, and in victims’ advocacy groups? What an opportunity of grace it would be if the Church, based on such discernment, were to partner with other organizations in researching and implementing best practices of transparency and accountability.

The wound to the Church from the clerical sexual abuse crisis has been mortal. The passion story in the Gospel of John (19:33-34) tells us that the body of Jesus was ripped open by the lance of a soldier of the Roman Empire, a regime based on oppression and abuse. But out of that wound, flowed blood and water, symbols of Baptism and Eucharist, the sources of the life of the Church. Can we believe that facing this grievous wound can result in contemplative action for an unimaginable renewal of the body of the Church and for the healing of the nations?

**COSMIC VISION.** G. K. Chesterton said that the most traditional organizations are also the most democratic because they give a vote even to the dead and are not limited to the oligarchy of people who happen to be walking around. The Church surely has access to the deep wells of renewal in the communion of saints. Theologian Ilia Delio expands that notion by suggesting that the Church should also give a vote to the future. For her, the root meaning of “catholic” is not so much “universal” as “whole.” She suggests that the “catholicity” of the church refers not to a past perfection to which the Church seeks to be rigidly faithful but rather to a future wholeness to which the Church, along with all creation, is directed. Can we look to the energies of the evolving cosmos for what they might tell us about Church renewal?

Perhaps the most important guide for healing from the clerical abuse crisis is the stunning encyclical letter of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*(2015). What we have in *Laudato Si*’ is astounding: the leader of a religious tradition that helped to form the dominant story of Western, patriarchal culture, systematically deconstructing it. The same patriarchal culture that demeaned women and devastated Earth is also responsible for the clerical sex abuse crisis. In *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis speaks of the sacredness of all that exists, of attention to the smallest things, of listening to the cries of agony of an abused planet, that diversity is a gift not a threat. Does this not offer a path to healing to a Church that has acted as if clerical lives are sacred and the lives of children and vulnerable adults are disposable, that sees the world as a hierarchy rather than the community of mutuality that it is?

What the Church needs to move forward from this current moment of crisis is people who are not blind to its brokenness but who are passionate for its mission. That spirit is expressed in a prayer, “I Love This Church,” attributed to Walter Burghardt, S.J.

> In the course of a half century,  
> I have seen more Christian corruption  
> than you have read of.  
>  
> I have tasted it.  
> I have been reasonably corrupt myself.  
>  
> And yet, I love this church,  
> this living, pulsing, sinning people of God  
> with a crucifying passion.  
>  
> Why?  
>  
> For all the Christian hate,  
> I experience here a community of love.  
>  
> For all the institutional idiocy,  
> I find here a tradition of reason.  
>  
> For all the individual repressions,  
> I breathe here an air of freedom.  
>  
> For all the fear of sex,  
> I discover here the redemption of my body.  
>  
> In an age so inhuman,  
> I touch here tears of compassion.  
>  
> In a world so grim and humorless,  
> I share here rich joy and earthy laughter.  
>  
> In the midst of death,  
> I hear an incomparable stress on life.  
>  
> For all the apparent absence of God,  
> I sense here the real presence of Christ.

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As I write this, we are entering into the season of Advent. Preachers and spiritual writers often frame Advent as a season marking hope that is not yet fulfilled. They describe the virtue of waiting in anticipation of a better world, God’s reign, a more just existence. It will be hard to preach waiting as a virtue, given the revelations of summer 2018. The latest “crisis moment” discloses and repeats an unholy waiting, enabling a passive behavior spawned by clerical culture and its long reach.

At their November 2018 meeting in Baltimore, the U.S. Catholic Bishops got a taste of clerical culture and its disadvantages. The bishops gathered with resolve and growing urgency—widely publicized in advance of their meeting—to adopt policy changes in response to the summer 2018 publication of Pennsylvania’s Grand Jury Report, and the demotion and departure of Cardinal Theodore McCarrick. But the U.S. bishops were stopped by a last-minute intervention from the Vatican. It was hard not to infer from the Vatican’s timing and the bishops’ immediate responses that the bishops felt blindsided, stifled, and stalled. In Baltimore...
the U.S. bishops saw in real time the confusing and confused clerical culture that highly prizes rank and protocol over transparency, urgency, subsidiarity and adult agency, even bishops’ individual and collective agency as a Conference. Many Catholics know well how it must have felt to be told to wait.

The current moment of crisis is first and foremost about victims and their rights and healing, but the sad events of 2018 have reminded us that the larger context is also scandalous. The Pennsylvania Report documented patterns in a church that infantilizes its members, discounts their word, and constrains their action unless and until permission is granted from above. Scandal occurs while everyone awaits instructions. In the abuse cases, clergy and diocesan officials waited for the respective bishop. Now U.S. bishops will wait for the Vatican’s permission to enact delayed reforms. And far too often, parishioners wait for direction from the pastor. Unholy waiting is a feature of the pervasive culture that caused the cover up of abuse. It is fair to call it a long-standing pastoral scandal. A pattern of passively waiting for permission, coupled with docility toward leaders and their orders, has little to do with justice or pastoral life. This is starkly seen in scenes of scandal, but is still true in Catholicism as lived day to day, by real people in real homes and parishes. There is such a thing as unholy waiting, and Catholics have been far too well-schooled in it for too long.

In the face of crisis it can be consoling as well as empowering to stop waiting and to take action at the local level, where effective global action often begins. Small steps encourage larger ones as we do something constructive, facing questions such as these: How might we move forward in our homes, parishes and faith communities with realism, healing and hope, communicating with an honesty and transparency that seem rare in church culture but highly prized in twenty-first century living? And how might we committed laity and clergy members “catch ourselves” creating a better church culture without waiting for permission?

Modest steps forward can be taken at home or in the parish or faith community. Intended to be practical, these proposed actions could be shaped for use in a variety of settings and among various groups, without waiting.

**CONNECT** with another parish’s concerned parishioners, taking small steps toward building conversation and energy for a regional gathering. A meeting of concerned Catholics from a few parishes could start with an agenda of ideas. Imagine an eventual synod or regional gathering to consider ways to achieve trust and transparency about other areas of church life, such as finances and governance. Start by creating a To Do List.

**IMAGINE** and propose changes in Canon Law. Canon Law (church law) resulted from another era of reform in the church, under Pope Gregory in the eleventh century. Canon Law was updated twice in the last century, in 1917 and then again in 1983, after the Second Vatican Council. Updating and revision of Canon Law are essential to the life of the Church so that the law can reflect pastoral realities, rather than be invoked as the reason that policies and practices cannot change. The parish is hardly the place where the law will be revised, but any change will require creative thought and action locally (at parish, diocesan and national conference levels), in order to envision and concretely propose how Canon Law could ensure good pastoral practices rather than constrain them. If the pope successfully convenes international meetings on abuse and cover-up, Canon Law will inevitably appear as an item for discussion. Its updating is crucial for a Church that cannot wait much longer for greater lay participation in Church planning, governance, and oversight.

**RE-INVIGORATE** the Parish Pastoral Council as a transparent mechanism for creative and critical input from lay people. While its status is governed by law, the Pastoral Council is intended to bring forth the talents of lay people, and not just their time and treasure. Consider when and how to approach parish leaders and concerned parishioners. Forming an image of a better working council can yield measurable results, and even the best of councils can improve. Gently persuade and inspire.

**CONVERSE:** Form a small group and invite people to gather to discuss the topic of the scandal and any other topic related to your best hopes for a renewed Church. Proceed in any way that encourages real exchange, a conversation that does not end neatly but maintains a singular focus on generating creative ideas for action in your small group, or parish, or the Church at large. This can be a group that meets very infrequently or regularly, determined by the group. Some will want to do this as a family, depending on age and circumstances of its members.

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**A pattern of passively waiting for permission, coupled with docility toward leaders and their orders, has little to do with justice or pastoral life.**
My first pastor after my ordination would occasionally say, “The worst thing that ever happened to the Church was Constantine.” The German Redemptorist moral theologian Bernard Häring said something similar in a book he wrote shortly before he died, Priesthood Imperiled:

“In the fourth century when Constantine, a “convert” to the faith, was crowned emperor by the bishop of Rome, drastic changes took place. While it is true that the Church was freed from bloody persecution, it quickly became evident that she was also greatly hampered in her quest to follow in the footsteps of Jesus the Servant. Accommodation of, and subservience to, civil authority...unfortunately became a reality in all parts of the Church. All too many bishops either succumbed or came close to the fate of becoming ‘priests of the king.”

Clericalism is how the Church drifted from discipleship and servant-leadership to defining ministry in terms of power or authority. Pope Francis has identified clericalism as a sickness. As the Church became mainstreamed into the empire of the Greco-Roman world, it often was coopted by that culture. Families of the Mediterranean world were an ordered hierarchy and patriarchal society. At the top was the paterfamilias, the head of the household, in the ordo (rank) of the family. He held special legal powers and privileges. He had jurisdiction (patris potestas) over all the members of the family from slaves to adult male sons, their wives and children, and even married daughters.

The empire was also hierarchical in nature. Categories were established by birth—patrician or plebeian. The patricians were the small ruling elite. They traced their ancestry back to the first Senate. They controlled political power. The plebeians were the rest of the citizens. Women and children were not citizens. They derived their social status from father or husband. Patriarchal women and children were granted rights not available to women and children of the plebeians.

Rank was based on wealth and political privilege. The highest levels were the senatorial and equestrian orders which were above the ordinary citizen. Attainment of honors could elevate a plebeian to Novus Homo or “New Man”. This would make his family nobilis; they became “noble plebeians.”

This Greco-Romanized Church took on hierarchical order and adapted theology to this world. It is when the Church took the idea of ordo that we see the terms “clergy” and “lay” as categories. The Latin word “ordinare” (from which we derive the word ordination) means “to designate.” In other words ordination designates rank in the Church.

Franciscan Friar Kenan Osborne in his book, Ministry: Lay Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church: Its History and Theology writes, “There would have been no ordination in the Christian community if there was not an understanding of church leadership as an ordo, both in the society called church and eventually in the society called empire.” One does not find the terms “clergy,” “lay” or “ordo” in the New Testament. These terms came to the Church from the culture of Roman antiquity.

There is not a problem with the Church recognizing structure or order. Nor is there a problem in using the word ordination (ordinatio) to describe...
the recognition of public persons in the Church as leaders of the Christian community. Problems arise when the orders or ranks of Christian society were given the “status” similar to the socio-political world of Constantine.

Osborne writes, “The concern arises when the ordination ritual is interpreted to mean: a) a conferment of sacred power, b) based on a conferment of an ontological repositioning.” Ontological repositioning means that the ordained have become a new type of being. When the ordained have been perceived as given a power to become a “new man” or separate caste, a chasm opens between them and the laity. This is reinforced with symbols that separate out the ordained: wearing clothing outside the liturgy that indicates social status, living apart from the laity, and mandatory celibacy. These symbols are designed to say the clergy are on an ontologically different level from others.

Theology then turned from the New Testament understanding of discipleship and sought models for ordination in the hereditary priesthood of the Old Testament. In the New Testament the only priests are the Jewish priests; Jesus, solely by analogy (and only in Letter to the Hebrews), and all the baptized are referred to as priests. As Christian leadership came to be seen as a different rank apart from the baptized, Old Testament patterns were applied to the ordination rites. They looked to the priesthood of Aaron. The ordination of Aaron involved two rites: he was clothed in rich liturgical garb and he was anointed. He was thus consecrated for cultic service. These rituals were added to the Christian ordination rituals. Ministry slowly became defined as a cultic priesthood, that is, the power to perform sacred rituals. Under such a model, ordination became one-sided, static and a personal power.

After this ontologizing of ordination, the Church began to create a theology of rank. It adopted Greek dualism which saw spirit superior to matter. Creation is ranked by the amount of spirit it contains. The more spirit the higher it ranked. Rank moved upward from inanimate objects, plants, animals to humans. In humans, men were seen as superior to women. Above humans were the spiritual beings, angels, with the Source of all being, God, on top.

This theology expressed itself in a spirituality of ascent. The more you left behind matter the higher you ascended in the divine order. The “dominion” that humans were given in creation, originally meant “to manage,” devolved into “domination.” This dualism created a two-level society. On a higher level were the dominant culture, men, clergy and celibates. On a lower level were different cultures, women, laity, and the married.

Clericalism is the shadow side of this system. It is to see oneself as belonging to an exclusive rank. Membership is restricted. The ranking is rigidly hierar-

The Great Chain of Being, Fray Diego de Valades, Rhetorica Christiana, (1579), representing a medieval hierarchal understanding of the structure of all of creation.
tical. It is closed and secretive. This is a system of privilege, deference, and power. The clerics have a monopoly on information and access to others with power. Members maintain their status at all costs. The system believes in accountability, but the accountability is only upwards never downward. The ordinary members do not have to be consulted, and indeed, they rarely are. There is no time or need for dialogue or debate because the elite hold all decision making power.

Pope Francis says that when clericalism infects the Church, the Church does not come out of itself to proclaim the Gospel. Then the Church becomes inward looking and self-referential, obsessed with its own image rather than looking after those who are the most vulnerable and suffering. In the abuse scandal hierarchs became more concerned with protecting institutional power than with protecting the abused.

This crisis of abuse and its cover-up is the death throes of the imperial Church. This hierarchal system with power held by an unaccountable few is ending. As this Church dies a new one is being born. The new Church is re-centered in the Paschal Mystery. It is a discipleship rooted in the Servant Jesus, it is for the whole body of believers and all are accountable to one another. This Church cares for the least and protects vulnerable children.

All ministry is rooted in Jesus and his ministry. Jesus proclaimed a new world where the merciful justice of God would reign. His Kingdom turns the hierarchies of this world upside down and inside out: “If anyone wishes to rank first, he must remain the last one of all…” (Mark 9:35) Ministry is a personal call from Christ to announce the Good News.

The Second Vatican Council redefined the Church not as a hierarchical order with rulers over and above the ruled. Rather, it defines the Church as the whole “people of God.” The Risen Christ is the light of all humanity and the mission of the Church is to reflect that light to the world. In *Lumen Gentium* the Council teaches us that all the baptized “share a true equality common to all the faithful.” All share “in the activity common to all the faithful for the building up of the body of Christ.” (#32)

All share “in the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world.” (#31)

The source of ministry and discipleship is not by delegation of the clergy but is a responsibility that arises from our Christian initiation (Baptism-Confirmation-Eucharist). These form us as the people of God and part of the priesthood of believers. They call us to serve.

In the New Testament, the ministry of Jesus is reflected in three specific ways. Christ is revealed as prophet, priest and king. *Lumen Gentium* tells us that all the baptized share in these roles of Christ. (#31) As prophet Jesus teaches us about the compassionate justice of the Kingdom of God. As priest, Jesus offers the self-gift of love to bring people holiness. As king, the Good Shepherd leads his flock into peaceful unity. All are responsible for his mission of teaching, sanctifying and unifying. Ordained or not, we have the same mission as Jesus the Servant who invites us to wash one another’s feet.

The best way to end clericalism is a change of consciousness. We must assert the dignity of the Sacraments of Initiation as foundational to our mission as Church. All the baptized are empowered by the Spirit to bring healing to the world. The ordained should be formed as servant-leaders. Seminarians need formation along with all the baptized, not in isolation. We should lose the titles from the imperial Church which reflect privilege, e.g. Monsignor, your Excellency, Eminence, etc. We must see the work of the Church as collaboration among all the people of God. A quote from St. Augustine provides the correct balance, “With you I am baptized, for you I am ordained.”

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The Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report in the summer of 2018 reopened the wounds of the clergy sex abuse crisis and cover-up in vivid and seemingly endless detail, and the Church’s own “MeToo” movement sprang up in its wake. As lay people, how do we heal and move forward? How do we take ownership of our role in the much needed reform of the Church? One model comes from the work of the Franciscan Renewal Center in Paradise Valley, Arizona. The “Casa,” as it is affectionately known to locals, offers retreats, classes, spiritual direction, and counseling. For over 20 years, the Casa has employed a shared leadership model. The Executive Director is an ordained Franciscan Friar, while the General Manager is highly qualified lay person. A Board of Directors advises both and establishes accountability on behalf of the Province. The leadership model is collaborative, and this is evident on a daily basis.

The Franciscans faced their own crisis in the late 1990s, and took immediate action with the formation of an independent Office of Pastoral Outreach to receive, investigate, and follow up on allegations of misconduct. The Diocese of Phoenix saw its share of abuse cases as well, and implemented the Dallas Charter at its inception. Through all of this, the Franciscan Renewal Center has remained a place of comfort and healing not only for victims but for many who were shaken by revelations they had never imagined possible in the Church.
The Casa’s response to the current crisis took the form of an open listening forum. The friars were “invited” not to attend this first session, and, while supportive of the event, stayed away. Some 75 community members gathered to pour out their hurt, anger, sadness, frustration, and astonishment. Yet the group remained orderly and respectful of each other and of the Church they love. There was no agenda other than to listen. The moderator, Dr. Michael Horan, clarified a few facts as needed, but the assembly’s passionate outpouring drove the evening. They insisted on holding another similar gathering within a month.

A follow up to the forum included two classes on lay involvement in the Church: a morning session based on Lumen Gentium, the Vatican II document that defines the Church and the role of the laity, and an afternoon session reviewing lay involvement in the history of the Church. Participants found both classes revelatory of information that had been unfamiliar to them, yet is not at all new.

In the second open session, four of the friars at the Casa joined the assembly: two priests who actively serve, and two deacons, one retired and one ordained just two weeks earlier. Each, in the course of the session, offered input that was deeply personal, heartfelt, and raw, just as all the sharing had been. And significantly, none took an authoritative (one might say “clerical”) posture during the sessions. They simply shared, as had everyone else, their own personal hurt along with their conviction to remain faithful to what the Church is called to be.

As this process moves forward, a committee of community members will join in the planning. Based on input from the two open sessions, it seems certain there will be some definitive immediate action—perhaps a letter to the US Bishops or something similar—along with an ongoing process of formation for lay people as they explore how to fully live their role in the life, governance, and leadership of the Church.

At its core, this scandal is about power. In particular, it is about the abuse of power by priests and bishops, and the mischaracterization of the “ontological” change that ordination is said to confer. While the complete details of the solution are not yet clear, it is evident from the Pope’s comments to the input from people in the pews that a profoundly new expression of the laity’s place in the Church is going to emerge. The Casa is well equipped to play a significant role in preparing for what is to come.

Included in the Casa’s services is its Center for Leadership Wellness. CLW develops and offers effective training for those in positions of leadership. Originally conceived with the management training volunteers in mind, the CLW has demonstrated that its ethical and collaborative approach to leadership can find application in any field. The core offering of CLW is the Leadership Skills Seminar, a five-day interactive training experience that addresses eight topics: Minister as Manager, Developing Volunteers, Conflict, Team & Consensus Building, Ethical (Situational) Leadership, Managerial Dynamics, Personal Growth, and Power and Influence.

In the session on Power and Influence, participants learn that power can be used for the benefit of all, or for the benefit of the one who has power, but the only ethical use of power is for the good of all. The misuse of such entrusted power is a grievous betrayal. The session explores different contexts for this yielding of power: reward/coercion, connection, expert, legitimate, referent, why someone might yield power to another, and how and why it might also be withdrawn. The session also reviews an image developed by Janet Hagberg in her book Real Power that looks at power from the point of view of one’s concept of one’s own power, and how this can be developed over time.

All these understandings of power prove profoundly relevant in the context of today’s crisis. Clericalism has enabled both the abuse and the cover-up. Clericalism is a distorted use of power that would otherwise be beneficial. From their experience in the secular world, many lay people are already familiar with models of collaborative leadership, ethical management of conflict, and a judicious allocation and use of power, and can bring those skills to the work of transforming the Church as well.

The Franciscans and the Franciscan Renewal Center offer an example of shared leadership: friars willing to afford the greatest possible latitude in the laity’s expression of concern as well as proposed remedies; a shared leadership model for the Casa itself, and a track record of dealing with crisis proactively and definitively. May we all hear, like Francis of Assisi, the voice of Christ speaking to us from the glorious San Damiano cross: “Go, rebuild my church, for as you can see, it is falling into ruin.”

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Image p. 9: Giotto, Legend of St. Francis, Church of St. Francis, Assissi
For the past three years, a national movement of Latino Catholics has been growing in the U.S. This Latino led movement is known as the V Encuentro. For many, V Encuentro has been an experience of deep conversion that has called for a spiritual awakening for Latino Catholics.

The V Encuentro is the fifth national movement of its kind involving both the hierarchy and lay Catholics. Every diocese and parish was invited to participate in an encuentro, an encounter process that occurred at the parish, diocesan, regional, and national levels. Throughout the past few years, Latino Catholics and those who journey with them were called to engage and encounter each other. Personally, I feel that the crux of this encounter was the participant's willingness to open their ears, mind and heart to listen to another person. In the context of our world today where fear of “the other” is rising, the fact that thousands of people around the nation took the time and energy to listen to each other is evidence of God's grace in our world.

For many Americans, the past few years have been filled with darkness. The V Encuentro process was able to shine light amid great turmoil. The process is truly a journey of hope for the Latino community in the U.S. To rephrase Dr. Hosffman Ospino, one of the national leaders of the V Encuentro, the reality is that Latino Catholics have existed in the U.S. for over 400 years. We are not a new audience to the Church; we are the Church as much as anyone else. Like the previous National Encuentros,
V Encuentro gave Latinos a platform to be heard. This process helped Latino leaders identify new strengths and grow current ministries. As a result, Latino leaders around the nation were able to determine their priorities and identify their needs both on a local and a national level.

One of the fruits of this work has been the light shed on the youth and young adult Latinos in the U.S. Young Latinos will make up the majority of our Church members in the very near future! How we invest in this population will be how we invest into the future of the Catholic Church. As a young adult who works for the Church, I cannot express how important it is for our Church leadership to encourage young adults to take ownership of our Church. What is most often forgotten is that it is our responsibility as Church leaders to guide and engage our youth and young adults. If we are not the ones leading our youth, the world will take that place.

Formation is not just a religious education requirement. As Catholics, formation is a life-long journey that requires all of us to participate as students and teachers. We will impact future generations by how we invest and respect our youth today. Latino young adults of today face a complex reality. Most of us come from mixed status families. The issue of immigration is not just a broken policy issue. For many families, including my own, the broken immigration system has led to the physical act of breaking families. The issue of immigration is imbedded in our culture and our daily lives. In the Latino culture, if you have not been affected by the broken immigration system yourself at some point in life, you probably know someone who has.

Given this background, Latino young adults have a unique and powerful gift to give to our Church. As immigrants or daughters, sons, and grandchildren of immigrants, we have learned the essence of solidarity. The gift of solidarity has given us the ability to empathize and identify with a suffering world. What I have learned as a Latina immigrant is that even through moments of great suffering, there is joy. This is one of the many gifts the Latino community has to share with our Church. The joy that we carry comes from the great hope that lives within our community. Most Latin countries have a devotion to the Blessed Mother. As a Mexican immigrant myself, I have celebrated Our Lady of Guadalupe’s feast day every year that I can remember. My culture and family upbringing are surrounded by Her presence. The graces we receive from our devotion to Our Lady are seen in the joy that we carry. She brings peace to a broken world, taking people back to the message of hope. Hope is what keeps me going. By no means has it been an easy year to be in the Justice and Peace Ministry; actually I would say the last three years have brought me to my knees, questioning my vocation in this ministry on several occasions.

I am Latina immigrant working for the Catholic Church. In a world built on racist systemic structures, I can promise you that the system was not made for people surviving generations of poverty. Indeed, the system also exists within the structure of the Catholic Church. Perhaps this is why I never thought I would be in a position of leadership. Yet, even within broken worldly systems, there is hope. I have learned to make a distinction between the authentic Catholic Church and the imperfections of its people who fail to live up to the glory of God. I found relief knowing that I don’t have to prove to be worthy enough to work for the Church. Instead, inspired by St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, I have learned to accept that my only job is to love. I aspire to live by the radical love that Christ showed us in the cross.

It is my faith that keeps me here working for justice, not because it is the right thing to do, but because it is what I have been created for, the pursuit of justice. Love compels us to act! This is the path that will take us to heaven. It is my hope for the Church that we can all learn to live the radical love Jesus exemplified on the cross.

“The author with Dr. Hosffman Ospino at V Encuentro in Dallas

“Edith Avila Olea serves as the Justice and Peace Associate Director of the Catholic Diocese of Joliet, IL. She received the national Cardinal Bernardin New Leadership Award, given by the Unites States Conference of Catholic Bishops to a young adult dedicated to social justice.”
TRANSFORMATION OF THE CHURCH

A Communal Reflection Process

Gather a group to read and reflect on this issue of A Matter of Spirit. The following is a suggested process.

Sit in a circle with a table and lighted candle at the center. Begin with the prayer I Love This Church on p. 3.

Convener: The articles in this issue of A Matter of Spirit examine the structure and culture of the Catholic Church and suggest various approaches for reform and transformation. We invite you to share the thoughts or insights you have after reading this issue of AMOS.

In our first article, Fr. Terrence Moran writes: The wound to the Church from the clerical sexual abuse crisis has been mortal. … Can we believe that facing this grievous wound can result in contemplative action for an unimaginable renewal of the body of the Church and for the healing of the nations? p. 3

What are small steps that you can take in your area to address the current crisis in the Church?

How can actions taken at the local level be part of effective global action?

In discussing the role of clericalism in the Church, Fr. Ron Schmit states: Clericalism is how the Church drifted from discipleship and servant-leadership to defining ministry in terms of power or authority. Pope Francis has identified clericalism as a sickness. … The source of ministry and discipleship is not by delegation of the clergy but is a responsibility that arises from our Christian initiation (baptism-confirmation-Eucharist). These form us as the people of God and part of the priesthood of believers. They call us to serve. pp. 7, 8

What has been your understanding and experience of clericalism?

How does a culture of clericalism harmed the Church?

How do you understand your own call to serve as part of the priesthood of believers?

Rick Hardy writes about one model for equipping and empowering the laity to take a more significant role in the Church: At its core, this scandal is about power. In particular, it is about the abuse of power by priests and bishops…it is evident, from the pope’s comments to the input from people in the pews, that a profoundly new expression of the laity’s place in the church is going to emerge. p. 10

How might power be exercised differently in the Church?

How do you envision a new expression of the laity’s place in the Church?

Edith Avila Olea writes: Latino young adults have a unique and powerful gift to give to our Church. As immigrants, daughters, sons, and grandchildren of immigrants, we have learned the essence of solidarity. The gift of solidarity has given us the ability to empathize and identify with a suffering world. What I have learned as a Latina immigrant is that even through moments of great suffering, there is joy. p. 12

How can we embrace and nurture new life in the Church, from immigrants, from the Latino community, and from youth?

In this moment of suffering in the Church, where do you find joy?

Convener: As we conclude, what is a word that is living in your heart? (pause) Invite people to share.

In your private prayer and discernment, consider using the Ignatian Examen for our Church on p. 16.
Justice Circles

New Brunswick, NJ
Holy Family Parish has been organizing Women’s Justice Circles for five years. Their last Circle was composed of a powerful group of Latina parishioners who decided to create safe spaces for survivors of domestic violence in their community. They appointed a committee to raise awareness and address the gaps in services. They will be hosting their first training on domestic violence in partnership with the local hospital in January!

“I celebrate the strength and confidence that we as women and mothers feel by sharing experiences that help us to be stronger in family and in community and make changes for the common good.”

We offered our second Family Preparedness workshop in December. We partnered with an elementary school in Lynnwood and engaged with a diverse group of Latino parent leaders who belong to the Edmonds School District. Attendees leaned how to claim their constitutional rights in encounters with immigration agents, drew up family emergency preparedness plans and prepared temporary consent agreements.

Save the Dates

Third Annual Immigration Summit
March 23, 2019
Seattle University

IPJC Spring Benefit
April 10, 2019
Join us to celebrate 25 years of the Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment’s work for the common good.
Reforms to Address the Crisis & Shape the Future Church

Join IPJC for a presentation by Pat Howell, SJ
Interim Director, Institute for Catholic Thought and Culture, Seattle University.

What major reforms in the history of the Church can shine light on our current sexual abuse and cover-up crisis?
What lessons from the past can help us today?
Most reforms in the past have been led by religious orders; the current reform will require major lay leadership.

March 9, 2019
10am–11:30am
Assumption Parish Hall
6201 33rd Ave NE
No registration required

Support IPJC

Thank you to all who have contributed to our Annual Appeal.
Remember to let us know if your company matches donations
Consider designating IPJC in your United Way pledge
We accept gifts of stock
Designate IPJC when buying from smile.amazon.com

Donations

In honor of: Virginia Pearson, OP, Makiko Fujiwara, SNJM, Judy Byron, OP, Megan McArthur Wellings
In memory of: Kirby Brown, Maureen Carleton, Margaret Lichter, Donna Wencel, OP, Anne Heger, OP, Joan Trunk

Catholic Advocacy Day 2019

February 7, Olympia, WA
email: catholicadvocacy@ipjc.org

Eastern, WA Legislative Conference
January 26, 9am–3pm
Spokane Valley United Methodist Church
RSVP: info@thefigtree.org / 509.535.4112

On November 10 over 150 people of faith gathered to engage in prayer, listening and learning on racism. Sisters Paty Chappell and Anne-Louise Nadeau from Pax Chriti USA offered us education, challenge and inspiration and left us energized and hopeful.

What’s next? It’s clear that there is a need both for conversion at the personal level and systemic change at the societal level. Workshop participants brainstormed action steps that our IPJC community will be considering. We hope to serve as convener for parishes and groups in the Seattle area who are interested in working to undo the sin of racism in our own communities and in our nation.
An Ignatian Examen for our Church

In daily prayer with the Ignatian Examen, God meets us where we are, inviting us to places we may not expect or be willing—but may need—to go. We are invited to talk with God in specific ways about the interrelationship between Gospel values and the life of our Church.

Begin with a Prayer of Gratitude

Consider the current realities of our Church. For what and for whom are you most grateful?

Ask for God’s Guidance

Enlightened by the Spirit, prayerfully consider our Church in this moment. Pay attention to your emotions and reactions.

What energizes you or brings you closer to God as you reflect on the current state of our Church?

What is disheartening or makes you feel farther from God as you reflect on the Church?

What is the current situation of those who are most vulnerable and marginalized in the Church?

What are the ways in which your identity shapes your vision for our Church?

Allow your honest reactions, emotions and desires to surface.

Conversation with God

Consider one or two of the strongest desires or feelings evoked by your prayer about our Church and bring this to God.

Engage God in conversation over these desires or feelings, speaking clearly, directly and honestly as one friend speaks to another.

What parts of our Church need healing and reconciliation?

What is God’s desire for those who are most vulnerable in our Church?

What aspects of our Church do you rejoice in and celebrate as faithful to Gospel values?

Listen to your heart—how is God present to you through your reactions and desires?

Personal Commitment

As we go forward seeking renewal and transformation in our Church, how will you promote a more vibrant and faithful Church? Ask God for the assistance you need to respond to this moment. Is there a specific attitude you want to cultivate, or an action you want to take? Entrust your desires and intention to God’s grace.

–Adapted from An Ignatian Examen for Civic Life, Ignatian Solidarity Network.