



InFormation

News for Pastoral Planners and Those Making the Plan a Reality!

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The Messy Work of Parish Renewal

*Adapted by:
Dr. Robert J. Miller for Catholic
parishes*

If you've ever remodeled a house while attempting to live in it, you have a sense of the chaos and complexity of parish renewal. It will take far longer, cost you more, and prove messier than you ever imagined at the start. People who have worked with both parish starts and parish renewal will tell you that

starting a church is easy compared to renewing one. The difficulty lies in the work itself. Pogo's line holds true here: "We have met the enemy and he is us."

The parish seeking renewal must look beyond simply improving its programs and its building, though both may ultimately be changed. Pastors and parish pastoral councils leading renewal in their declining parishes are asking people to make fundamental shifts in their perspectives, their attitudes, and their behaviors. The work demands a great deal from a people and a pastor.

Your parish is what it is today not because of what a bad pastor did to it, or because the neighborhood has changed, or because our culture is going to hell in a hand basket. Although those occurrences and many others have had an impact, your parish is what it is today because of how it responded, or failed to respond, to the realities it faced. What your parish will be in the future is up to you and the other members and how you work together and sometimes work with other parishes to create something new from the realities you face. What you do or don't do now will make the difference. Your actions will either reinforce the patterns that have become established in your parish, or start to counter and shift them. The leadership provided by your pastor can help or hinder, but it cannot make your parish succeed or keep it from ultimately achieving the goals you set for yourselves.

Some wonder, "Is it even possible? Can people with little or no experience of their parish's being church in this way create this kind of community?" We've seen it happen enough times to know that the hope is true and that renewal is possible—not easy, but

possible. The path to renewal looks different for each parish, but some common elements can be observed. Here's what we know. Renewal has both outer and inner aspects. To move to a new place, a parish must tend to both. Organizationally, there are three phases of work:

1. Developing readiness: preparing the leaders to lead the parish in a new direction
2. Surfacing a compelling parish vision that will guide decision making
3. Developing and implementing strategies that move the parish toward the envisioned future

These three fundamental tasks frame the work that ultimately realigns a parish. Addressed sequentially, they break renewal up into understandable and manageable phases of work. The work of the first two phases culminates in pivotal decisions that prepare the parish to tackle the final phase of work. Phase 1 results in the pastor and the parish pastoral council declaring the parish's current trajectory unacceptable and committing to lead in a new direction. Phase 2 results in a vision of a better future, ..*Continued on Page 3*

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for the use of Parish Pastoral Planners and
those who implement those plans.
Suggestions for future articles should be directed to
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Prayer for a Meeting



O Lord, we thank you, for the privilege to come together for this Parish pastoral council meeting. Direct our thoughts and our deliberations so that we may exhibit fair judgment and understanding of the matters at hand. Please give us the faith to see your plan and the courage to move it closer to fruition. We pray through Jesus our Lord.

Amen

Married Happily !



Church stages mass marriage for undocumented Latino parents

According to Alberto De La Peña Jr.

Too few Latino parishioners in the pews were cluing a Bakersfield, CA, priest that many of them were not married. His solution: a workshop and retreat resulting in the mass marriage of more than 40 couples.

When Fr. Miguel Flores became pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church, he noticed children lining up for Holy Communion, but not parents. He discovered the majority of parents were cohabitating, but not married either civilly or by the church due to fears of deportation (Bakersfield.com 12.20.08).

The mass ceremony not only allowed the couples to legalize their marriage, but to split the church costs as well.

Continued scrutiny of the undocumented status of some Hispanic-dominant immigrants results in fear and further withdrawal from social and community interaction.

Educational efforts like those of St. Joseph Catholic Church provide a measure of comfort to a demographic aiming to move out of society's fringes.



"A great woman of our times, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, was awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1979. During her acceptance speech in Oslo she remarked to her listeners: "I want you to find the poor here, right in your own home first. And begin love there. Be that good news to your own people. And find out about your next-door-neighbor--do you know who they are?" I refer to this quote from a person universally acknowledged as a woman of prayer and sanctity because her insights are as real for us today here in Philadelphia as they were in Oslo. In our city of neighborhoods we do not always know our neighbors. Love begins at home and can only happen with God. God, who is Love, is the source of peace. Only when we call out to God, only when we come together in love, can we achieve true peace. In this time and in this place, we call upon God to lead us in the ways of love and peace."

From Cardinal Rigali's prayer for mayor Nutter at the inaugural service <http://archphila.org/rigali/cardhom/mayornutter.htm>



YES!
CAN I GET ADDITIONAL COPIES OF THE INFORMATION?

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www.archphila.org/pastplan/Index/InFormationindex.html



Trivia Box

What are the highest Median Housing Values Within Pennsylvania?

(Go to Page 5 in the answer box)

Has your parish or Cluster entered into a Planning Process?

Do you need a professional Facilitator? The office of Research and Planning maintains a list of trained and experienced Resource people.

Contact us at: *The Archdiocese of Philadelphia*
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Phone 215-587-3545

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F.Y.I.

In the Archdiocese of Philadelphia:

Right now, there is one Priest assigned to parish ministry for every 2, 976 registered Catholics. It is projected that by 2020 there will be one diocesan priest in parish ministry for every 3,565 Catholics.

By 2010, the total number of Priests required to maintain 3,000 parishioners per priest ratio will be short 47 Priests . By 2015 - 99 Priests short. By 2020 -140 Priests short. Therefore it's necessary for the laity to help Clergy carry out the ministries in parishes.



Remember
Save A TREE



The Messy Work of Parish Renewal

Continued from page 1

discerned by the parish and formally adopted by the parish pastoral council and, in the case of the need for major change like creating a new parish, proposed and approved by the archbishop.

While making such decisions might be a simple thing for an individual, it takes a fairly long time for a parish to make informed and "owned" choices. Whatever the parish decides must be desired, claimed, and lived into. It's one thing to say you want something; it's another to want it enough that you follow through and act on the intention. Phase 3 focuses on exactly that—creating the future that's been envisioned.

Each of these three phases demands significant work on the part of the people involved. The real work of renewal, however, is inner work. It is here that the greatest challenge lies. To complete these tasks, the people of the parish must make inner shifts, making the transition from one way of thinking about the parish to quite another. During renewal, people let go of what feels right and normal to create a new normal for themselves. The parish's inner work of transition has multiple steps. It begins with the recognition that something is wrong—that parish life, while adequate, is missing something. Because a parish is where Catholic people experience the Church, the next step is to become anchored in an understanding of the Church. When that seems clear, the next step is to name and let go of precon-

ceived notions about the form ministry should take. This step leads to a period of genuinely not knowing what to do. Rather than jumping in and filling that void with a quick solution, the challenge is to open ourselves to God and wait. From that place of expectant waiting, God's leading is sensed and a path forward is chosen. Finally, actions are aligned with intent, and a new way of being and doing parish is created. The parish moves through these steps of transition only as individuals in the parish are able to move through these shifts.

This inner work is the real work of renewal, and it is a work of the people. Pastors and outside consultants have much to offer, but they can't do the work for the people. It may help to think of renewal as physical therapy for the body of Christ. The body is renewed as the people engage in practices that develop and strengthen the muscles of Christian discipleship and community. It isn't easy work, but it's worth it.

from [Pathway to Renewal: Practical Steps for Parishes](#) by **Daniel P. Smith and Mary K. Sellon**,

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Remember to observe the Year of the Priest in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Continue to:

Pray for our priests!

Pray for our Pastors!

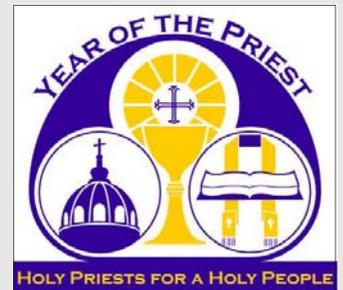
Pray for our Bishop!

Pray for Vocations!

Pray for our Parish Pastoral Councils!

Pray that our Pastors seek and get help from the Laity!

Pray that Planning will give us insight into God's Plan!



Something to Live By "A Parish Motto"

Selecting a "motto" is a process by which the Pastoral Council might invite the leaders and people to discern core values and identify characteristics of the parish. The result of the process are three words that sum up the purpose and mission of the parish, words that everyone can remember as defining aspects. This is a good beginning but more may be needed. What we suggest is the formulation of a **motto** that calls the parishioners to live out their faith with new insight and renewed awareness. This motto should be succinct, six words or less, but still challenging in what it asks of leaders and people. What follows is one suggestion. Use it if it fits, or make up your own. The idea is to have something in front of people's consciousness that might move them closer to becoming a better follower of Christ.

*A possible parish motto might be:
Being Jesus With and For Others.*



Videogames



According to:

Pew Research Center

97% - Play Video Games Galore

Whether they happen to get their fix on a Wii, laptop computer or cell phone, just about every American ages 12 to 17 -- young teens and older teens, girls and boys, and teens from across the socioeconomic spectrum -- plays video games (97%), and most do so frequently. In a fall 2008 survey, half of all teens reported playing a computer, web, portable or console video game "yesterday." Most use consoles like the Xbox, PlayStation or Wii (86%) or computers (73%), but roughly half of teens (48%) play games on their cell phones. Teens play a wide variety of games, from racing to adventure to role-playing, and girls (6) play just about as many different genres of games as boys (8). However, boys (50%) are much more likely to cite a "mature" game -- heavy on violence, gore and rough

97%
Just about every teen -- ages 12-17 -- plays computer, web, portable or console video



language -- than are girls (14%) as a favorite. [Read more http://pewresearch.org/pubs/953/teens-video-games-and-civics](http://pewresearch.org/pubs/953/teens-video-games-and-civics)

Latinos in Pennsylvania

The Philadelphia City School District is the largest district in Pennsylvania with a total Latino student population of 17% of the total student population. Latino students represent 14% of the total Philadelphia County student population.

Pennsylvania's population continues to grow older, with the median age increasing to 39.9, up from 38.0 in 2000. Pennsylvania is ranked third in the nation in the percent of its population that is 65 or older, but 43rd in the percent that is under 18. However, Latinos are the youngest population in Pennsylvania with a median age of 27.

County	Hispanic or Latino
Pennsylvania	593,986
Bucks	21,883
Chester	24,261
Delaware	12,734
Montgomery	25,903
Philadelphia	163,406
Archdiocese of Philadelphia	248,187

Source www.gacla.state.pa.us Yr. 2008

REMEMBER!!

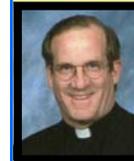
Attention Pastoral Council Members!

Save the Date
Saturday, November 14, 2009

The 2009 Archdiocese of Philadelphia Catholic Life Congress is offering a highly focused series of sessions for pastoral council members at all levels of experience. New and experienced members will find much of interest and value in one or more of the presentations, which are:



PPC Orientation and Overview: Marti Harrington, Coordinator of Parish Pastoral Councils, Archdiocese of Philadelphia



Role of Prayer in Effective Pastoral Councils: Rev. Thomas M. Higgins, Pastor, Holy Innocents, Archdiocese of Philadelphia



Envisioning the Church of the 21st Century: The Cyclical Nature of Pastoral Planning, Robert J. Miller, Director, Office for Planning and Research, Archdiocese of Philadelphia



From Vision to Action: Bringing Life to your Parish Pastoral Plan: Robert Choiniere, Director, Pastoral Planning Office, Diocese of Brooklyn

Contact Marti Harrington at : maharrin@adphila.com for an invitation to attend or exhibit at this event.

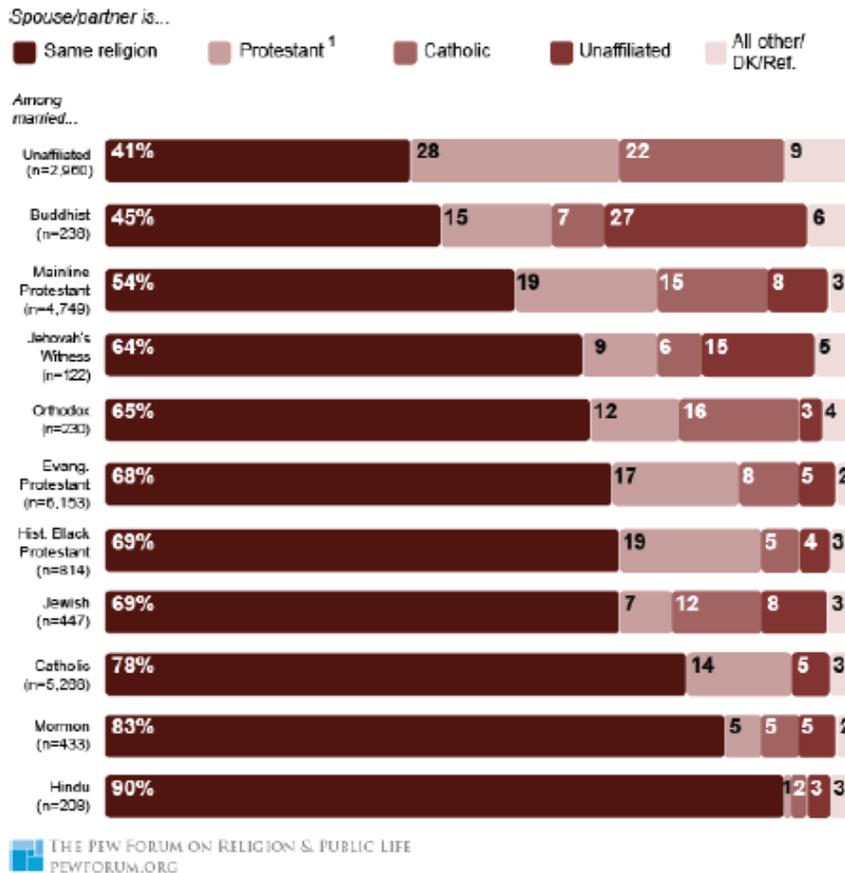
Mixed Marriages



Brides, Grooms Often Have Different Faiths

According to the Pew Forum Dated June 4th 2009: Early summer is a traditional season for wedding ceremonies.

U.S. Data from the [U.S. Religious Landscape Survey](#), conducted by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life in 2007, shows that many marriages are between people of different religious faiths. According to the survey, Buddhists and the religiously unaffiliated are the most likely to have a spouse or partner with a different religious background, while Mormons and Hindus are the least likely to marry a partner outside their own faith.



Source: [Pew Forum U.S. Religious Landscape Survey](#), conducted in 2007 and released in 2008. Based on respondents who say they are married and respondents who say they are living with a partner. Results for other religious groups are not reported due to small sample sizes. Due to rounding, figures may not add to 100.

1. For mainline Protestants, evangelical Protestants and historically black Protestants, this category includes marriages and partnerships between people from different Protestant denominational families (e.g., a Methodist married to a Lutheran).

Answer Box

the southeastern counties of Chester (\$343,300), Bucks (\$326,800) and Montgomery (\$301,000) led all Pennsylvania counties in median housing value of owner-occupied housing units in 2007.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey Release Date: September 23, 2008
The Pennsylvania State Data Center Research Brief