



PROPER PARISH GOVERNANCE



SHARED LEADERSHIP – NOT “CONGREGATIONALISM”

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7/7/2010

OCA Parish Ministries Conference 2010
June 27-30 2010 Baldwin Wallace College

Session Goals

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- Describe a proper atmosphere of shared leadership and governance within our parish communities.
- Help parish council's and parish leadership teams to understand their proper ecclesiological roles in the parish and to execute that role.
- Make service on parish council attractive to parishioners who are interested in and equipped to help build stronger parishes.

The Motivation

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- Follow through for actions and initiatives resulting from use of Parish Inventory Model.
 - “Who will coordinate this?”

A new leadership mindset is needed to help us define and implement the types of ministries relevant for today’s vibrant parishes.

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Congregationalism

Influences and Impacts



Influences on Orthodox Congregationalism in America

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Congregationalism in American Orthodoxy

Key Factors & Their Impact

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Leadership Vacuum

- **Bishops or priests not present/accessible**
- Temporary assignments
- Poor leadership skill
- Distance

- Laity saw themselves as founders/"owners" "of the parish; "our parish"
- "Board" focused on buildings/bills; budgets
- Saw priest as employee; hired spiritual specialist; isolated laity from spiritual role

Orthodox Turmoil

- **Toth Schism movement**
- Jurisdictional competition
- Nationalism
- Ethnic differences
- Communism

- Reduced authority & leadership of clergy
- Confirmed existing/new parishes in congregational structure
- Distrust: clergy; other ethnic groups; "outsiders"
- Inward focus >> Disconnected from Diocese
- Sense of parish autonomy; diocesan responsibility optional; loyalty to our parish; sovereignty

Secular Influences

- **Lay Societies:** Parallel leadership structure owned/ funded churches; de facto authority for "material" issues
- Protestant influences ("Boards"; hiring)
- Required property ownership
- American freedom of choice ; democracy; separation of powers

- "Ours" vs. "Stewards"
- Legalities, "Membership", Voting, Motions, Dues, Entitlement, Ownership, "Club"
- Isolation of laity/lay leaders from spiritual roles
- Dissociation of parish council from parish ministries

7/7/2010

Source: "*American Orthodoxy and Parish Congregationalism*" Ferencz

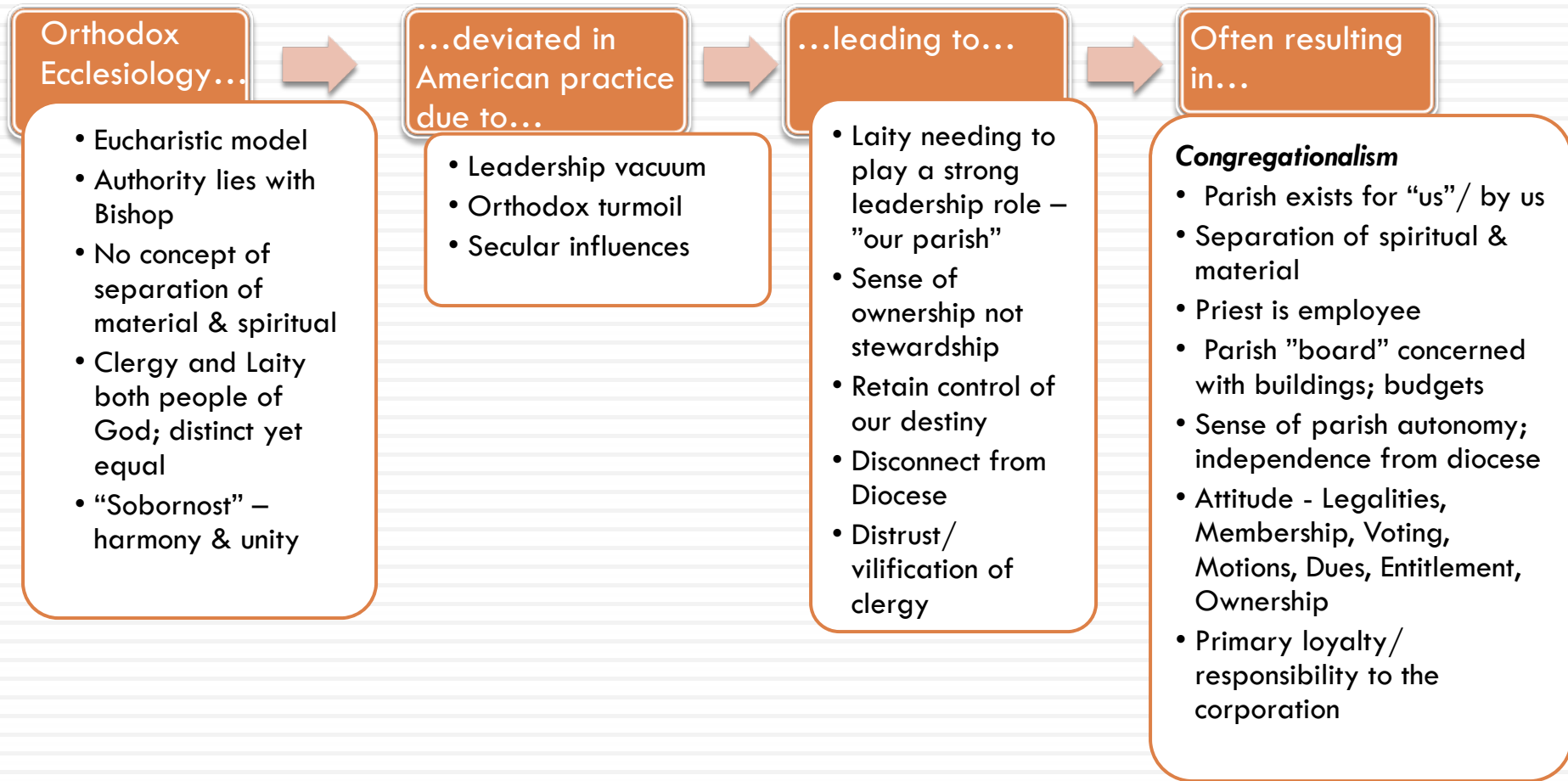
Factors Fostering Congregationalism Today

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- Bottom up mission planting
- Lack of strong consistent diocesan policies (compensation etc.)
- Sloppily run dioceses
- Standards and policies treated as *optional*
- Impaired leadership & “governance maturity”
 - ▣ Hierarchs, clergy & laity
- Clergy appointment process treated as a hiring process
- Internet – all have right to express an opinion -- informed or not -- and do so!

A Summary

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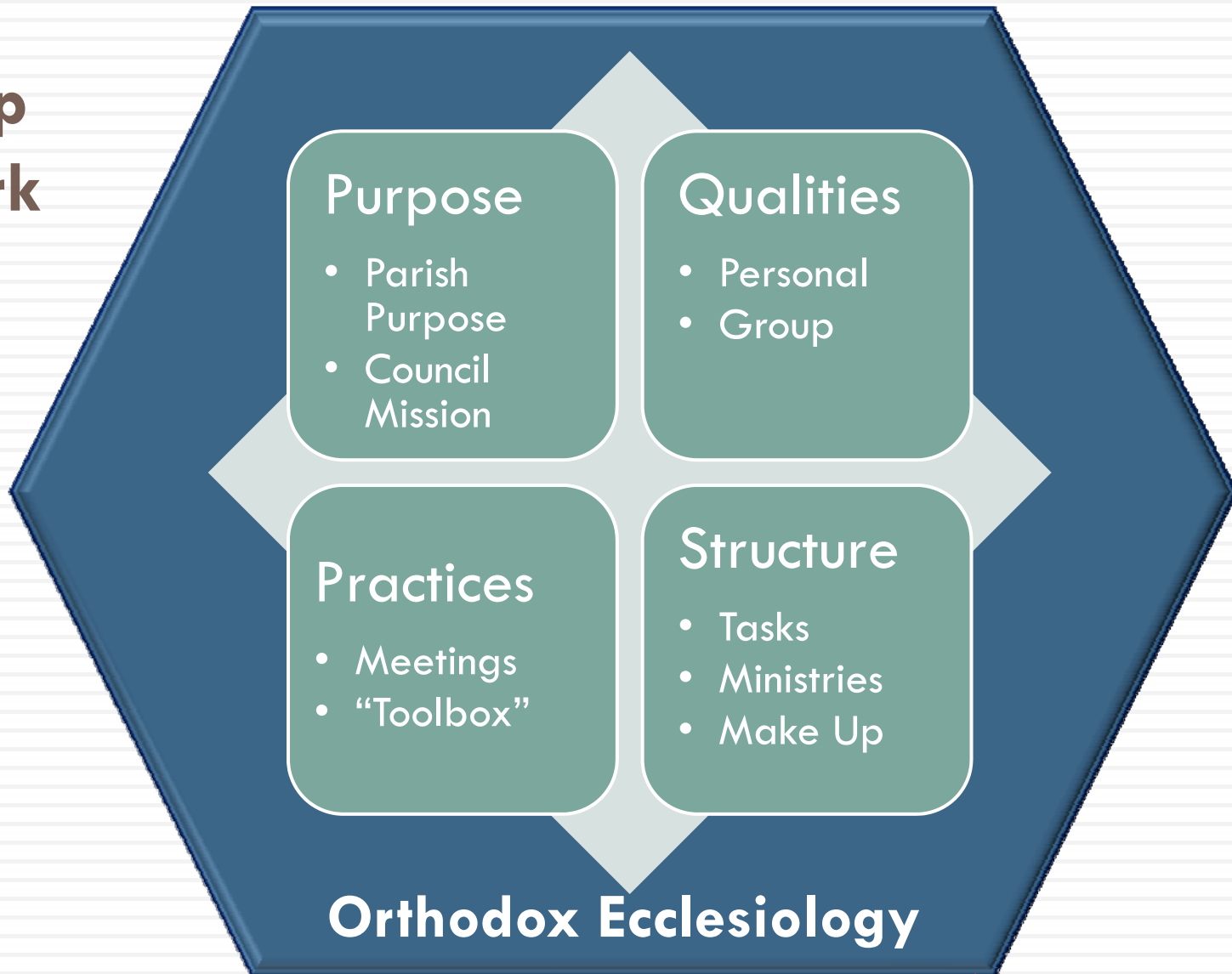
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Proper Parish Governance

A Framework



A Parish Leadership Framework



What makes a parish governance system/framework properly Orthodox?

Source: *American Orthodox and
Parish Congregationalism*

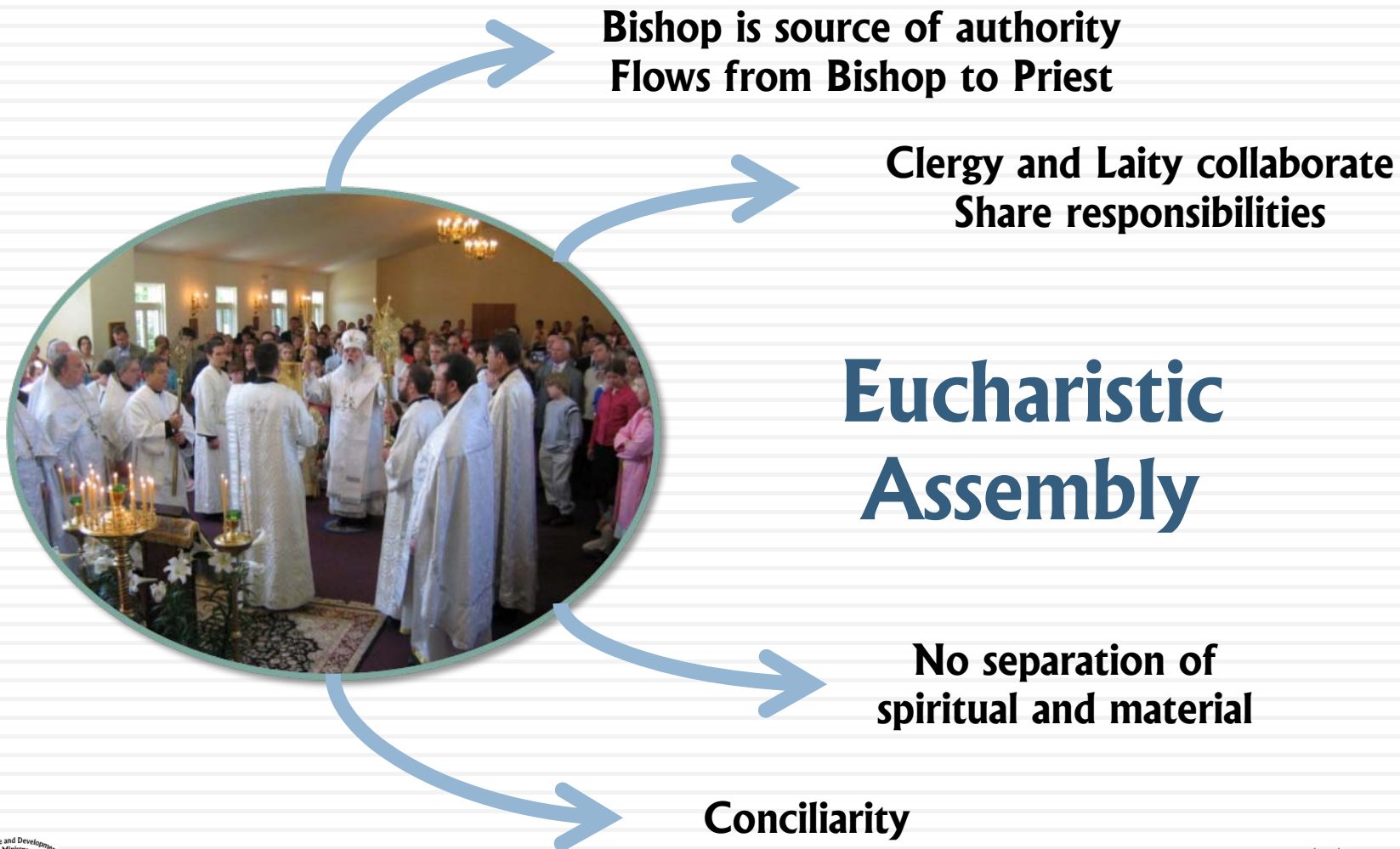
Fr Nicholas Ferencz



Orthodox Ecclesiology

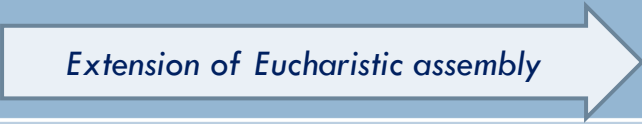
Governance is an Extension of Eucharistic Assembly

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Eucharistic Model

Real work with common purpose



Governance Model

Real work with common purpose

Bishop /Diocese is source of Authority & Fullness.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Prerogative to serve from Bishop (antimins) □ Bishop presides □ Priest: Bishop's deputy; □ Commune with all parishes as liturgy is served | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Mandate/prerogative to exist comes from bishop □ Priest is leader of parish; appointed by hierarch □ Priest authority flows from Hierarchical authority □ Integral part of Diocese; expressing fullness locally |
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Clergy & Laity Work in Synergy

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Clergy and laity need/require each other. No private liturgies □ All are laos – people of God; Different roles –all important. □ Not authoritarian, individualistic, democratic □ Active collaboration; NOT laity passive “receivers”; clergy active “givers” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Different roles –all important; none isolated □ Not authoritarian nor democratic □ Co -responsible; shared leadership |
|--|---|

No separation: Spiritual & Material Issues

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Offering: material blessings (bread and wine; behalf of all and for all”) to commune with God; God’s kingdom at hand here on earth. □ Collection: material resources are linked to God. □ Seek Kingdom of God while in this world -- material & eternal. (...”commend all our lives unto Christ...”) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Deal with material matters through the eyes and teaching of the Church. □ “Temporal/material matters” are not “different”. □ Priest and laity actively collaborate -- need each other; □ Priest and laity deal with spiritual and material – no separation |
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Consensus and Conciliarity is the Norm

<p>Consensual, unanimous praise of God. Not a vote! (“...that with one accord we may confess...”)</p>	<p>Consensus preferred decision making model</p>
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Parish Models

A Comparison

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Trusteeship/ Congregational Model

- Parish exists for “us”
 - On its own; for its own
 - “Sovereign”
 - Diocesan responsibility is almost optional
- Priest is the employee; a hired specialist
- Parish Council
 - Concerned with material issues – building/budgets
 - Priest is “Spiritual advisor”; observer
 - Elected “officers”
- Attitude
 - Legalities , Membership, Voting, Motions, Dues, Entitlement, Ownership

Eucharistic/ Conciliar/ Steward Model

- Parish exists For Christ
 - Mandate to exist comes from hierarch
 - To do work of Christ in the World
 - Integral part of Diocese
- Priest is leader is leader; appointed
 - Authority flows from Hierarchal authority
- Parish Council
 - Extension of Eucharistic Assembly
 - Led by priest; fully participates, approves decisions
 - Co -responsible; shared leadership
 - Material & Spiritual concerns
- Attitude: stewardship; sojourners, consensus; Eucharistic

The Parish Council

A Shared Leadership Body

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- The Parish Council is co-responsible under the guidance of and in collaboration with the rector for the health & vibrancy of the parish. Working together they drive & inspire growth, change & development to fulfill the parish's total mission as a Christian community.

Practical Ramifications

- Stands in the stead of the parish community
- Parish Council is NOT solely involved with the material/ "temporal"
- Priest is NOT solely involved with "spiritual"

- Led by the priest -- collaboratively
 - ▣ Presides over Parish Council; fully participates in decisions; final approval of decisions
 - ▣ Priest runs parish council & parish meetings unless he chooses to turn chair over to an appropriate leader.
- "Board of Trustees" >> "Parish Council" >> "Council of Ministries"
- Consensus, whenever possible, is desired approach to decision making.

Parish Council Responsibilities

One Person's View

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- Managing...
 - ▣ the real assets of the parish -- all things done in good order.
- Preparing...
 - ▣ for the parish's brighter future
- Stimulating, Creating, Implementing
 - ▣ essential, ongoing ministries to harness parish gifts, engage parishioners in the work of the Church, ring out the Good News and mirror parish priorities.

Parish Council Tasks

One Person's View

Administration

MANAGING...

the real assets of the parish
-- all things done in good order.

Often done well

Tasks

- Finance
- Bldg & Grounds
- Secretarial
- Communication
- Administrative Policies

Planning & Development

PREPARING...

for the parish's brighter future

Often NOT done well

Tasks

- 3-10 yr .Vision
- Annual Priorities Planning
- Stewardship
- Equipping -- Leader Development
- Gift planning

Ministry Coordination

STIMULATING, CREATING & IMPLEMENTING...

essential, ongoing ministries to harness parish gifts, engage parishioners in the work of the Church, ring out the Good News and mirror parish priorities.

Tasks

- Ministry definition
- Staffing
- New member integration
- Follow through
- New Ministry Development

So, You May Ask...

Why Is This Better?

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- Continuity with belief
 - If you believe something you live it; you don't behave in a way counter to the norms simply because mutations crept in unwittingly
- Unity with others
 - This is the norm in many, not all, parishes.
- Right stuff/next level
 - The model we've followed for decades was understandable for its time...
 - A new leadership mindset is needed to help us define and implement the types of programs and ministries relevant for today.
 - While probably not practical in the "world", such a system should be effective in a community of love (church) -- and become a distinctive quality by which Christians are recognized.
 - Makes the church attractive to current members, youth and new persons
- Trust
 - A system based on trust – which is after all more enjoyable than distrust.
 - A system that seeks behavior centered on the Gospel should seem inherently attractive.
- Continuity with/ learning from past
 - Parish forefathers built an Orthodox community for their time, in the best way they knew how. That continues as today's job.
- Speed & Effectiveness
 - Should make decisions and their implementation faster/ easier.
 - Better decisions and results
 - More people with correct skills would be motivated to serve on parish council and other leadership positions.

THE END

7/7/2010

Thank You for Your Attention