



Handout for Virtual Leadership Workshop with Deborah Stollery

April 20, 2021

Steps to figuring out and then using your why

A. Come up with a list of questions for parishioners or constituents or leadership team

- 1) Questions to ask your leadership team for the whole parish:
 - a. Why are we doing what we are doing in the parish?
 - b. Why are we here in this neighborhood?
 - c. Why do we exist?
 - d. Why are we who we are today as a parish?
 - e. Why are we good at what we do?
 - f. What do people say about us?
 - g. What are we great at?
 - h. Who would miss us if we ceased to exist?
- 2) Figure out what you believe when it comes to your spheres of influence:
 - a. Why are we doing what we are doing in our area apart from Church policy?
 - b. Why are we reaching out to our constituencies? What's important about this?
 - c. Why are we in the current situation in our ministry?
 - d. What are we good at and why is that so?
 - e. What do our constituencies say about us?
 - f. What happens if we cease to do our work?
- 3) Ask specifically "What do we believe about:
 - a. Children and God/Jesus?
 - b. Teens and God/Jesus?
 - c. Families/Parents and God/Jesus?
 - d. Adult Catholics?
 - e. God's call upon people's lives?
 - f. The purpose of parish ministry?
 - g. The impact of the parish?
 - h. The Mass?
 - i. Other areas of parish life?

B. Talk with leadership bodies/constituents around these questions

C. Be prepared for the following barriers to this conversation:

- a. We think we know why we are here and “everyone already knows this” so this is a waste of time.
 - i. Response: Then let’s share what we already know to see what we discover. Then we can test this against what others say.
- b. We realize we cannot express well what we think we know and that leads to a negative cascade of feelings. Shut down happens.
 - i. Response: Agree that expressing deep belief is hard but it is the Jesus way. He expressed his deepest mission: to do the Father’s will *no matter what* and that took him to the cross, the grave AND THEN the resurrection. So we are a people accompanied in the hard work by Jesus...if we stay open to the difficulty and allow the Spirit to work.
- c. We cannot get past what or how we do what we are doing, and believe that people affiliate with us because of what and how...so there’s no need for why.
 - i. Response: True that people come to the parish for services like sacraments and funerals. By they too often do not stay after they get what they want. There’s no loyalty, no willingness to sacrifice. No commitment. We lament this all the time. So if what and how are not working, we are left with why.
- d. In parish leadership, the temptation will be to default to rules or creedal statements which are what and sometimes how...but they are not why.
 - i. Response: Rules, dogma, doctrine and creeds are to be in service to a much greater reality and that is the gift of Jesus Christ, to heal (save) us from all that is wounded and therefore keeps us from experiencing the life God intends. At the heart of it all is Jesus Christ, a person. So one great why is because Jesus deeply desires all of creation to return to God’s loving embrace and ways. There are many ways to get to a why around Jesus.
- e. There are so many “whys” possible that it feels like trying to grab air, and people shut down.
 - i. Response: The beauty of our diversity is found in the many “whys” and the challenge for our sphere of influence is to hone in on what is our deepest belief about what we are doing, right here and now. It’s that belief that when stated, your heart burns, your eyes fill up with tears, you get angry when someone diminishes it.

D. Socialize your why with others in your sphere of influence. Listen for their passionate “Yes!”

Rolling this out within your sphere of influence:

- E. Bring everything together in a short, simple and genuine statement that will serve as the compass for all that you do in this area.**
- F. Roll out the messaging, starting with the why and then the how and then the what. Inside the circle to outside: Why-How-What.**
- G. Make it sticky...it appears all over the place, woven into all that you do in your sphere of influence.**