



The Heart of the Matter

Convictions Underlying *Vibrant Parish Life* - Part 3

“Living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into Him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body...brings about the body’s growth and builds itself up in love.”
(Ephesians 4:15-16)

In Parts 1 and 2 of “The Heart of the Matter” we focused on planning in a spirit of “communio”, and the principle of subsidiarity. This article will highlight the third value Bishop Pilla named in his *Vibrant Parish Life* pastoral letter – collaboration, which has been the hallmark of the *Vibrant Parish Life* initiative.

What is collaboration?

- X collaboration is the process of working together in a joint effort
- X in parish work, “*collaboration is that form of ministry which identifies, releases and unites all the gifts in the Christian community to further the mission of Jesus Christ, the coming of the reign of God*”ⁱ
- X for parishes, collaboration means working **together** to carry out the mission of Christ

Why is collaboration important among parishes?

- X collaboration allows for preserving and utilizing the different gifts of each parish
- X parishes can offer more services by sharing the work and resources with other parishes– it lessens the burden
- X it enables important needs to be more effectively addressed and it allows more people to be served than could otherwise be served by separate parish activities
- X it fosters Catholic values by promoting mutual giving and receiving, and by fostering intentional and inclusive relationships – embracing our unity as the Body of Christ

What are indications of people working collaboratively?

- X programs, ministries, and/or parish staff are shared between parishes
- X Mass schedules may be coordinated in an area, eliminating duplicate times where needed
- X eventually a “collaborative mentality” develops so that as planning is done, people would naturally be asking if plans could be accomplished better if they were implemented among 2 or more parishes
- X parish life becomes more vibrant because resources are shared
- X neighboring parishes exhibit signs of friendship and unity, rather than competition

As the “hallmark” of *Vibrant Parish Life*, collaboration should be at the heart of parish planning and ever more present in day to day ministry. Collaboration embraces the will of our Lord as it serves to build one body in His name.

Jeremiah 29: 11-14

“Yes, I know what plans I have in mind for you, Yahweh declares, plans for peace, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. When you call to me and come and pray to me, I shall listen to you. When you search for me, you will find me; when you search wholeheartedly for me, I shall let you find me, Yahweh declares.”

Going Deeper:

1. In what ways is your parish already collaborating with other parishes?
2. In what other ways would you like to see collaboration put into action at your parish?
3. Is there evidence of collaboration in your own life? Give examples!

ⁱ Loughlan Sofield, ST and Carroll Juliano, SHCJ, Collaboration: Uniting Our Gifts in Ministry

Next week: Number 5 in our VPL series...“What About Our Identity?”