

Discussion Questions

Spring Formation Day 2018

Making All Things New

Watch the video presentations

- [Morning presentation](#) by Chris Lowney
- [Afternoon presentation](#) by Sister Teresa Rickard, OP

(Watching the videos is not required in order to proceed with the discussion questions)

Morning Presentation

1. As Christians and workers in the Church, we must all be both followers and leaders. How do you view your own ministry work as being both “leadership” and “follower”? Are you comfortable in both roles? What are some ways you might improve or become more comfortable in both these roles?
2. Chris indicated that “humility” is necessary to be a true, quality leader, and that humility comes only when a quality leader loves those he or she leads. What are some ways to show a humble spirit to those we lead? How might we foster humility in our parish staff and volunteer leaders?
3. The world we live in is summed up as: VUCA – Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous. How are you and your parish leaders prepared to act in our “VUCA” environment? How open are you to true innovation?
4. What are some ways to create a parish culture that sustains our unified mission?
5. Do your parish plans get the attention and support of all involved in making the plan come to fruition? ... Or do some plans leave it to individuals to do certain tasks alone? How might a leader change this culture?
6. When parishioners are asked why they are not more involved with their parish, many respond, “Because no one asked me to help.” What are some ways to welcome and encourage parishioners to get involved in your parish’s ministry groups, charities and programs? Does offering a personal invitation to a potential leader (or follower) seem appropriate? Does it help them feel needed?
7. Leaders point the way to a goal or vision. How do you point the way for the people in your parish?
8. There is an urgency to our call to leadership – parishes are shrinking and membership is dwindling. What gifts and talents do you bring as a leader that might help build up the Church in today’s world? How do we call forth the unique gifts of others?
9. Do we tell the truth about the state of our parish today? Why or why not?
10. Then-Cardinal Bergoglio (Pope Francis) would measure the success of his young priests by how dusty their shoes were. If they were walking the streets and encountering people, their shoes would be dusty from the dirt roads they traveled. How dusty are our shoes as parish leaders? How many people do we go out and encounter?

Afternoon Presentation

1. Sister Teresa says that “growing small” will (in the end) grow the Church. Her point is that great parishes have many small communities that are very effective because they produce much more personal interactions – they also produce a great sense of belonging. People feel more intimately connected with a small group. If someone is missing at a meeting, the others are concerned and care. It is important to hear: “Where were you last evening? We missed you!”

Does your parish have small group ministries? Are the people in charge (even you, perhaps) always looking for the “big successes?” What might be a good, smaller ministry that a leader might foster and watch grow in longevity and effectiveness rather than mere numbers?

2. Sister Teresa also reminded us that we are not only called to be gathered ... but also sent. Are most of your parish ministries about bringing people in to be educated or entertained ... or are there also some ministries that are sending people “out”? What are some ways we prepare people to be sent into the world to share the light of Christ?
3. Sister Teresa points out that a large measure of success will be evident in parishes where volunteers do not take “ownership” of a certain ministry (consequently denying others from joining and/or sharing in the ministry work). We must remember, no one “owns” a ministry. How do we welcome and give equal opportunity to everyone called to serve the various ministries in our parish?
4. As a staff member or ministry leader yourself, are you on the lookout for new leaders emerging? Or are certain leadership roles “already taken” with no need to look for, or train, someone new?
5. How do you assist and support leaders who come forth from our parish community with a sense of determination that may not fit with our own style? Are we open to their call from the Holy Spirit? What are some ways we might guide them without squashing their passion?
6. Sister Teresa noted that it is helpful not to keep the same people in leadership positions for long-term service. Parishes should rotate new “qualified” young leaders into leadership roles regularly, because: It is excellent training, it is welcoming, it is necessary to prevent stagnation of a ministry effort, it helps keep the “We’ve always done it this way” language at bay. Do you rotate leaders? How might you begin?
7. While we might think that *believing* leads to *belonging*, more often it is the other way around: belonging leads to believing. What are some ways you might welcome people who are looking to belong, even if their faith is still developing?
8. How do people in your parish know they matter to you, the parish – and to God?
9. Do you bless and thank your leaders? What are other ways your parish shows appreciation for the people who do God’s work in your parish?