

**AMPLIFYING CHRIST'S MISSION IN THE DIOCESE:
TRANSFORMING THE EPISCOPAL-PRESBYTERAL RELATIONSHIP**

by

Peter Denio

Submitted to the Faculty of

The Catholic Theological Union at Chicago

in partial fulfillment of the requirement for

the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

January 22, 2026

Dr. Scott C. Alexander
Thesis-Project Director

Copyright © 2026 Peter Denio

Acknowledgements

It was in conversation with my brother, David Denio, during the pandemic that the idea to apply to the Doctor of Ministry program at Catholic Theological Union was born. My life has been dedicated to exploring my faith since high school. My mother, Kathleen Denio Downs, gave each of her children the gift of freely exploring their own spiritual pathway. It was through my peers during high school that I was led to the local Catholic Church. There, countless individuals together reflected onto me by their actions the life of a Jewish man who lived nearly 2000 years before me.

That witness sparked in me an unquenchable curiosity to learn more about this person named Jesus and what his followers believed. I was able to attend college, in part, because of the generosity of several people from what is now my community of faith at Church of the Presentation in Upper Saddle River, New Jersey. There, I learned how my faith applied to very real situations in my life.

I was fortunate enough to have discovered in college Catholic mentors who were perfectly imperfect yet charitable, compassionate, and, in their own ways, expressed the love of Christ to me. Fr. Paul Holmes, my preeminent theology professor, chaplain, and fraternity brother, and later in life, my colleague and friend. Fr. Bob Meyer, who advocated for me when my poor judgment nearly had me removed from school. He created a new graduate assistantship position so I could continue my studies and earn my master's in public administration. He freely offered me his apartment as a graduate student so I could use his kitchen. During my time as a resident assistant, my residence hall director, Jim Pillar, became the older brother I never had. Together we laughed and

enjoyed the life we were given. He was my go-to for navigating the day-to-day realities of life at that time. Zeni Fox, one of Seton Hall University's greatest treasures, was my spiritual director for some time during those days. She was a peaceful refuge on the seas of life at that time, where I had very few life rafts available should something go wrong.

After my initial stint of schooling, I traveled for a year as part of the educational program Up with People. It was here that I met Erick Long, who had a deep love of Jesus and sought Christian community wherever he went. We were kindred spirits, holding deep conversations about life and faith. Here is where I met Scott Vanderveer, now Father Scott. I was fortunate enough to journey with him later in my life, when we attended Boston College together. Today, Scott is the quintessential Catholic priest. He loves the Lord and has a personal commitment to excellence in ministry that has been unsurpassed in my experience working in the Church.

My ministry colleagues at my first, and currently only, full-time parish ministry work back at my home parish, Presentation, will forever be my model for collaborative ministry. Funny how it didn't feel like it at the time, but I later realized that our ability to "fight" about our ideas openly with one another was the hallmark of any success in our ministerial work. That level of high trust among the staff, our willingness to take risks and fail, to argue about the best ministerial approach, and then to go get a drink together afterwards, is precisely the sort of context that leads to greater mission vibrancy. Dennis Corcoran, who guided me as my youth minister, became my mentor when I returned to the parish as staff, and now, as a friend and colleague, has done more for me in my relationship with Christ than anyone I know. Thank you for helping me wrestle with my questions of faith early on. Most importantly, you are a model of fortitude in a Church

that can relentlessly test one's commitment. When justice is at play, you never take the easy way out. You work on behalf of those who can't do it for themselves. And your capacity to speak about the love of Christ that consistently brings tears to the eyes of others is unmatched.

Joe Nuzzi is another of my early colleagues in ministry at Presentation who has become a lifelong friend. My mantra remains, "He is the best pastoral minister I have ever met!" Also justice-oriented, he is fervent about the word of God (zealous?!). He understands Christian community like few do. Nearly my peer in age (though a tad older), I'm so glad I have had someone of my generation to collaborate with in ministry and, more importantly, walk through life with, trying to live this Christian life authentically.

The rest of the Presentation team during my years there is vital to acknowledge. There are too many ways this talented group of people has shaped my life: Fr. Tom Ivory, who offered me my first full-time job when other priests might not have, Maureen Murphy, Ed Ginter, Margie Rightmeyer, Nancy Mierswa, Maura Roem, Michelle Baron, Therese Gagliardotto, Lori Zucaro, Liz Perna, Peggy Lockwood, Cesar da Gama, Carol Reilly, Peggy Gelnaw, and countless other staff and parishioners.

Always trailblazing new pathways for ministry, Dennis Corcoran and Tom Ivory approved my ability to continue my studies at Boston College. There, I experienced what a rigorous theological foundation in faith looks like. Rick Gaillardetz was my professor for as many courses as I could take in my degree program. Rick is a combination of every attribute I admire in a professor (and human being) - theologically rigorous, he prioritized communicating our beliefs in an accessible manner. He was always charitable in his

critiques, aware that how you communicate reflects the dignity you hold for another person. His theology was always rooted in its pastoral application. An early mentor to me, he would generously keep up with me and my ministry, and rapidly respond to my various theological-pastoral questions over the years. Rick's untimely death hit me like few deaths I've experienced so far in life. I see my work, in part, as a dedication to his superior tutelage.

The summer program at Boston College was a very formative experience for me. I heard the life of Christ proclaimed like I never had before, bringing me to tears at the end of Bernard Cook's Christology class. Liturgies coordinated by Jim Montolongo and the camaraderie of Paul and Kristin Melley were spiritually and communally meaningful. However, it was the many nights in the local Irish pubs and the student lounge, drinking "Two Buck Chuck" with Maura Colleary, that made the Boston College experience feel so integrated. Maura created a superior living-learning community that integrated all of our faith-based principles. Bravo!

It was through my internship, which was a requirement of the BC program, that I came to another of my ministerial mentors, Sr. Catherine Patten, RSHM. I interned at the National Pastoral Life Center in lower Manhattan after learning about the Catholic Common Ground Initiative in a course taught by then *New York Times* religion columnist Peter Steinfels. Little did I know that later on, I would work at the Center in its final years, serving as the Director of the Catholic Common Ground Initiative. Sr. Catherine was one of the first national Catholic leaders to expose me to some of the pastoral and theological greats of our Church in the current moment. She would generously encourage my involvement in various national initiatives, giving me first-hand exposure to the

complicated orchestration of how the Catholic Church in the United States operates—how the pastoral sausage gets made, if you will. Catherine is sharp, thoughtful, and prayerful. She understands the politics – the human element— involved in making progress in our Church. She perfectly balances compassion and justice. She boosted my confidence as a pastoral minister and helped me recognize and affirm my gifts for ministerial leadership in national Church positions.

It was at the NPLC that I met Peg Garvey-Mitchell, who has been a steadfast friend of faith. Peg, too, has been an earnest supporter of me, my ministry, and my studies. I'm so grateful to have someone like Peg by my side. She is “my elder sister.”

Two people whom I have never met but who have had outsized influence on me and my ministry are connected to me through the NPLC – Joseph Cardinal Bernardin and Msgr. Phil Murnion. Both men, ordained leaders in the Catholic Church, continue to sustain and inspire my ministry. Serving the Catholic Common Ground Initiative as I have has brought me into an orbit of people who had known and loved the Cardinal. Additionally, benefiting from the scholarship at Catholic Theological Union that bears his name, I have had the opportunity to study his life and writings in depth. There is too much that I admire about this man and the way he has pastored our Church! Surely he is the model of episcopal leadership I have in mind when I think of the subject of this thesis project. Bernardin was the consummate pastor. He was collegial and collaborative with clergy and laity. He was brilliant and surrounded himself with equally bright individuals whom he relied on to serve the Church. He called laity, and frequently women, into key leadership roles in the Church. He was measured, always attentive to maintaining unity in our Church. He was innovative, operating with foresight, capable of reading the pastoral

landscape. He was vulnerable with those he led. I found myself fortunate to direct one of his last initiatives before his death. I am continually grateful to serve in whatever capacity I can on the Catholic Common Ground Committee.

Msgr. Murnion modeled what it means to be a minister in service to others. While I never met the man, I spoke with him before I ever knew he was the founder of the NPLC. On the advice of another priest, when I inquired about laypeople's roles in the Catholic Church – trying to chart my own ministerial future – I called Msgr. Murnion. He was unavailable when I called, so I left a message. He called me back the following day with an apology for not getting back to me sooner—he was undergoing Cancer treatment and the following day was the first available time he could contact me. He peppered me with questions, then provided a laundry list of individuals to contact. A week later, I received a call from him, asking me if I had followed up with any of his contacts! Fortunately, I had contacted a few of the names on the list. Here was a man undergoing Cancer treatment. What I did not realize at the time was that soon after, he would eventually die from Cancer. We wouldn't speak again, but that second call stuck with me. Here was a man who knew nothing about me except my vocation to serve the Church. He followed up with this faceless person, while dying from Cancer, to check up on my progress. That is commitment to the faithful!

Years later, when I learned about him in my coursework at Boston College and began to work at the NPLC, which he founded, I could see, inherently in the programs, the magazine *Church*, which the Center published, and the people who worked there, how his ethos of pastoral care filtered throughout the organization's culture. When the Board of Directors asked me to close the organization, it was in tribute to a man who

cared so passionately about me and my ministry, despite never meeting me, that I willingly and without hesitation took on the responsibility.

I have spent more time in ministry consulting with pastoral leaders about their organizational leadership challenges and forming pastoral leaders in the Catholic Church at Leadership Roundtable than in any other ministerial role at this point in my life. I would like to thank Kerry Robinson, who, with Michael Brough, led this organization for almost all of my tenure. Kerry is an ever-affirming leader who deeply cares for the joy and well-being of those in her care. Thank you for modeling how ministry begins with how we care for and treat one another. I'm also grateful to Michael, who pours every ounce of himself into making the Church a better, more effective, and just institution. Few people work as hard for this institution as he does.

Jim Lundholm-Eades was my direct supervisor for several years at Leadership Roundtable. He truly is a unicorn when it comes to diocesan intervention – a mix of crisis and family therapeutic training, school superintendent, MBA, former novice in a religious order, who served for years in a diocese under multiple bishops. It was when we sought his replacement upon his retirement that I realized there were not enough skilled people who could guide dioceses in orienting themselves toward Christ's mission. He is also a patient and compassionate person who understands my flaws yet accepts and affirms my contributions!

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church has been my ministerial sandbox for the last thirteen years, where I minister one day a week in adult faith formation. This community of faith has been a wonderful complement to my early ministry days. Pastored for the last 28 years by a priest, Msgr. Ron Rozniak, who has the gift of ministering to the Church as

a “big tent” where diverse theological views are welcome, this Church is a witness to the universal Church on how diversity strengthens our witness to the world. “Fr.” Ron has come to my rescue on a couple of occasions when the diocese's bureaucracy would have made it challenging, at best, to continue working for the Church. I am indebted to him for his consistent dedication to prioritizing pastoral necessity over ineffective bureaucracy.

The Christian witness among the parishioners of OLMC I have had the gift of ministering with has convinced me that co-responsibility in our Church is not only possible but an imperative. Many, many lives here have shaped me and my ministry, yet there are those who have been with me on this journey for a great deal of my time here: Patti and Joe Roche, Cathy Shea, Kristin Halvey, Ken and Rebecca Kingston, Tom Gorman, Brian Gatens, Nancy Nardelli, Beth Pfeil, and Suzanne Zilvetti.

My desire to continue my exploration of faith and ministry through a Doctor of Ministry program had been with me for some time. Knowing the work of several professors at Catholic Theological Union and having had the good fortune to work with a few of them, particularly Fr. Don Senior and Fr. Robert Schreiter, C.PP.S., I was eager to one day study at this fine theological institution. The Vatican II philosophy that undergirded its formation was appealing to me. One of the attributes of both Bernardin and Murnion that I admired most is that they were, first and foremost, practitioners of ministry who rigorously applied our theological tradition using the very best pastoral approaches. I believe that is true here at Catholic Theological Union.

I am tremendously grateful to Dr. Steve Millies, who, as Director of the Bernardin Center at CTU, supported my application to the D. Min program and conferred upon me a Bernardin Scholarship, along with the many others who have a hand in determining

awardees. I, too, am grateful to the patrons for this scholarship. Without their foresight and support, lay leaders like me could never afford to pay for the knowledge that has been attained through this degree in service to the Church. I hope to be a good steward of their generosity.

Dr. Chrissy Zaker and Fr. Robin Ryan, CP, are assisting with my thesis project defense. Despite never being able to take a class with him, I have great admiration for both Robin's work and his pastoral sensibilities, as expressed by my fellow students. He was precisely the faculty member I wanted to read my thesis project, given his interest in ecclesiology, which played a significant role in my work. And thanks to the happy fault of needing to take a course that fits my availability as a virtual student and holding down one and a half jobs, I was able to take a course with Dr. Zaker. Everything Chrissy did was thoughtful and intentional, from the way she facilitated the bi-modal class discussions to the selection of course readings to the course assignments. I was grateful to benefit from her pastoral application of our theology to what can, for some, be a highly neuralgic topic: ordered ministry and its relationship to lay ministry.

I am grateful to my fellow theologian-practitioners who have journeyed with me in this program. In particular, I have a great affinity and esteem for two fellow D. Min. students: one who has already left CTU, serving the Church in Chicago as the director of Ignatian Spirituality at Loyola University, Dr. Lauren Schwer. Lauren and I first met at Boston College and were both surprised to find ourselves back in school together in the same CTU cohort. The other, I have been grateful to meet in my work at Leadership Roundtable. Nicole Sotelo (soon to be Doctor Sotelo!) is one of those individuals who transcended the role of colleague and became a dear friend. We both understand the

tremendous challenges of working in a small national Catholic organization with high aspirations while dealing with very human individuals. The days, nights, and weekends were sometimes long in our work. But with people like Nicole, you always want to go a step beyond to help. She would go to the nth degree for any of her colleagues. Both of these incredible women of faith are serving as readers for my thesis project defense. I am eager to benefit from their wisdom and hope to maintain our relationship long after this degree is completed.

A thesis project director is an important and special relationship. Dr. Scott Alexander was the perfect director for me in this process. Many qualities were vital to me in this role. I desired someone who was theologically rigorous yet thoughtful in their feedback. I needed someone I could be vulnerably myself with and who would recognize my own humanity without faulting me for it. I wanted someone who could critique me while also being humble himself. I needed someone who would be flexible yet communicative throughout the process. I needed someone who could keep me on track while allowing me to chart my own course when I felt strongly pulled in a particular direction. His knowledge and skill with the English language were a bonus I wasn't expecting, but I'm grateful to be a beneficiary!

But most importantly, I needed someone who was 100% my advocate. Scott was 200% my advocate. Honestly, Scott has been a true gift and has become a dear friend.

Christian community has been the source of all I have been capable of achieving. This has never been truer of the small Christian community that my wife, my kids, and I have been a part of for the past decade or more. Faith is more real, more alive, and more present in my life because this group of fellow Christians is willing to walk this journey

with me day after day. They celebrate my victories and support me in my grief and loss. I know Christ deeply and personally because of their steadfast witness and friendship. They are my family and my school of discipleship. They are: Ed Coudriet, Ellen and Sean Farley, Erin and Ani Foley, Marianne Strayton, and MJ, Tim, Liza, and Caroline Wieland.

No one has been impacted by this journey more than my wife, Mary, and my four children, Andrew, Conor, Riley, and Devon. Mary knows all the family commitments I had put aside or delayed. She also picked up the family slack for me when I prioritized my academics. She felt the brunt of my academic commitment most when I RSVP'd "no" for a social or family event. It is essential to recognize that, while all the prior acknowledgements are significant, without a partner willing to support my desire and aspiration to fulfill this goal, completion of this thesis project would never have happened. I am so grateful to have a wife who believes in me and supports me and my work. It doesn't give us all we want, but I know that because of her support, it helps to provide our family with that which is more important-tools that have helped me, and our family, to have a deeper life in Christ, so we can continue to work out our salvation.

These acknowledgements are not exhaustive. There have clearly been other people who have had a major influence on my life and my faith. However, these people in particular shaped my journey toward this doctoral degree. I hope this account demonstrates that whatever this achievement may be for me in my life, it is not solely my own. It is the culmination of countless people of faith who have passed along and strengthened my faith in Jesus Christ. I hope that my work on this thesis project is a small, just contribution in return for all that the Church has given me.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Diocesan Structure and the <i>Missio Dei</i>	8
Chapter 2: Ecclesial Relationships and the <i>Missio Dei</i> : The Bishop and the Faithful	19
Chapter 3: The Impact of the Episcopal-Presbyteral Bond on the <i>Missio Dei</i>	30
Chapter 4: Theories and Typologies of Organizational Structure and Development	52
Chapter 5: The Impact of Various Organizational Structures on Ecclesial Relationships	66
Chapter 6: Research Methodology	102
Chapter 7: Research Analysis: Emerging Patterns from Priestly Lived Experience	114
Chapter 8: Conclusion	130
Appendix A: The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire SurveyMonkey Survey and Summary	145
Appendix B: Interview Script	185
Appendix C: Explanation of Correlation	188
Appendix D: Narrative Examples of Bishop's Behavioral Drivers	191
Appendix E: Diocesan Breakdown of Attitudes and Behaviors	196
Bibliography	210

List of Diagrams, Figures, Tables, and Graphs

Table 1: Field Structures and Spherical Impact	100
Diagram 1: Theory U: 1 Process, 5 Movements	103
Table 2: Survey Participants by Diocese and Region	109
Table 3: Mission-Oriented Behavior Categories and Bishops' Attitude/Behavior Statements	115
Table 4: Survey Dimension and Question	116
Table 5: Cross-Diocesan Matrix of Mission-Oriented Behavior Indicators with Unity and Mission Vibrancy	118
Table 6: Diocesan Mission Vibrancy Classification	124
Graph 1: Relational Unity–Missionary Vibrancy	125
Graph 2: Openness and Unity	127
Graph 3: Openness and Missionary Vibrancy	128

Abstract

This thesis examines how the relationship between a bishop and his presbyterate shapes a diocese's capacity to fulfill Christ's mission. Arguing that missionary discipleship moves at the speed of quality relationships, it proposes that a healthy social field—marked by trust, openness, and communion—between bishop and priests structurally amplifies missionary vibrancy. Integrating Catholic ecclesiology, organizational development theory, and mixed-methods research with priests across multiple dioceses, the study identifies attitudes and practices that strengthen or weaken this social field. It concludes with preliminary recommendations for cultivating change-agile diocesan structures that support more effective, mission-aligned leadership.

Introduction

The Catholic Church is “missionary by her very nature.”¹ This statement holds within it two fundamental assumptions. First, the Church serves as a disruptive agent of change in the world. There is an apparent dissonance between life as we know it and the future Jesus proclaimed. The Church seeks to “embody, demonstrate, and proclaim” that future reality, continuously propelling all existence toward our collective destiny with God.² Secondly, the inherent organizing structure of relationships within the Church must maintain the capacity for continuous transformation to evangelize each new generation. As Stephen Bevans explains, the Church’s “structure exists only in order to serve the mission that it shares and continues as God’s people, Christ’s body, and the Spirit’s presence in the world.”³

As an entity of change, the Church’s structural nature must be comfortable with, and capable of, flexibility to adapt accordingly in an ever-changing environment to lead the transformation it desires in the world. Pope Francis says as much in *Evangelli Gaudium*: “There are ecclesial structures which can hamper efforts at evangelization, yet even good structures are only helpful when there is a life constantly driving, sustaining, and assessing them. Without new life and an authentic evangelical spirit, without the

¹ Second Vatican Council, *Ad Gentes*. (1965), no. 2, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html.

² Stephen Bevans, *Community of Missionary Disciples: The Continuing Creation of the Church*, Kindle (American Society of Missiology, 2024), 29.

³ Bevans, *Community of Missionary Disciples*, 27.

Church's 'fidelity to her own calling', any new structure will soon prove ineffective."⁴ In a world of rapid change, Catholic dioceses need renewable structures capable of supporting and sustaining evidence-based missionary activity throughout their complex system of parishes and apostolates.

In practice, however, the Church is too frequently experienced as slow to change its structures to respond to its pressing evangelizing mission. Such experiences might be behind Pope Francis' plea to abandon "the complacent attitude that says: 'We have always done it this way."⁵ The purpose of this thesis project is to take up Francis' invitation to "be bold and creative in the task of rethinking the goals, structures, styles and methods of evangelization in their respective communities" by investigating one of the most fundamental relational structures of the Church and its impact on Christ's mission within the diocese: the episcopal-presbyterate relationship.⁶

Missionary discipleship moves at the speed of *quality relationships*. This thesis project argues that a positive social field—the unseen environment of our inter-relationships with one another—between the presbyterate and the bishop structurally amplifies Christ's mission in the diocese.⁷ Drawing on an interdisciplinary analysis of Catholic ecclesiology, organizational development, and the lived experience of Catholic priests, as expressed through a mixed methods approach of questionnaire and interviews,

⁴ Francis, *Evangelli Gaudium*. (2013), no. 26, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html

⁵ *EG*, no. 33.

⁶ *EG*, no. 33.

⁷ Social field theory is an essential component of a change theory developed by Massachusetts Institute of Technology Senior Lecturer Otto Scharmer called *Theory U*. Social field theory was pioneered by social scientist Kurt Lewin to describe and analyze the complex social reality that surrounds a group of organized individuals, establishing often unseen cultural norms and modes of functioning.

this thesis project will identify positive social field behaviors and practices of the bishop and correlate these praxes with the overall authenticity, quality, and efficacy of missionary discipleship within diocesan contexts.

My interest in the impact of the relationship between a bishop and the presbyterate on Christ's mission for the Church within a diocese has emerged from a core experience that has guided my life's ministry. At a critical moment during my adolescence, the Church—not only the clergy but the whole community of believers in Christ—cared for and sustained me so that I could have a chance at a healthy and fulfilling life. This experience has driven me to seek out the answer to a particular question: How does a people (in this case, the Christian community) come to know and respond to the deep human and spiritual needs of others?

I grew up in a low-income family of six. During a moment of financial instability, we were evicted from our rental home and moved in with my grandparents, where we would live for the remainder of our childhood. A few years after this move, my father suddenly died. This left my mother, who suffered from chronic illness and a low-income job, in a home not her own to care for four boys. Without the support and care of the parishioners from the local Catholic parish, my life would be in a very different place, if at all. In this way, the Church could legitimately be said to have “saved my life.”

Throughout my adolescence and young adulthood, parishioners from this Catholic parish drove me to school, work, and church commitments. They taught me how to drive a car, balance my checkbook, and find summer employment. When the Division of Youth and Family Services contacted my youth minister to see if they could help improve our family's living conditions, a team of parishioners donated their time and money to

renovate our grandparents' degraded home. Without the financial means to afford a college education, it was the people of this parish community who financially supported me to receive my bachelor's degree.

This experience sparked a profound curiosity about these people's faith and how they organized themselves to be so compassionately responsive to the needs of someone they had no apparent reason to care about. I majored in Catholic theology and immediately pursued a master's degree in church management. To me, church management answered the question that arose from my personal experience: How do we steward a people's resources to the best of our human capacity to be responsive to the needs of others?

After my studies, I returned to the parish that had helped raise me to minister full-time as a pastoral associate. I was given incredible responsibility for a person my age, managing three full-time pastoral associates, several administrative support staff, and scores of parishioner pastoral leaders. I was fortunate to serve alongside other pastoral leaders on the parish staff in an innovative environment where we could engage in passionate disagreements while maintaining deep respect and affection for one another, all united by the Church's mission. Although I had no access to an analytical framework at the time, we were able to function this way because the *social field* maintained a supportive structure and contained the social-cultural practices that encouraged healthy dialogue. In hindsight, this social field was deeply ingrained in the parish's culture, permeating the leadership of its parishioners and leading to unconventional approaches to ministry, such as the parish's response to my unique pastoral needs as a young person.

Since then, I have sought ongoing pastoral leadership formation and roles that aid the Church in organizing itself to respond innovatively to others' pastoral needs. This has led me to my current work at Leadership Roundtable, where I have led the ongoing formation of priests and pastoral leaders for more than sixteen years in various dioceses in the United States. In this role, I have had the benefit of listening to hundreds of priests and, in some instances, bishops. In most cases, their stories reflected an unhealthy, dysfunctional social field that perpetuates a negative, distrustful environment that overly relies on rules and procedures as a surrogate for maintaining a semblance of order.

In the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, we hear that priests are to be "united" and "bound" together by "an intimate sacramental brotherhood" under their bishop. "Bishops should "consider priests as their indispensable helpers and counselors", "regard them as their brothers and friends", and be "concerned as far as possible for their welfare."⁸ Yet in the largest study of Catholic priests in over fifty years in the United States, *the Catholic Project* reported that only about *half* of the approximately 3,500 priests surveyed from nearly all dioceses in the United States expressed confidence in the decision-making and leadership of their diocesan bishop.⁹

Without explicitly using the language of social fields, the Synod on Synodality has called for greater attention to the nexus of communal dynamics that bind people together and are vital to fulfilling Christ's mission within a diocese. Through this thesis project, I desire to identify the types of ministerial practices in dioceses that foster a

⁸ This characterization of the relationship between a bishop and the presbyterate are taken from *Lumen Gentium* no. 28, *Christus Dominus* no. 28, and *Presbyterorum Ordinis* no. 7.

⁹ Brandon Vaidyanathan et al., "Well-Being, Trust, and Policy in a Time of Crisis: Highlights from the National Study of Catholic Priests," *The Catholic Project*, October 2022, 6. <https://catholicproject.catholic.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Catholic-Project-Final.pdf>.

healthy social field between a bishop and the diocese's presbyterate. It is my working assumption that a healthy social field is a prerequisite for leading the Christian people of a diocese forward in mission.

The scope of this work will focus on the episcopal-presbyterate relationship and its implications within Catholic dioceses in the United States. The first chapter will look broadly at the diocesan structure as it exists today and make the case for why it must change to better serve Christ's mission. The second chapter will focus on the role, relationship, and influence of the bishop on the faithful and its impact on Christ's mission. The third chapter will explicitly explore the episcopal-presbyteral relationship.

Chapter four introduces the significance of human organizing as a God-given gift that aids our efforts for the *Missio Dei*. It considers systems theory as a way to address the ever-increasing complexity humanity faces and identify key levers for change. Chapter five builds on the overview of chapter four by exploring how organizational forms moderate human activity. The chapter then turns to the relationship between the bishop and the presbyterate. Using organizational theory to discuss the positional power the bishop holds within the structure of this relationship, the chapter concludes by examining how trust influences this relationship and impacts the diocese's missionary activity.

Chapter six will focus on the methodology employed to understand the lived experiences of priests, who serve as the study's research participants. This chapter will also outline some of the methodological limits of this study, as well as the limitations of the research approach used. Chapter seven summarizes the collective wisdom of the priest participants from various dioceses throughout the country to uncover the

significant themes in their experience of the episcopal-presbyterate relationship that support and hinder their social field. Chapter eight will conclude this thesis project by presenting preliminary recommendations to the episcopal-presbyterate social field and, more broadly, to the diocesan system, based on the identified research themes. This chapter will highlight key insights, linking the literature reviewed, the research conducted, and the researcher's personal perspectives. The goal is to affirm existing practices and explore new ways of being within the episcopal–presbyteral relationship that strengthen the diocese's missionary activity. Preliminary as it may be, this thesis project aims to outline potential steps toward a change-agile diocesan structure that incorporates adaptable processes and systems, necessary for responding to the rapid pace of change required to remain relevant in the Church's missionary mandate.

Chapter 1: Diocesan Structure and the *Missio Dei*

Current Missionary Impact and Flawed Structural Focus

Insisting that the diocesan structure needs to change implies that the way they are currently constituted is not effectively serving the Church's mission. While the mission of Christ is nothing short of the audacious task of transforming the people of the world to be in right relationship with God, we can see signs in the context of the United States, as elsewhere, that the Gospel message is not having the desired impact. This, in part, is due to the focus of several renewal efforts in the United States attending to the local parish as a closed system with little acknowledgement or attention to the fact that the parish is connected to a larger diocesan system. Examining the developed vision for the Church since Vatican II can provide theological insights that can refocus renewal efforts on the diocesan system for greater service to Christ's mission.

There are multiple methods one might employ to assess the state of the world as it journeys toward the fulfillment of God's reign. One method might be to examine the world's political systems against the vision Christ has for life on earth. Another method might be ecological, to see development toward a healthy appreciation for and the prospering of creation. Another approach might be to assess the mental health of people worldwide and their interpersonal relationships. Each of these approaches illuminates different facets of a world touched by the Reign of God. And while church participation may not immediately correlate with a world closer to fulfilling its mission in the ways indicated above, it is an indicator of acceptance of the Gospel message. Jesus's charge to "go and make disciples of all nations" explicitly calls for the Church to share the Gospel vision for all of humanity to embrace.

A cursory view of participation in the Catholic Church in the United States shows a consistent decline in Catholic sacramental activities and participation.¹⁰ While the number of Catholics who say their religious affiliation is strong has increased in recent years, Catholic sacramental activity in the United States has continued to decline overall. In the previous twenty-five years in the United States, infant baptisms have dropped over fifty percent, adult baptisms have dropped over sixty percent, and reception of adults into full communion has dropped forty-six percent. First Communion participation has declined by forty-five percent, and marriage in the Catholic Church has fallen by fifty-eight percent. These numbers do not communicate a church that is expanding its missionary activity.

Since the Second Vatican Council's re-examination of the Church's identity and its missionary activity in the world, and subsequent Popes' development of its evangelizing nature, several parish renewal efforts have emerged in the United States. They include initiatives such as the Small Christian Community movement, embodied by organizations like RENEW International and its adopted parish renewal effort, Parish Catalyst. Additionally, there are other parish renewal efforts, such as "Rebuilt", "Divine Renovation," and "The Amazing Parish," as well as evangelization initiatives, including "Alpha-Catholic Context" and "ChristLife."¹¹ Divine Renovation, initially a parish-based renewal effort, has since recognized the need to focus on the diocese's systemic structure. In the book, *Divine Renovation Beyond the Parish*, Fr. James Mallon acknowledges, "the

¹⁰ Center for the Applied Research in the Apostolate, "Frequently Requested Church Statistics," Center for the Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2025, <https://cara.georgetown.edu/faqs>.

¹¹ More information about these parish renewal efforts and evangelization initiatives can be found at the following websites: Rebuilt at www.rebuiltparish.com/; Divine Renovation at divinerenovation.org; Amazing Parish at amazingparish.org; Alpha-Catholic Context at alphausa.org/catholic; ChristLife at christlife.org.

success and long-term fruitfulness of a parish as it moves into a missionary posture is absolutely dependent on diocesan leadership.” While these renewal and evangelization efforts are likely affecting the lives of Catholics who participate in these movements, they are directed at the parish level and generally ignore the larger structure of the diocesan system. Attention to the systemic level is critical when considering structural factors such as the frequency of leadership transitions across the diocesan structure. The system as a whole is also essential when assessing how the structure supports or does not support the alignment of institutional values and beliefs, effective system-wide communication, and ongoing leadership development. Systems, such as a diocese, “are bound by invisible fabrics of interrelated actions.”¹² By focusing on the parish, “we tend to focus on snapshots of isolated parts of the system, and wonder why our deepest problems never seem to get solved. Systems thinking is a conceptual framework...to make the full patterns clearer and to help us see how to change them effectively.”¹³ Anne Codd explains that living systems integrate between part and whole, local and global, inner and outer dimensions of life and work.¹⁴ It connects the transformation of the ministry of the priest with the development of the parish and the diocese. “The living system imagery cultivates a vision of leadership that is attentive to changing environments and calls the ‘system’ to be responsive”.¹⁵ It is attentive to the “interrelatedness of person, role and system, and the dynamics of power and authority.”¹⁶

¹² Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1990), 7.

¹³ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 7.

¹⁴ Anne Codd, “Priesthood Today within Evolving Church Structures,” in *Priesthood Today: Ministry in a Changing Church*, ed. Eamon Conway (Dublin, Ireland: Veritas Publications, 2013), 124.

¹⁵ Codd, “Priesthood Today within Evolving Church Structures,” 124.

¹⁶ Codd, “Priesthood Today within Evolving Church Structures,” 124.

A Renewal of Church Structures Guided by the Missionary Nature of the Church

Each of the last three popes has discussed the renewal of the Church for it to be effective in serving the mission of Christ. In his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, Pope John Paul II invited “the Church to renew her missionary commitment” since such “missionary activity renews the Church.”¹⁷ Pope Benedict XVI, in his meeting with Catholics Engaged in the Life of the Church and Society, called for greater reform of the Church but cautions against giving “greater weight to organization and institutionalization than to her vocation to openness towards God.”¹⁸ This caution frames diocesan structural reform in terms of critical alignment with the *Missio Dei* rather than exclusively in terms of creating stable systems for the evangelically meaningless purpose of longevity alone.

Pope Francis, insisting that church structures remain in a “missionary key,” develops how institutionalization, properly rooted, guides the Church in its missionary activity. Joseph S. Flipper helpfully identifies the priority Pope Francis has for processes that emphasize time over space as a means to align structures with the *Missio Dei*. In a review of Jorge Mario Bergoglio’s writings both before and after his election as pope, Flipper has identified Francis’s insight that structures require processes that hold the tension between the “individual moment”(space), which imprisons us in the spatial limits of now, and “the greater, brighter horizon of the utopian future” (time).¹⁹ Such structural

¹⁷ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (1990), no. 2, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html

¹⁸ Benedict XVI. “Meeting with Catholics Engaged in the Life of the Church and Society”, Apostolic Journey to Germany, September 25, 2011. https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2011/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110925_catholics-freiburg.html

¹⁹ Joseph S. Flipper, “The Time of Encounter in the Political Theology of Pope Francis,” in *Pope Francis and the Event of Encounter*, ed. John C. Cavadini and Donald Wallenfang (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2018), location 5715, Kindle.

processes that endure and go beyond the current temporal human horizon of existence prepare the Church for future challenges that may not be foreseen at the moment. This insight points to one of the learning disabilities of organizations identified by Peter Senge, which prevents it from achieving generativity - the fixation on events. He states, “generative learning cannot be sustained in an organization if people’s thinking is dominated by short-term events. If we focus on events, the best we can do is predict an event before it happens so that we can react optimally. But we cannot learn to create.”²⁰

An example of such a generative process, which takes into account our interconnectivity of relationships and frees us from the current moment, leading us to a broader horizon, is the broadening of the Synod experience to include the whole Church. In the Synod on Synodality of 2021-2024, we see the extension of a process so that the many temporal spaces of the Christian faithful are not only connected by the web of participation with the other spaces around the world but carried forward into the future discernment for the Church, bringing the Church to a new horizon. Practices such as this emphasize the organizing principle of time over space and are steeped with the dialogical methods found within liberation theology, outlined by Paulo Freire.²¹ Demonstrated in this example of the Synod, as imperfect as it may be as an introductory experience, we can identify how such a process begins to chip away at a hierarchical imposition of objectives that contorts the involvement of the laity and instead invites them into cooperation for the future mission of the Church. Through the listening process, the Synod takes steps against Freire’s anti-dialogical strategy, Divide and Rule – a method of

²⁰ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 22.

²¹ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed 50th Anniversary Edition* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 137-174, Kindle.

oppression that keeps people fragmented and suspicious of one another so they cannot unite to challenge oppressors, and instead proffers a process for greater unity.

Thus far, this chapter has done the following: 1) highlighted the Church's current evangelizing impact in the United States, using sacramental records as evidence for needed reform, 2) argued that reform should focus on the diocesan system as opposed to parish level, 3) identified the papacy's invitation to regularly review and, if needed, reform the Church's structures for the sake of the mission, and 4) presented a guiding principle for "time over space", which emphasizes our inter-relational nature to inform the types of processes and structures of a reformed diocese. Our attention will now turn to how the Church's developed understanding of itself since the Second Vatican Council emphasizes this interrelated nature for any newly proposed reformed structures.

Church Structures and the Trinitarian Nature of God

A shift in the Church's framing of its missionary activity, beginning with *Ad Gentes* to today, has been from one regarded as an optional extra to something that emerges from its very nature. Noel Connolly, a Columban missionary priest, describes how this "optional extra" still exists in the diocesan structure today. He observes how "many dioceses have an Office for Evangelisation but they seem primarily oriented to bringing people back to the church rather than to participating in God's mission."²² If his observation reflects a broader reality within our Church, then many dioceses continue to remain stuck with an understanding of evangelization, despite all the Church's

²² Noel Connolly, "Ad Gentes to Evangelii Gaudium: Mission's Move to the Centre," *The Australasian Catholic Record* 92, no. 4 (October 2015): 398-399.

theological reflection on the subject, that is reduced to the practical equivalent of an individual's participation at Mass. Such an impoverished emphasis encourages an individualized experience of faith with little to no consequence to that individual, contributing to the Christian community's charge to bring about the Reign of God in the world.

Magisterial teaching about Christ's mission for the Church since Vatican II is grounded in the Trinitarian relationship of God.²³ As a sacrament of Christ and instrument of the *Missio Dei*, it follows that the Church's structures should therefore embody and emphasize such relationality. This essential understanding of the Church informs both the criteria and means for any renewed structures in a diocese. Having clarified the Trinitarian lens through which the Church evaluates new diocesan structures, the focus now shifts to how these structures must ultimately emphasize the personal transformation of heart and mind.

Metanoia: The Personal Transformation of Mindset from Relational Organizing Structures

The word *metanoia*, used in the Greek translation of Scripture, describes the change of mindset Jesus seeks in his followers. While Norman Todd argues the word is often associated with repentance and the change of sinful behavior, he explains the word actually maintains a more visionary, hopeful meaning. Todd demonstrates how, in the story of salvation, this metanoia begins first with a change in mindset from the worship of idols to the worship of the living God in the story of Abraham. The following change is

²³ See examples of the Church's identity and mission as an extension of the Trinitarian relational nature of in *Lumen Gentium* nos. 3 and 4, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* no. 75, *Redemptoris Missio* no. 4, and *Evangelli Gaudium* no. 111.

with Moses and the prophets from a mindset of lawlessness to the right-living law of Yahweh. Finally, the disciples arrive at the fulfillment of the law in Jesus and the change in mindset to the Reign of God.²⁴ “The Life of Jesus is an embodiment of the hope that depends on the good news about the reign of God. He invited all to change their mindset until it was like his.”²⁵ This change of mind that Jesus invites us to is a life-long journey that progresses like “an open spiral staircase on which we come round again and again to the same positions as before, but from a higher vantage point of greater understanding.”²⁶ The bishop and diocesan leadership need to consistently invite all the faithful throughout the diocese into the vision of the Reign of God that Jesus fulfilled and bore witness to in his ministry. Such an invitation will acknowledge that people will be at different stages of their journey. Diocesan leadership and the structures of organizing they employ should continue to invite people into the ever-expansive mindset necessary to imagine and work to bring about the fullness of the Reign of God.

Through the image of the spiral staircase, Todd describes the ongoing process of metanoia experienced by the disciple. For our purposes, this process highlights the role diocesan leadership would play by leading people in their awareness and agency for the Reign of God. S. Joubert adds to this discussion by describing the type of organizing needed in the Church structures of today. Jobert argues that the Church can no longer rely on predictability and order—structures that assume fixed relationships and culturally embedded narratives—because today it must navigate flexible networks of relationships that allow for infinite possibilities and change. Church leaders need to embrace

²⁴ Norman Todd, “Metanoia and Transformation I: Godly Organization with Servant Leaders,” *The Way*, 52, no. 1 (January 2013), 24-25.

²⁵ Todd, “Metanoia and Transformation I”, 26.

²⁶ Todd, “Metanoia and Transformation I”, 27.

“complexity leadership” that “favours new forms of complexity, openness, description, uncertainty, self-discovery, and non-linear change.”²⁷ In such an approach, leaders “create the structures, rules, interactions, interdependencies, tensions, and culture in which complex mechanisms can thrive and unanticipated outcomes can occur - and, they weed out poorly adaptive outcomes.”²⁸ Thus, pastoral leaders guiding the Church’s missionary activity will establish varied processes throughout the diocese that invite parishioners into a reflective process on the Church’s mission, and they will also establish networks of formed leaders who have the agency to adapt to the local needs and challenges of the modern mission field.

The developed Trinitarian nature of the Church, articulated since the Second Vatican Council, demands a relational structure among its members to be responsive to its mission given by Christ. Such a structure emphasizes the relationships between people over time in the organizations they lead, versus structures that keep people isolated and static. Relational structures ultimately lead to the collective transformation of the mind and heart of a people. A critical role of diocesan leadership is to create these structures of interaction that support the complex matrices of inter-relationships between people while encouraging open, creative responses to the myriad pastoral challenges faced among the people of God. Such leadership maintains the Church’s relevancy today, keeping its

²⁷ S Joubert, “Not by Order, nor by Dialogue: The Metanoetic Presence of the Kingdom of God in a Fluid New World and Church,” *Acta Theologica* 33, no. 1 (August 21, 2013): 114–34, <https://doi.org/10.4314/actat.v33i1.6>.

²⁸ R. Marion, “Complexity theory for organizations and organizational leadership,” in Complexity leadership, Part 1: Conceptual Foundations, ed. M. Uhl-Bien & R. Marion (USA: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2008), 1–15. quoted in S Joubert, “Not by Order, nor by Dialogue: The Metanoetic Presence of the Kingdom of God in a Fluid New World and Church,” *Acta Theologica* 33, no. 1 (August 21, 2013): 117, <https://doi.org/10.4314/actat.v33i1.6>.

structure open to a looser, more networked matrix that permits local adaptability and innovation.

If the Church is to be a disruptive agent of change, leading the world toward the Reign of God, it must be capable of adapting to an ever-changing mission field. As the local embodiment of the Body of Christ, the diocese functions as a system that requires structures responsive to shifting pastoral needs while remaining focused on its mission. Current trends of Catholic identification and activity in the United States suggest that existing methods and structures are ineffective, in part because renewal efforts have focused primarily on the parish rather than the diocesan system as a whole. For renewal to be effective, the diocese must be understood in its interconnectedness and restructured in ways that reflect the Church's mission and the relational nature of the Trinity. Such relational structures foster personal conversion and enable pastoral leaders to create networked, flexible forms of organization that are more easily adaptable to emerging needs. By cultivating a culture of ongoing discernment attentive to the interrelationships of its members, diocesan leaders can guide the Church toward structures that better serve its mission and draw both the Church and the world closer to the Reign of God.

Having established the need to prioritize relationships in Church structures for continued personal transformation and ongoing responsiveness to changing pastoral circumstances, the next chapter will turn to the relational structure of the Church. The chapter will expound upon the significance of trust as the bedrock of all of the Church's relationships. The role of trust in ecclesial relationships, as expressed in Church teaching, will first be identified. Then, the relationship between the bishop and the faithful, the loss

of this trust in recent decades, and how the Church's recent synodal experience may help to mend this trust, will be explored. Finally, using the framework of critical realist social analysis as articulated by Ricard Gaillardetz, the position of the episcopacy and its influence on the relational structure of the diocese and the ministries it offers will be introduced.²⁹

²⁹ Richard R Gaillardetz, "The Chimera of a 'Deinstitutionalized Church': Social Structure Analysis as a Path to Institutional Church Reform," *Theological Studies* 83, no. 2 (June 1, 2022): 219–44, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00405639221091289>.

Chapter 2: Ecclesial Relationships and the *Missio Dei*: The Bishop and the Faithful

The Communion Amongst the Faithful and Its Impact on Mission

The local bishop's *relationship* to, and *role* within the local Church entrusted to his pastoral care have a substantive impact on its missionary activity. As Pope Francis notes in *Evangelii Gaudium*, the bishop must always foster "missionary communion in his diocesan church, following the ideal of the first Christian communities, in which the believers were of one heart and one soul."³⁰ Thus, communion between the bishop, his priests, and the lay faithful is essential to the effectiveness of God's mission. In the Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of the Bishops, *Christus Dominus*, the Church fathers of the Second Vatican Council reflect on how a bishop encourages communion in his diocese:

In exercising their office of father and pastor, bishops should stand in the midst of their people as those who serve. Let them be good shepherds who know their sheep and whose sheep know them. Let them be true fathers who excel in the spirit of love and solicitude for all and to whose divinely conferred authority all gratefully submit themselves. Let them so gather and mold the whole family of their flock that everyone, conscious of his own duties, may live and work in the communion of love.³¹

To engender a strong communion, the bishop is to be in service to the faithful in their midst, excelling in the spirit of love and solicitude. Such modeling leads the faithful to submit themselves to communion with their bishop. This submission is not done blindly, but because he is a witness to the missionary service revealed in the person of

³⁰ Francis, *EG*, no. 31.

³¹ Second Vatican Council, *Christus Dominus*, www.vatican.va, October 28, 1965, no. 16. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651028_christus-dominus_en.html

Jesus Christ. As expressed in the document, the “bishops should stand in the midst of their people.” It infers proximity to the faithful. This closeness establishes the parameters of a trusting, loving communion that serves as the foundation for the Church’s missionary impulse. Speaking about the posture of the bishop when fostering the dialogical conditions necessary for the reception of the Gospel in society, *Christus Dominus* continues, the bishop “should be noted for due prudence joined with trust, which fosters friendship and thus is capable of bringing about a union of minds.”³² The stronger the communion, the greater the impact the diocese will likely have on the mission it is charged to fulfill. If the closeness of the relationship between the Church’s members is vital to the effect of Christ’s mission, the role of the bishop and his theological modality inform how people in the diocese work with each other and the types of ministries that are encouraged. In this light, Pope Francis’ exhortation that bishops “be shepherds, with the odour of the sheep,” reinforces that episcopal leadership finds its fullest expression only when it arises from genuine proximity, shared life, and deep communion with the people entrusted to their care.³³

Trust and Communion between the Bishop and the Local Church

Closeness to the faithful was one characteristic indicative of the relationship between the bishop and the people of God in the council document *Christus Dominus*, which implies trust within their communion. In his brief essay, *The Pope and Bishops: Collegiality in Service of Catholicity*, ecclesiologist Richard Gaillardetz reminds us that

³² *CD*, no. 13.

³³ Francis, “Holy Thursday Homily” (Chrism Mass, March 28, 2013), https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130328_messacristmale.html.

“as Christianity developed in the first five centuries, a strong bond developed between the bishop and the local church.”³⁴

In the essay, Gaillardetz points to the most ancient ordination ritual for a bishop from the third century, *Apostolic Tradition*, which alludes to the closeness experienced between the faithful and their bishop:

Let the bishop be ordained after he has been chosen by all the people; when he has been named and shall please all, let him, with the presbytery and such bishops as may be present, assemble with the people on Sunday. While all given their consent the bishops shall lay hands upon him.³⁵

Gaillardetz also highlights the Bishop of Carthage, St. Cyprian, who similarly emphasizes the closeness needed between the faithful and the bishop to scrutinize him as a worthy candidate to lead the Church. St. Cyprian writes, “Moreover, we can see that divine authority is also the source for the practice whereby bishops are chosen in the presence of the laity and before the eyes of all, and they are judged as being suitable and worthy after public scrutiny and testimony.”³⁶ Finally, he references Pope Leo I (440-61 CE), who indirectly acknowledges the relationship to the faithful in the election of the bishop when he instructs: “He who has to preside over all must be elected by all.”³⁷

Closeness is also a key factor in the relationship between the bishop and the presbyterate. *Presbyterorum Ordinis* describes the relationship between bishop and priest as brother and friend.³⁸ Brother and friend are both words that engender a sense of filial

³⁴ Richard R. Gaillardetz, “The Pope and Bishops: Collegiality in Service of Catholicity,” *C21 Resources* Fall (2013): 8.

³⁵ Gaillardetz, “The Pope and Bishops,” 9.

³⁶ Gaillardetz, “The Pope and Bishops,” 9.

³⁷ Gaillardetz, “The Pope and Bishops,” 9.

³⁸ Second Vatican Council, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, www.vatican.va, December 7, 1965, no. 7, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_presbyterorum-ordinis_en.html.

intimacy. *Christus Dominum* explains how such intimacy impacts the pastoral work and mission of the Church, explaining how “through their trusting familiarity with their priests they should strive to promote the whole pastoral work of the entire diocese”.³⁹

Reflecting on the brotherly relationship between bishop and priest, Cardinal Wilton Gregory insists, “this sense of fraternal love is critical between priests and bishops and for the health and holiness of the local church.”⁴⁰

After the ninth century CE, the closeness between the bishop and his local Church shifted when bishops began to be transferred from one diocese to another; a practice that was prohibited in Canon 15 of the Council of Nicea. In addition, the practice of ordaining priests as bishops to serve in bureaucratic positions at the Vatican or as one of several diplomatic posts, such as nuncio, legate, or apostolic delegate, separated the long-held traditional identity of the bishop from the closeness to his Church, creating a sense of careerism. These actions not only eroded the trust and communion necessary for the missionary activity of the local Church but also had an impact on the full communion with the universal Church, with missionary implications as well. Gaillardetz explains the contribution a bishop makes to the communion with the universal Church when he experiences closeness with his people:

It is the bishop’s relationship to his local church that gives full meaning to his relationship with his brother bishops in the episcopal college. When bishops gather together with other bishops, they bring the unique gifts, wisdom, and pastoral concerns of their local church with them. Consequently, in their episcopal gatherings, they manifest not only their collegial relationship with one another, they also manifest the communion that exists among all their churches.⁴¹

³⁹ *CD*, no. 16.

⁴⁰ Wilton D. Gregory, “Father, Brother, Friend: Bishop-Priest Relationships,” *C21 Resources* Fall (2013): 12–13, <https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/top/church21/pdf/BC-Share/2013-Fall-Resource-BCShare.pdf>.

⁴¹ Gaillardetz, “The Pope and Bishops,” 9.

Thus, communion in the local Church is a requisite for mission, both locally and universally. As St. Pope John Paul II reminds us in *Christifideles Laici*, “Communion and mission are profoundly connected with each other, they interpenetrate and mutually imply each other, to the point that communion represents both the source and the fruit of mission: communion gives rise to mission and mission is accomplished in communion.”⁴²

At the Second Vatican Council, some progress was made in re-establishing the foundational relationship between the bishop and the local Church.⁴³ However, due in part to the unofficial insistence that the final version of the conciliar documents be accepted by a moral unanimity rather than by the official two-thirds majority, many compromises were made regarding the role and relationship of the episcopal office to the local diocese. The Council documents, according to Gaillardetz, managed to articulate the apostolicity of the Church - the activity of the whole of the Christian community in its worship, life, and service - and the apostolic office of the episcopacy, but failed to integrate them. Through the work of Jean-Marie Tillard, Gailardetz explains how this ecclesial bond could be reintegrated.

In brief, Tillard sees the role of the Christian community as responsible for the apostolic memory that has traveled throughout history from the early apostolic community in Jerusalem. This memory is *received* through a process that interprets the memory of another church and places it in dialogue with the memory it already bears.

⁴² John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, www.vatican.va, December 30, 1988, no. 32. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici.html.

⁴³ For further illustration of the varied ways the Second Vatican Council related the role of the bishop to the local diocese and the college of bishops read: Richard Gaillardetz, “The Office of the Bishop within the Communio Ecclesiarum: Insights from the Ecclesiology of Jean-Marie Tillard,” *Science et Esprit*, no. 61 (2009): 175–94, <https://richardgaillardetz.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/tillard-4.pdf>.

The receiving church recognizes the received memory in what it already knows. This communal process of recognition-reception discerns what is or is not in keeping with the apostolic memory and is the actualization of the community's *sensus fidei*. Tying the role of the bishop to his local community, Tillard explains that the function of the episcopacy serves as a guardian for the faith that abides in the community. In this way, the bishop presides, providing "oversight" over the reception engaged by the whole Church.⁴⁴ Tillard thus articulates anew the essential relationship and necessary closeness required between a bishop and his Church in the local diocese. By the closeness to his Church "the ministers of *episkope* receive from the *sensus fidelium* the Church's awareness that something is needed for the well-being and the mission of the community, or the conviction that what has been declared still needs to be refined."⁴⁵ We see from Tillard in this articulation of the relationship between the bishop and the faithful that the direction of the Church's missionary activity is shaped by their relationship.

Since the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, the last three popes have indicated a need for new structures and relationships with the faithful that will aid in the Church's renewal and missionary activity. St. John Paul II called for communion to be "cultivated and extended day by day and at every level in the structures of each Church's life. There, relations between bishops, priests and deacons, between pastors and the entire people of God, between clergy and religious, between associations and ecclesial movements must all be clearly characterized by communion."⁴⁶ Pope Benedict XVI

⁴⁴ Gaillardetz, "'The Office of the Bishop within the Communio Ecclesiarum,'" 18.

⁴⁵ Gaillardetz, "'The Office of the Bishop within the Communio Ecclesiarum,'" 18.

⁴⁶ John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20010106_novo-millennio-ineunte.html.

called for a new way of thinking and speaking about this communal relationship between the bishop and the laity, namely as “co-responsibility.”⁴⁷ In this communal relationality, the laity makes its own specific contribution to the ecclesial mission. Perhaps emerging from the call of John Paul II to use church structures for a more profound sense of communion and Benedict’s invitation to enflesh a new lived reality of co-responsibility in the Church, Pope Francis profoundly, and in alignment with Tillard’s thesis of the bishop serving as guardian of the faith expressed by the people of God, invited the universal Church into a global synod process from 2021-2024. Here for the first time since the ancient Church, we experienced the full consultation of the *sensus fidelium* in a way that may potentially elevate the laity to a shared, co-responsible role with the bishop in his teaching office expressed by Tillard; use of a current canonical structure that may help to bring back into balance the trusting, communal relationship between the bishop and the faithful. If this multi-year consultative event, whose implementation continues over the coming years, fashions a new way of being into the memory of the ecclesia, then the Church may be on the precipice of a new missionary threshold. This trajectory can be an opportunity to restore the closeness between a bishop and his diocese to foster the trust necessary for the creative employment of the faithful in service to Christ’s mission.

The first part of this chapter explored the relationship between the bishop and the faithful in effectively serving the missionary activity of the Church. The closer the bishop

⁴⁷ Benedict XVI, “Inauguration of the Ecclesial Convention of the Diocese of Rome at the Basilica of Saint John Lateran (May 26, 2009) | BENEDICT XVI,” www.vatican.va, May 26, 2009, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2009/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20090526_convegno-diocesi-rm.html.

is to his church, the more trust can be built. This trust has the ability to align the faithful and their bishop with a vision for their local church. It encourages the faithful's advocacy for this vision, fashioning the people of God into a strong, corporate, communal witness to the world that spurs the Church to reach ever-outward in faith by word and deed. This version of the local church is contrasted with the potentially fractured community that lacks high trust and is unaligned with its bishop. In this scenario, the received memory of the faithful is not even sought or acknowledged by the bishop; therefore, the faithful remain unengaged and dislocated from their bishop in their missionary pursuits.

New consultative structures, such as synods and advisory councils, were encouraged at the Second Vatican Council to support the communal nature of the Church and the mission it seeks to fulfill. Popes since the Council have called upon the Church to use these consultative structures. While the level of closeness and trust in the communion of the faithful of a diocese and the greater appropriation of consultative structures in service to that communion has been argued as essential to the effectiveness of the Church's missionary activity, the positional role of the bishop and his theological modality will frequently determine its method and its shape.

The Impact of the Role of the Bishop on the Missionary Activity of the Church

The hierarchical structure of the Church places a significant level of power on the role and function of the bishop in a diocese. As the chief legislator, executive, and judge, there is very little that can be done to change the direction of the strongly held decisions or positions of a bishop. Access and influence are the greatest tools in such a structure. Thus, the theological modality of the bishop has an outsized impact on the missionary activity of the diocese; specifically, and of interest for this thesis project, how the

diocesan structure works (or does not work) to support collaboration and ministries that further missionary impact. Critical realist social analysis will be described to highlight the positional power inherent in the role of the bishop and how his theological modality influences, both positively and negatively, the work and ministries of the diocese. This framework underscores the rationale behind the examination of the episcopal-presbyterate relationship from the experience of the priests within a diocese, who find themselves, at some level, bound by the positional authority of the bishop.

Critical realist theory (CR) recognizes that in complex aggregated entities, such as a diocese, the relationship between the distinct parts has a unique, emergent property. The example of water is frequently used to illustrate this point. Water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen. Two elements that separately fuel fire. However, when combined in a particular way, they create water, which extinguishes fire. Applied to a social context, CR suggests that a diocese's organizational structure has unique emergent properties due to the *relationships* between its various parts, its people and structures. Furthermore, CR recognizes the role human agency plays within a structural system, yet acknowledges that such agency is always situated and conditioned by the social structure and culture of the system.

Social structures have an established set of positional relationships within the organization, which may be reproduced, modified, or resisted. They influence the individual agency of persons in determinate ways, with opportunities and restrictions experienced respectively as incentives or disincentives within the system. The social structure of institutions is generally durable, encourages cooperation, and carries “a

certain momentum that those who enter into them feel moved to embrace.”⁴⁸ Considering the contributions of CR, the positional relationship of the bishop in the diocese's structure, and his theological modality, it is likely that the longer the bishop retains the role, the more influence he will have on how people work together within the diocesan social structure and the types of ministerial initiatives promoted.

CR also considers the organization's culture as an influencing factor on the social structure and a person's agency. As Gaillardetz illustrates, culture today in a postmodern world is not the overarching integrated system of meaning and values experienced in a given society but, due to the ever-expanding impact of globalization and communications, is often the space where “different symbol systems and power relations often stand in an unreconciled tension and even contradiction.”⁴⁹ Such is the case in a diocese, where a variety of organizational cultures are exhibited by the parishes that make up a diocese. These subcultures can serve as a strong resistance to an incoming bishop and his vision for the diocese. Yet considering the bishop's positional relationship with the presbyterate, who have direct influence over the parish communities, he can maintain an outsized influence on the culture of the diocese. Over time, the bishop can override or, at a minimum, interrupt other institutionally operational values within the local church.

Finally, CR recognizes the distinctive role that human agency has within an institution. While social structure and culture both influence human agency, an individual agent has the capacity to “acquiesce, comply, evade, ignore, or subvert” their influences. Attention to the role of human agency is vital in the critical realist theory to moderate

⁴⁸Richard R Gaillardetz, “The Chimera of a ‘Deinstitutionalized Church’: Social Structure Analysis as a Path to Institutional Church Reform,” *Theological Studies* 83, no. 2 (June 1, 2022): 228, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00405639221091289>.

⁴⁹ Gaillardetz, “The Chimera of a ‘Deinstitutionalized Church,’” 231.

expectations that social structure or culture has a predetermined outcome on individual actors. That said, the power and authority given to a bishop make it challenging at best for individual actors to deviate from the imposed structural and cultural norms prescribed by the bishop within a diocese.

This overview of the critical realist school of social analysis builds a rationale for how the theological preference of the diocesan ordinary can influence the structure of work and types of ministries that are likely to be nurtured or impeded. This will be a vital contextualization when the human subject research of this thesis project is reviewed and analyzed.

Trust is a critical element of any healthy social field. In recent times, the trust between a bishop and his church has been eroded. Yet, as explored above, critical realist social analysis demonstrates that while there can be many varied influences within a relational structure, the role of the episcopacy can have an outsized influence on the culture and the relationships within a diocese. In the next chapter, the episcopal-presbyterate relationship will be explored, firstly through recent Church teaching and the origins of this ecclesial relationship. Recent theological development on the concept of synodality and its praxis will demonstrate a vision and approach for how the episcopal-presbyterate relationship can be improved to support a more missionary ecclesial structure. The next chapter will also guide our exploration of the discipline of organizational development and its practices that aid the social field between the bishop and the presbyterate.

Chapter 3: The Impact of the Episcopal-Presbyteral Bond on the *Missio Dei*

“All effective leadership rests on building solid, one-to-one relationships with people. Other activities, such as organizing meetings, setting up committees, establishing task forces, making speeches, writing, and so on, may be very important but they are no substitute for building relationships,” is the reminder given by Seán Ruth in his writing about the leadership responsibilities of the ordained minister.⁵⁰ The bishop, as the successor of the apostles, is the visible source and foundation of relational unity in the local Church (*Lumen Gentium* 20, 23). The priests, ordained collaborators with the bishop, form with him one presbyterate (*Presbyterorum Ordinis* 7). While the bishop holds full responsibility for the diocese, he exercises this ministry not in isolation but in communion with his priests, who assist him in teaching, sanctifying, and governing the People of God. As the bishop’s primary collaborators, this relationship is critically important to the impact the local church is capable of having on the embodiment, demonstration, and proclamation of Christ’s mission.

Current Church teaching expresses a relationship characterized by fraternal communion that exhibits ongoing trust and dialogue, mutual support, and shared mission. The historical perspective of this relationship informs the Church’s re-presentation of these ministerial roles at the Second Vatican Council, emphasizing qualities inherent in this relationship from the earliest Christian communities. The history of this relationship also reveals how some developments frustrated these positive characteristics in the

⁵⁰ Seán Ruth, “Realising Leadership Potential,” in *Priesthood Today: Ministry in a Changing Church*, ed. Eamon Conway (Dublin, Ireland: Veritas Publications, 2013), 248.

relationship and have persisted within its current structures, continuing to hinder and undermine the Church's missionary activity.

Sacramental theologian Kenan B. Osborne, O.F.M., has looked closely at the development of ordained ministry throughout the history of the Church. He warns that when speaking about the earliest days of the Christian community, noting a lack of historical data between CE 90 and 200 CE, any interpretation of how the Church functioned and how it was led should be cautiously received. In its fledgling days, the Christian community organized itself and identified leadership in multiple ways. From about 200-300 CE, the selection of leaders who are the forebearers of our modern-day ordained minister – bishops, priests, and deacons was made by the local community and not considered validly elected for the role otherwise.⁵¹ The most crucial factor in considering a candidate for leadership was whether the person exhibited the qualities and characteristics of Jesus.⁵² These are critical points for us as we think about the close, personal relationship a leader has with those served in the Christian community. It emphasizes the essential role the community played in identifying candidates to lead them. Equally as important, the necessity to be affirmed by the community demonstrates the quality of the relationship held between those serving and those served.

Additionally, Osborne reminds us that the role of a bishop and presbyter in the early Church looked vastly different from what it does today. Around the year 200, the title episkopos was applied to the leader of the Christian community, a role roughly equivalent to that of today's parish priest or pastor. The Eucharist was celebrated by the

⁵¹ Kenan B Osborne, *Orders and Ministry* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2006), 135.

⁵² Kenan B Osborne, *Priesthood : A History of Ordained Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf And Stock, 2003), 52-53.

episkopos. The role of the presbyterate was also very different than what one might expect today. Each Christian community had one or more *presbyteros*. There was no concelebration of the Eucharist. The *presbyteroi* generally did not celebrate the Eucharist. Instead, in the ordination ritual described in the Apostolic Tradition, the *presbyteros* is ordained *to advise* the episkopos. In other words, the role of the presbyterate in the early Christian community, beyond teaching the faithful, *was to provide counsel to the leader*. To demonstrate the point, part of the episkopos's responsibilities was to hear legal cases in the early Christian community. The *presbyteroi* joined the episkopos after hearing both sides of the case to help him make a decision.⁵³

In time, the function of the presbyterate underwent a gradual transformation from primarily serving as advisors to the episkopos toward assuming the role of principal sacramental ministers, a shift prompted by pressing pastoral demands. In the early Church, the episkopos was regarded as being “married” to the local community, serving until death or until physically unable to fulfill the office. With the establishment of new, often remote, rural Christian communities, however, it became increasingly impractical (and less desirable) for episkopoi to remain in these locales for a lifetime. In response, they enlisted members of the *presbyteroi* to assume pastoral leadership in their place. Although no additional ordination was conferred on them for this new responsibility, these presbyters were formally delegated to preside at the Eucharist and to preach. Over time, their faculties were further extended to include the administration of baptism and the sacrament of reconciliation.⁵⁴

⁵³ Osborne, *Orders and Ministry*, 137.

⁵⁴ Osborne, *Orders and Ministry*, 137-138.

This early account of the episcopal–presbyterate relationship is essential for understanding its foundational nature. The origin of the presbyterate's role to the bishop was to function as *trusted advisors* in mutual service to the life of the Christian community and its responsibility to carry out the mission Christ left to his Church. A consultative relationship like this requires high trust, a strong bond, and intimate knowledge of the community. Such qualities were more likely in this relationship due to certain supporting structural factors. The leader knew the people intimately, given that he emerged from within the community he was ordained to serve. He could personally understand and empathize with the issues confronted. Furthermore, because the people elevated the candidate to lead them, there was no “getting to know you” period. Relational trust was pre-established. Because the leader was expected to serve the community for a lifetime, the selection process held serious weight.

Current Church teaching explicitly identifies the presbyterate's role as that of consultors. It alludes to the qualities necessary to foster the close, collaborative relationship through which they fulfill their historically primary role of advising the bishop. *Christus Dominus*, the Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, and The Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Gregis* by John Paul II all call for bishops to listen, engage, and consult their priests (CD 16, PO 7, PG 47). *Christus Dominus* explains that regular, close, collaborative communication is a necessity for the prudent stewardship of Christ's mission. It states:

To ensure an increasingly effective apostolate the bishop should be willing to engage in dialogue with his priests, individually and collectively not merely occasionally but if possible regularly.(28)

Church documents describe the close bond expected between the bishop and presbyterate. *Presbyterorum Ordinis* speaks of priests being “bound together by an intimate sacramental brotherhood” in union with their bishop (8). *Christus Dominus* explains that the relationship should be characterized by an “atmosphere of mutual trust” to “facilitate the entire work of the diocese” – an acknowledgement of the importance of trust in the missionary success of diocesan pursuits (16). The documents call upon familial imagery, particularly that between a father and son, when speaking about the episcopal-presbyterate relationship. *Presbytrorum Ordinis* calls for bishops to regard priests as “brothers and friends” (7). *Christus Dominus* calls for bishops to regard priests as sons as well as friends (16). Such familial expressions attest to the deep and intimate union between God the Father and the Son, serving as the exemplar for the relationship between a bishop and his presbyterate. As Irish Bishop Willie Walsh explained in an essay regarding this relationship, it is one way to describe “a relationship of respect between two people with a common goal and purpose”.⁵⁵

The role of the bishop was surprisingly solidified somewhat early in Christian history, given that there was no organizing authority among the Christian communities. By the mid-third century, both in the East and West, the bishop was responsible for preserving unity within the Church and affirming proper teaching. The community understood the bishop as a role designated by God through Christ and the inspiration of the Spirit to guide them.⁵⁶ The presbyterate and deacons served the community in collaboration with and under the bishop’s leadership.

⁵⁵ Willie Walsh, “The Relationship between Bishop and Priest,” in *Priesthood Today: Ministry in a Changing Church*, ed. Eamon Conway (Dublin, Ireland: Veritas Publications, 2013), 277.

⁵⁶ Hermann J. Pottmeyer, “The Episcopacy,” in *The Gift of the Church*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 343.

Over the centuries, however, the role of the bishop and his relationship to the community, and thus the presbyterate, changed. For most of the first millennium, the bishop was considered the highest rank in the sacrament of orders, with full responsibility for leading the Christian community in his region with the counsel and support of the presbyterate. Toward the end of the first millennium, this began to change. Between 600 and 1000 CE, rural churches, once led by presbyters connected to the bishop of a nearby urban church, gradually came under the control of local lords as proprietary churches. This was due to property law at the time, which gave the local lord ownership of all land located within their geographical borders. Because the Church's stone altar was fastened to the land, the church building belonged to the lord. The lord, responsible for the people who lived on his land, would lease out the church property and select the person who would serve the people as their priest. This change in the selection of ordained ministers serving the Christian community was caused by the Franks, whose kingdoms became established across Western Christianity. Thus, the local lord controlled priestly appointments while the bishop continued to ordain them. As such, the priest would become beholden to the influence of the lay proprietor and lose nearly all accountability and relationship to the bishop. In many ways— liturgically, pastorally, educationally, administratively – the pastor of the local parish became the focus of church life. The consultative role initially bestowed upon the presbyterate in relation to the bishop was essentially destroyed due to the realignment of the priest's allegiance to the local lord. This recentering of the Christian community's life around the parish priest would heavily

influence the Church's later theology of priesthood during the high scholastic period. The theology of the sacrament of Holy Orders would not change again until Vatican II.⁵⁷

With the emphasis placed on the priest's capacity to serve the local community and celebrate the Eucharist, ordination to the priesthood, not the ordination of a bishop, gradually became regarded as the fullness of orders. Bishops no longer held strong ties to the priests and the communities they served in the rural areas. To limit the influence of secular rulers over the appointment of priests and bishops, Pope Gregory VII introduced what is now known as the Gregorian Reform.⁵⁸ By the time of the reform, the bishop's pastoral responsibilities of teaching and leadership were no longer connected to the bishop's ordination but understood primarily as juridical functions. The assertion of greater control over clerical appointments through Roman centralism, while seeking to regain the lost relationship between priest and bishop, inadvertently reinforced a canonical theory held by some at the time that "the bishop's jurisdiction is not bound with his episcopal office conferred sacramentally, but is a concession from the pope."⁵⁹ Efforts to centralize control over bishops were often resisted but were ultimately affirmed at the First Vatican Council (1869–70). If the Frankish structuring of ministry severed the shared commitment and collaboration between the bishop and the presbyterate, the Gregorian Reform would further delay the recovery of this collaborative relationship from the early Church.

⁵⁷ Osborne, *Priesthood*, 169-174.

⁵⁸ Carlos Schickendantz, "The Bishop Is Never Seen as Accountable before His Church," in *Studia Canonica: A Canadian Canon Law Review*, ed. John A. Renken, vol. 56 (Ottawa, Canada: Faculty of Canon Law of Saint Paul University, 2022), 396.

⁵⁹ Pottmeyer, "The Episcopacy," 345.

The Reorientation of the Role of the Bishop to the Community at Vatican II

At Vatican II, the Council Fathers took up the role of the bishop as part of their broader reflection on the Church and the *Missio Dei*. Historical scholarship at the time had begun to uncover the communal nature of the early Church. Among the many ways the Church described itself over the centuries, Vatican II prioritized the People of God as the leading way for the Church to think and talk about its nature, in part to express this communal emphasis. This inherently relational ecclesial expression recovered the essential interrelatedness of its members as the way the Church lived and carried out its mission. This recovered structure, grounded in scripture and the early Church, holds the Holy Spirit as the life principle of its *communio*. Pottmeyer notes that such a relational ecclesial structure is far more challenging and demanding to maintain than the hierarchical structure that is currently maintained and persists in many respects today.⁶⁰ One of its most significant challenges to such a structure is that all members must recognize their need for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to build up the Church. A relational ecclesial structure requires all the faithful to name and claim their role in the life and mission of the Church.

As the Council Fathers reexamined the Church at Vatican II, it sought to address the role of the Bishop and how this ministerial leader relates to other members. Vatican II reestablished that it is not the priest, but the bishop, through his ordination, who receives the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Because the bishop acquires the power of leadership sacramentally, his leadership is pastoral, in service to the community and not juridical, a power over the community. The sacrament of ordination integrates the bishop

⁶⁰ Pottmeyer, “The Episcopacy,” 338.

into the life of the community with a special charge as teacher, preacher, and servant. This power to minister in these roles, again because it is sacramental, comes from Jesus Christ. Therefore, a bishop does not teach alone but in service to the community, *aids* the Church in its teaching as the Body of Christ. The bishop makes Christ known through his service to the community, not through his person.⁶¹

Although the theology of the episcopacy and its relationship to the community has been rearticulated to reflect a deeper understanding of Christian life, the Church has struggled to embody and fully integrate this renewed vision. The Gregorian Reform, initiated to mitigate the abuse of politically influential secular leaders' overinvolvement in the appointment of ordained ministers, solidified the overly juridical expression of power exercised in our current hierarchical structure in the person of the pope, down through the bishops and priests. Furthermore, the theology of the sacrament of order from theologians of the high scholastic period (1000 to 1400), without a full historical context for ordained ministry, focused ordination narrowly on the power conferred upon the priest to consecrate the Eucharist.⁶² There is a clear connection between the theologizing expressed by these theologians and the pastoral practice of earlier centuries, where the priest in his capacity to offer the Eucharist became the center of church life during the Frankish restructuring of ordained ministry. Additionally, the theology of the priesthood from the high scholastic period emphasized the relationship of the minister to the Church as a holy, ordered society. As Osborne notes, this focus has a limitation. The ecclesiological focus of ordination as a sacredly ordered society omits the reflection of

⁶¹ Pottmeyer, "The Episcopacy," 346-347.

⁶² Osborne, *Priesthood*, 204-212.

ordination from the patristic period, which focuses ordination on the person of Jesus. Osborne explains, “the stress on order and ordination tends to emphasize the Church, but not Jesus.”⁶³ Vatican II helpfully reoriented the understanding of ordination to focus centrally on Jesus for one’s conception of priesthood and ministry. However, remnants of this high scholastic theology of priesthood, rooted in the hierarchical holy society in the Church’s history, continue to influence its structure today. The impact is experienced in the lack of institutional structures that support and sustain the collegial relationship once held between the presbyterate and the bishop.

Osborne explains why the effort to reclaim the inherent relationality between the episcopacy and the presbyterate is a challenge. He argues that there is a near-universal perception that the roles and functions of the bishop and the priest we have today have remained the same throughout church history, since the time of Jesus. This notion is exacerbated by the promotion of such ideas in official church documents, confusing the laity and clergy alike. What has actually occurred, Osborne explains, is that current views about the role of priests and bishops emerged from cherished cultural assumptions experienced later in church history.

While the Church acknowledges and discusses how sacramental practices have evolved over the centuries to meet pastoral needs, it shows resistance to recognizing the need for change in the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The resistance to changing any element of ordained ministry is highlighted in a footnote Osborne includes in *Orders and Ministry*. He observes that while the Catechisms of the Catholic Church references how the liturgy can and sometimes must be informed by the local culture, there is no reference

⁶³ Osborne, *Priesthood*, 212-216.

in the CCC about how culture may influence the Sacrament of Holy Orders.⁶⁴ Therefore, culture “is treated as an accident even if official documents often say the opposite” when it comes to the sacrament of holy orders.⁶⁵ This leads to a dismissal of what the social sciences, such as history or organizational development theory, can contribute to the relationship between the bishop and the presbyterate. Instead, the highly hierarchical structure of a specific previous historical period between the bishop and presbyterate is maintained, resisting any instinct to modify the relationship to be more missiologically responsive.

Osborne explains the challenge of shifting any culture, like the Catholic Church, which has a particular expectation of the episcopal-presbyterate relationship. Even if some current practices between the bishop and the presbyterate are accidental and misaligned with our Vatican II vision for these roles, losing this cultural layer can frequently mean a loss of someone’s relationship to some deep personal connection to something that matters most to them - their history, family, beliefs, etc. Osborne makes the analogy between the essential and accidental elements of culture and the layers of an onion.⁶⁶ The onion *is* its layers. To remove a layer of the onion is to remove the onion itself. In other words, there are accidental elements of the episcopal-presbyterate relationship that have become culturally integrated into the identity and roles they serve in the Church. Remnants of these accidental elements that impede the episcopal-presbyterate relationship remain in the structure of the Church today, despite the theological vision promulgated at Vatican II. In “The Bishop is Never Seen as

⁶⁴ Osborne, *Orders and Ministry*, 108.

⁶⁵ Osborne, *Orders and Ministry*, 109.

⁶⁶ Osborne, *Orders and Ministry*, 108.

Accountable Before His Church,” Carlos Schickendantz outlines how some of the accidental cultural elements from the past continue and sometimes resist the theological framework in current Church teaching.

Schichendantz references five attributes that ecclesiologist Herman Pottmeyer has identified, which still remain with the Church today as a result of the Gratian reform and limit its ability to transition to a more relational ecclesial structure: “priorities of the universal Church over local churches, priority of ministers over community, priority of a monarchical structure of ministry over a collegial structure, priority of the ministry over charisms, and finally, priority of unity over diversity.”⁶⁷ Each attribute has an impact on the collaborative relationship between the bishop and the presbyterate.

Taken in order, the priority of the universal Church over local churches directs the attention of the bishop away from the local community and toward his role of collegiality with other bishops and the issues of the region or universal Church. This can unduly prioritize the national bishop’s conference or the bishop’s relationship to Rome over and above his attention to his priests and the people of his diocese.

The priority of minister over community has nurtured the clericalism that still remains prevalent in our structures, attitudes, and beliefs in the Church. This attribute directly conflicts with the close communal nature of the People of God and the pastoral leaders, who from the Church’s earliest history were called to serve the community. It remains in stark contrast to our current theological understanding of the role of the clergy within the Christian community. While Vatican II clarified that the episcopacy represents the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders and reaffirmed the close collaboration

⁶⁷ Schickendantz, “The Bishop Is Never Seen as Accountable before His Church,” 397.

intended between bishop and presbyterate, Susan Wood notes that it may have unintentionally left presbyters feeling that their role and ministry are somehow incomplete or lacking the fullness of ordination. This is only true, she argues, if one treats the Sacrament of Holy Orders as being solely ordained for the priestly function of ministry and not the prophetic and servant *munus* of Christ.⁶⁸

From an ecclesiological vantage point, the two roles of bishop and priest are rooted in their relationship to the Christian community they serve, and thus bound to each other through that relationship. The bishop serves a particular church, the diocese, and reflects that relationship in his collegial activity with the universal Church. A priest presiding over a grouping of the faithful, unlike the bishop, cannot represent the fullness of the universal Church. The presbyter, “who shares in the priesthood and mission of the bishop,” represents the people from his parish to the bishop and the diocese.⁶⁹ The universal communion of the Church among the bishops is tied to the communion the bishop has with his priests and the priests’ communion with his parish community. Therefore, the priest receives his identity through the relationships he has with the parishioners of his parish and the bishop, and not from the eucharist. Woods goes on to explain, “A presbyter does not exercise pastoral leadership alone, but always collegially. This is not only the collegium of the presbyterium, but also the collegiality of shared ministry in a fully functioning baptismal community.”⁷⁰ Thus, the inherent relationality necessary for the role of the ordained minister contradicts the hierarchical-monarchical framing of minister over community. It is precisely because of the intrinsic relationality

⁶⁸ Susan K. Wood, “Presbyteral Identity within Parish Identity,” in *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood*, ed. Susan K. Wood (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2003), 181.

⁶⁹ Wood, “Presbyteral Identity within Parish Identity,” 181.

⁷⁰ Wood, “Presbyteral Identity within Parish Identity,” 189.

that the Church can never hold the role of the minister above the community. Instead, the ordained is a minister *because* of his relationship with the community. It is *in* community that the effect of the ordained role is realized.

The next priority in Pottmeyer's list that remains from the Gregorian reform is the priority of a monarchical structure of ministry over a collegial structure. This has led to an over-reliance on rules versus a power that stems from expertise and credibility— a power which is more likely to develop in the highly relational and experiential structure of collaboration.⁷¹ Woods's reframing of the role of the ordained in their interrelatedness demonstrates why collaboration serves as a valuable expression of the Church's internal life. If the structure of the Church enables unilateral decision-making of any kind, void of “accountability, transparency, participation, and consensus,” then the Church is likely to stray from the guidance of the Holy Spirit.⁷² It is here that Schickendantz makes his greatest argument for structures of mutual accountability. He emphasizes that the Church's juridical system does not support the theological vision of the Church expressed at Vatican II, amounting to the goodwill of those in authority to make the best decisions for the Church. Of specific note to the bishop-presbyteral relationship, Schickendantz discusses the canonical framing of the Presbyteral Council. He observes that Canon law provides for only a consultative vote. And while the Code indicates that the bishop must consult the presbyteral council on seven topics in particular, it requires the council's consent only on issues defined by Canon law. None currently exists for explicit consent!⁷³ He summarizes, “This particular and very evident situation reflects the general

⁷¹ Ruth, “Realising Leadership Potential,” 248-249.

⁷² Schickendantz, “The Bishop Is Never Seen as Accountable before His Church,” 397.

⁷³ Schickendantz, “The Bishop Is Never Seen as Accountable before His Church,” 401.

tendency to guarantee the 'freedom' of authority without paying adequate attention to the participation, as in this case, of even the bishop's primary collaborators in discernment and decision making, namely, the priests of the diocese.”⁷⁴

The priority of ministry over charism also continues to plague the Church today. Ministry, as expressed as the role or function of servant leadership to the community performed by a person, and charism, as described as one's God given gifts and innate talents, were in the earliest days of church life integrally linked. Today, ordained ministers are not selected by a community of people to lead them based on their capacity to preach, teach, and lead. The current vocational discernment process bears little resemblance to the community's election of candidates for community leadership of the ancient Church. The early method of selecting leaders emphasized an affirmation of the qualities of Jesus that they witnessed in the person elected to lead them. While much could be said about the importance of reconnecting the link between ministry and charism in the selection of ordained leaders in the Church, a strong episcopal-presbyterate relationship would enhance the discernment of priests in service to the People of God. This is particularly the case in the area of clergy assignments.

The final accidental priority identified by Pottmeyer that remains from the hierarchical-monarchical model of the Church is the emphasis on unity over diversity. This is particularly challenging for the Church, which, as expressed previously, has seemed to select and idealize a particular cultural expression of who a priest is and what he does from a specific period of time. This accidental priority, therefore, serves to protect and maintain certain unhelpful assumptions in the way a bishop may relate and

⁷⁴ Schickendantz, “The Bishop Is Never Seen as Accountable before His Church,” 401.

communicate with the priests in his presbyterate. It can be easy for a bishop to resort to acting more as an administrator who commands and directs those under their purview, as a feudal lord may do, instead of fostering communal bonds through appropriate vulnerability that engenders mutual trust and support. Equally challenging from the vantage point of the priest, it can propel certain expectations that one can serve as a lone ranger, independent and disinterested in the larger presbyterate, bishop, or diocese as a whole.

Even without considering the deficit experienced by the Church due to the limitations placed on candidates available for ordination, if we look at the many ways a vocation to the priesthood can be lived out in service, the Church stands to gain by embracing the diversity of life experiences currently serving within the presbyterate. With stronger collaboration between the bishop and the presbyterate, the rich diversity of knowledge, wisdom, and experience within the presbyterate—as well as the intimate insights priests bring from their local parishes—could be more fully expressed and integrated into the diocese’s vision and mission.

Up to this point, the challenges the Church in the United States faces in carrying out its mission have been examined. In order to respond to the ever-changing pastoral needs of the world, a structure that reflects the relational nature of God and serves the personal transformation of individuals is necessary. One structural limitation has been the tendency to frame renewal primarily at the parish level rather than within the broader diocesan system. For the diocese to respond effectively to its missionary mandate, one area that requires greater attention is the relationship between the bishop and the

presbyterate. Historically, this relationship was marked by close consultation. Over the centuries, it has shifted toward a less collaborative dynamic, one that often falls short of addressing the needs of the Christian community and the Gospel imperative to advance God's reign.

The Second Vatican Council reaffirmed the missionary identity of the Church and rearticulated the roles of its members in service to that mission. In particular, it called for a renewed spirit of collaboration between bishops and presbyters, echoing the practices of the early Church. Yet, despite these conciliar calls, structural challenges persist, reinforced in part by the limitations of current Canon law, which often sustains outdated patterns of ecclesial life and relationships.

More recently, under the leadership of Pope Francis, the global Church has undertaken the Synod on Synodality (2021–2024), an unprecedented process of worldwide consultation. This synodal journey has invited the Church to deepen its communal and relational identity, advancing the praxis of living into the vision of Church initiated at Vatican II. If its insights are integrated into ecclesial structures, the synodal process holds the potential to re-establish more collaborative relationships between bishops and presbyterates in service to the Church's mission.

Implications of Synodality for the Episcopal-Presbyterate Relationship

The International Theological Commission's document, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, explains the meaning of synodality within the Tradition of the Church as "the path along which the People of God walk together."⁷⁵ Synodality

⁷⁵ International Theological Commission, "Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church (2 March 2018)," www.vatican.va, accessed September 7, 2025, no. 3.

designates not merely a procedural mechanism but a constitutive dimension of the Church's life. It is "the most appropriate framework for understanding the hierarchical ministry itself," therefore making synodality "an indispensable precondition for a new missionary energy that will involve the entire People of God."⁷⁶ Synodality is the concrete way the People of God journey together in carrying out Christ's mission for the Church. As Rafael Luciani argues, synodality is best understood as a "theological-cultural" model that seeks to reform ecclesial structures by reorienting them around the People of God ecclesiology, as articulated in *Lumen Gentium*, chapter two. In this framework, the *sensus fidei fidelium*—the faith-sense of the baptized community—possesses a "binding and permanent character" in the discernment of the Church's mission.⁷⁷ Synodality, therefore, requires that all members of the People of God—laity, presbyters, bishops, and the pope—participate in the reciprocal listening and communal discernment as a means of discerning the presence of the Holy Spirit within the Church. Every baptized person, enlivened by the Spirit, participates in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and servant mission.

Scerena Noceti extends this vision by describing synodality as the means by which the Church sustains *ecclesiogenesis*, or the continuous renewal of itself in response to the pastoral needs of each historical moment.⁷⁸ She insists that synodality entails not simply a modification of practices or strategies but a reconfiguration of ecclesial self-

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_en.html#.

⁷⁶ International Theological Commission, "Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church," no. 9.

⁷⁷ Rafael Luciani, *Synodality: A New Way of Proceeding in the Church* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2022), 141.

⁷⁸ Serena Noceti, *Reforming the Church: A Synodal Way of Proceeding* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2023), viii.

understanding, relationships, and structures. Reform, in her view, requires an intentional process of reshaping attitudes, procedures, and institutional forms that resist synodal participation. In this reconfigured ecclesial life, the bishop assumes the role of guarantor of unity, responsible for safeguarding apostolic fidelity, while also ensuring that the discernment of the whole community is respected and integrated into decision-making processes.⁷⁹

Synodality is rooted in Scripture and Tradition. The International Theological Commission points to the Council of Jerusalem as the biblical paradigm of synodal practice. In this early episode of Christian living, the disciplines of dialogue and discernment serve as a means of listening to all voices, leading to decision-making guided by the Spirit. Throughout the history of the Church from Antioch to Vatican II, synodality has always involved a balance between episcopal leadership and the participation of presbyters, deacons, and laity. Practices evolved differently in the East and West but retained a communal character.⁸⁰

Synodality aids the Church in reflecting its Trinitarian nature. It serves its communal nature by calling upon the self-giving of all the people's diversity of charisms. It requires practices and structures that do not exclude participation, respect the baptismal dignity of every member, and invite their differentiated participation based on their role and ministry in unifying missionary service.

Synodality can offer a constructive path for renewing the episcopal-presbyterate relationship in service to the Church's missionary mandate. It serves as a means for the

⁷⁹ Noceti, *Reforming the Church*, 61-62.

⁸⁰ International Theological Commission, "Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church," nos. 24-39.

shared responsibility in the exercise of pastoral governance between the bishops and their presbyterate, called for by Vatican II (*Lumen Gentium* and *Christus Dominus*). It emphasizes the historical principle from the Church’s earliest tradition: *nihil sine episcopo, nihil consilio vestro, et sine consensu plebis*—nothing without the bishop, nothing without the presbyters or deacons, and nothing without the consent of the people.⁸¹ It emboldens the bishop as the presider of unity by means of governing in consultation with his priests and with the participation of the whole People of God. As argued earlier, missionary discipleship advances at the pace of relationships, and the quality of the relational field between bishop and presbyterate profoundly shapes the Church’s capacity to embody and proclaim the Gospel. By embedding practices of shared discernment, dialogue, and co-responsibility into diocesan structures, synodality strengthens the presbyterate’s role as co-workers and advisors, while at the same time deepening the bishop’s accountability to the communal discernment of the faithful.

The practical implications of such a synodal reconfiguration are significant. Structures such as diocesan synods and presbyteral councils must be more than consultative. They must function as authentic spaces of listening and deliberation in which the presbyterate shares genuine responsibility for shaping diocesan priorities. Communication processes need to be multidirectional, ensuring that presbyters bring the experiences of their local communities into dialogue with the bishop’s leadership and the broader diocesan mission. Furthermore, the cultivation of synodal leadership skills—listening, discernment, consensus-building, and collaborative governance—must become an integral aspect of ongoing formation for both bishops and priests.

⁸¹ International Theological Commission, “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church,” no. 25.

In this way, synodality does not supplant the sacramental authority of the episcopal office but rather situates that authority within a relational and communal horizon. The bishop remains the guarantor of unity and apostolic fidelity, but his exercise of authority is mediated through processes of consultation, discernment, and shared responsibility with the presbyterate and the faithful. Such a model resonates with the Council's renewed vision of the Church as a communion ordered to mission, where the relational bonds among bishop, presbyters, and the laity become the very means by which the Church manifests the Reign of God in the world. If embraced, synodality has the potential to re-establish the trust, intimacy, and co-responsibility that characterized the earliest expressions of the episcopal-presbyteral bond, thereby enabling the diocese to respond with greater creativity and fidelity to the demands of the contemporary mission field.

Synodality supports and nurtures the co-responsible relationship between the bishop and the presbyterate for the advancement of the Church's missionary activity throughout the diocese. However, it is hopefully apparent that there are specific skills, processes, and practices required to nurture a synodal culture in this important ecclesial relationship effectively. In her exploration of establishing synodal reforms for the Church, Serena Nocenti acknowledges that such "structural change requires...more systematic collaboration with sociology, political science, social pedagogy, and the human sciences generally."⁸² She believes that "without these contributions, ecclesiology cannot address the sensitive issue of leadership, nor can it define new communication and

⁸² Noceti, *Reforming the Church*, 97.

organizational dynamics.”⁸³ Her words echo the Church’s recognition of the human sciences as providing a valuable contribution to the life and mission of the Church.⁸⁴ Eugene Duffy and Eddie Molloy, in their article that explores what the Church can learn from structures of accountability in secular institutions, say it best:

The Spirit of God is at work throughout all of creation...building up the Kingdom of God....[The Church] must remain open to those Kingdom goods emerging in the world that are being offered to it, through the power of the Holy Spirit...A Church that shows itself open to learning from the world can be a more credible teacher and effective instrument in proclaiming the Gospel.⁸⁵

From this clear direction, we shift our attention to the study of organizational development as an aid in understanding the relational dynamics of the social field at work in the bishop-presbyteral relationship. The next chapter will explore humanity’s capacity for organizing as a means of overcoming large-scale, complex challenges. It will examine the benefit of thinking about the diocese as a system and the forces imposed on human activity by various organizational forms.

⁸³ Serena Noceti, *Reforming the Church*, 97.

⁸⁴ “In pastoral care, sufficient use must be made not only of theological principles but also of the findings of the secular sciences, especially of psychology and sociology, so that the faithful may be brought to a more adequate and mature life of faith.” Second Vatican Council, “*Gaudium et Spes*,” www.vatican.va, December 7, 1965, 62, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

⁸⁵ Eugene Duffy and Eddie Molloy, “Developing a Culture of Accountability in the Church: Learning from Other Organisations,” ed. John A. Renken, *Studia Canonica: A Canadian Canon Law Review* 56, no. 2 (2022): 561.

Chapter 4: Theories and Typologies of Organizational Structure and Development

One of Yuval Noah Harari's central themes in his book, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, is that the trajectory of human evolution has been a story of our capacity to organize as a means of overcoming the challenges our species has encountered.⁸⁶ However, through the lens of Christianity, one might see evidence of God's activity, calling all of humanity into greater communion throughout history.

The book traverses the phases of humanity's evolutionary development. One of the book's key contributions is its ability to take a long and broad view of human history, punctuating it with important moments in our human social evolution.⁸⁷ One of the more fascinating changes in our species' history is our relationship to time, precipitated by our invention of agriculture. Before the agricultural revolution, when humans were still hunter-gatherers, their minds were limited to focusing on the present moment. This stemmed from the absence of any need for planning. They were always on the move.

⁸⁶ "Sapiens can cooperate in extremely flexible ways with countless numbers of strangers. That's why Sapiens rule the world..." Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (Random House UK, 2014), 25.

⁸⁷ Some scholars, such as Graeber and Wengrow, critique Harari's thesis of human development as being overly linear. Additionally, they argue that humanity's development was far less constrained by new discoveries and held that humans had greater creative agency in their destiny. Harari admits that the book by necessity, given the approach of taking a broad and long view of human history, inevitably leaves out significant nuance. The author of this thesis project finds merit in both perspectives. The long and broad view of humanity can provide a helpful narrative in order to see patterns and make meaning of vast amounts of information. Additionally, organizing structures have limitations on human activity. At the same time, humanity can also have experimented with various forms of organizing and have always maintained a level of agency in their decision-making. The perspectives of these contrasting positions are held within critical realist theory mentioned earlier in this thesis project. CR recognizes that structures can both support and restrict human agency. CR also holds a place for an individual's agency within a system. For the purposes of this thesis project, the work of Harari is being used to emphasize the creative genius of humanity's ability to organize and how organizing structures can be a moderating force in our interpersonal interactions despite the agency of individuals in a system.

They had no established place on the Earth to call home. They did not know where their next meal would come from. They lived in the moment.

As humans discovered the capacity to grow stable food sources, our species evolved and learned to plan and anticipate cycles of time. Our ancestors needed to know the length of the seasons for growing and harvesting. How much water was too much or too little for their crops? How long would it take a domesticated animal to produce offspring? However, with this development came the consequence of not living in the present as often. Humans began to think more about the past or the future. Interestingly, when humans lived in the moment as hunter-gatherers, they also experienced lower levels of fear and anxiety. If you live only in the present, you are fully attentive to the current moment. Fear and anxiety increased in the human experience.

As part of our evolution, humanity's understanding of time has helped us organize and plan as a species, extending beyond the moment and the day into our future to consider future generations. However, the consequence of this evolution is greater distraction to the present moment and our attentiveness to one another in the now. It is here that we see the words of Jesus' plea, "not to fear," as a command to attend to the sacredness of the moment, which is threatened by our human evolution. Presence to the moment banishes the anxiety that has crept into our everyday experience and has become a source of division in our society.

Continuing humanity's social development, Harari illustrates how each evolution (he calls them revolutions) expanded humanity's connection and capacity to solve increasingly larger challenges. Some evolutions did not always affirm the dignity of the individual, such as during the era of slavery, imperialism, colonialism, and industrialism.

However, the wide-angle lens approach taken in the book demonstrates how, throughout history, such tragic periods have led to subsequent stages of social development and further connection. Other aspects of human society, such as trade, money, and religion, despite their capacity to divide, have, overall, served as bonding agents among individuals, groups, and nations. Observing humanity's development over millennia through the lens of Christian faith, one can see the trajectory of human existence as growing toward the communion Jesus called for in his prayer, "that they may all be one," to His Father.

Harari's insight that the fundamental genius of humanity is its ability to organize in response to the ever-increasing challenges of the world is vital to the Church's reflection on the value of organizing itself and the methods chosen to structure itself in service to the *Missio Dei*. It exemplifies the relational character and Trinitarian nature of a thoroughly Christian anthropology. It expands the relationality of God as Trinity to humanity's desire to create organizing structures that support the flourishing of humanity and all of God's creation. The capacity to be drawn into association with others, in an ever-increasing complexity of relationships, is part of humanity's fundamental design. It follows, then, that the act of organizing, as an expression of our shared humanity, is divinely intended as both a means of forging communion and participation in the building of God's reign. For the Christian, organizing illustrates how God's mission for His Church transcends the Church's work. Bringing the whole human family into communion is not initiated or facilitated solely by the Church; it is part of the human condition, bestowed on all by the Creator. As a constitutive element of our human capacity, the

organization of our relationships can also express the nature of God, making this activity sacred and transformative.

Throughout history, the approach frequently taken to solve humanity's problems has been through technical solutions. A technical approach to solving issues typically involves a linear, step-by-step process. It generally assumes one answer or a decision tree of known responses to a problem. It does not consider complex relationships, conditions, or variables. For example, in primitive times, if you wanted the food someone else had hunted, you either stole it or killed the person who had hunted it. With the onset of bartering and money, you may have traded something in your possession for the food you desired or exchanged some object that represented something of mutual value (money) to purchase other goods. (As a sidenote, the byproduct of this invention was that far less violence has occurred between people throughout the centuries. Today, we may view money as the cause of violence and war. We rarely consider the number of conflicts that have never emerged due to the technology of money.)

Another technical example can be expressed in how we often think about the Industrial Revolution. In this era, factories mass-produced goods through a step-by-step process, producing larger quantities in a shorter period. Both examples reflect a mechanical/technical approach to problem-solving, similar to the functioning of a clock – each piece has its place and function. If something breaks, you know which piece needs to be replaced and follow a specific set of steps to fix it. However, in recent decades, many organizational theorists have begun to see the dynamic, or sometimes called adaptive, challenges and complexity inherent in our relationships.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ See the work of C. Otto Scharmer, Peter Senge, Ronald Heifetz, and Marty Linsky for their work related to adaptive leadership challenges and potential solutions.

In Chapter One, this thesis project introduces the argument that, for the diocese to serve the *Missio Dei* effectively, it must adopt a systems approach for comprehensive renewal. A systems approach positions the diocese to move away from using technical solutions for dynamic, adaptive challenges. This requires a focus on the whole diocese – the interconnectedness of its varied offices and ministries, and their relationships to and among the primary mission-delivery points: the parishes. Many pastoral planning efforts in the U.S. Catholic Church continue to employ a more technical, mechanistic approach, often using a variation of strategic planning. A systems approach recognizes the innate synergy within a system, leveraging the unseen behavioral patterns that drive generative and transformative learning. It acknowledges that each person contributes to the system's challenges and potential solutions. There is no enemy in the system. The person “and the cause of the problem are part of a single system. The cure lies in the person’s *relationship* with the ‘enemy’.”⁸⁹

In his characterization of management science and its development over the decades, Peter DeLisi cites several authors who describe the field as one that, in many ways, still needs to shift from a technical/mechanistic to a systemic approach. The authors DeLisi reviewed explain how early management studies were influenced by the scientific method, which dissected, compartmentalized, and analyzed ever smaller segments within a system. This led to a hyperattentive focus on linear and fragmented thinking in organizational design within the field of management. DeLisi draws on the

⁸⁹ Italic emphasis is mine. Peter M Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 67.

work of Fritjof Capra to highlight the limitations of viewing a system through a mechanistic lens:

“Systemic properties are destroyed when a system is dissected, either physically or theoretically, into isolated elements. Although we can discern individual parts in any system, the nature of the whole is always different from the mere sum of its parts. Another important aspect of systems is their intrinsically dynamic nature. Their forms are not rigid structures but are flexible yet stable manifestations of underlying processes.”⁹⁰

Such mechanistic/technical thinking is still frequently employed in many planning practices and arguably remains the preferred approach for most pastoral planning conducted in the Catholic Church in the United States. Mechanized management can “handle the sort of complexity in which there are many variables”, referred to as ‘detail complexity’ by Senge.⁹¹ It is found frequently in “sophisticated tools for forecasting and business analysis, as well as elegant strategic plans,” yet they “usually fail to produce dramatic breakthroughs.”⁹² Detail complexity is advantageous when multiple sets of instructions need to be followed. However, this type of organizational design does not suffice when institutional challenges are neither linear nor obvious.

This leads Delisi to argue, as several of the authors he quotes affirm, that the focus should be on the system for achieving the desired impact. Emphasizing this point, Delisi quotes Russel Ackoff: “The performance of a system obviously depends on the performance of its parts, but an important, if not the most important aspect of a part’s performance is how it interacts with other parts to affect the performance of the whole.”⁹³

⁹⁰ Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point : Science, Society, and the Rising Culture*. London: Fontana. 1982. Quoted in Peter S. DeLisi, *Strategic Leadership and Systems Thinking*. (New York: Routledge, 2021), 11.

⁹¹ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 71.

⁹² Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 71.

⁹³ Russell L. Ackoff, *The Democratic Corporation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994. Quoted in Peter S. DeLisi, *Strategic Leadership and Systems Thinking*. (New York: Routledge, 2021), 21.

Taking a systems approach, emphasizing and leveraging the connections between the parts of a diocese, invites synergy where there is

“an increase in the value of the parts of a system that derives from their being parts of the system – that is, from their interactions with other parts of the system. Such an increase in value can occur only if the parts can do something together that they cannot do alone. Put another way, synergy requires an increase in the variety of behavior available to the parts of a system.”⁹⁴

It seems fair to conclude that the transformation of society into one that reflects God’s reign necessitates the mutually supportive and complementary efforts of all the baptized. Therefore, each parish, itself a web of relationships, requires and should rely on its relationships with the diocese and other parishes, which also seek the same goal.

Dynamic or adaptive challenges are problems that do not have straightforward solutions. “They require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization.”⁹⁵ Dynamic challenges require new ways of thinking—a change in attitudes, values, and behaviors. C. Otto Scharmer, a senior lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and creator of social transformational technology called Theory U, is one of several organizational theorists who believe that the large-scale problems of today cannot be resolved using technical solutions. He identifies three major dynamic crises that have been running concurrently in the world today: an environmental crisis - a disconnection between the person and nature manifested through climate destabilization and the loss of the planet’s biodiversity, a relational crisis - a disconnection between the person and others exhibited by inequality, hyperpolarization,

⁹⁴ Ackoff, *The Democratic Corporation*, Quoted in DeLisi, *Strategic Leadership and Systems Thinking*, 22.

⁹⁵ Ronald A Heifitz and Marty Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* (Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Review Press, 2002), 25.

violence and war; and a spiritual crisis - a disconnect between the person one is and the person one could be, illustrated through issues such as anxiety, loneliness, and depression.⁹⁶ These crises are complex, layered, and multifaceted, requiring a tremendous amount of focus, time, and attention from many people across various sectors worldwide. Technical solutions, drawn from prior experience, will not resolve these problems. Scharmer argues that this poly-crisis illustrates the overwhelming complexity of the dynamic challenges facing our organizations, institutions, and society today.

Most organizations today struggle with dynamic challenges. Scharmer identifies three types of organizational complexity that often are intertwined in many of today's dynamic/adaptive challenges: Dynamic Complexity, Social Complexity, and Emerging Complexity. Dynamic complexity, unlike the methods of detail complexity (forecasting, planning, and analysis), is for situations "where cause and effect are subtle, and where the effects of interventions over time are not obvious".⁹⁷ Dynamic complexity exists when "the same action has dramatically different effects" in the short term and long term, "where an action has one set of consequences" in one part of the organization "and a different set of consequences in another part of the system", or "when nonobvious interventions produce nonobvious consequences."⁹⁸

For example, in the short term, a parish merger or closure may resolve financial strain and address priest shortages. However, in the long term, it may erode the laity's trust in diocesan leadership, reduce engagement, and erode community identity, which can affect engagement and giving patterns if the process is not adequately transparent or

⁹⁶ C Otto Scharmer and Katrin Kaufer, *Presencing: 7 Practices for Transforming Self, Society, and Business* (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2025), 15.

⁹⁷ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 71.

⁹⁸ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 71.

does not sufficiently involve the laity. Similarly, when a diocese centralizes the administrative operations of its Catholic grammar schools, the decision may lead to greater efficiency and compliance at the diocesan level. Still, over time, it can diminish the sense of ownership and responsibility that pastors and parishes once felt for sustaining the school's viability through their time, resources, and expertise. Finally, a diocese might institute lay leadership formation programs to build internal capacity. Over time, this could unexpectedly shift parish culture toward greater expectations for shared decision-making and leadership. However, it may also create tension with pastors who feel their authority is being diminished.

Social Complexity occurs when various “actors within a system have different views and interests”, many of which are unrecognized.⁹⁹ This may be exhibited in ministry to young adults in a diocese. Diocesan leadership might design ministry activities focused on catechesis, particularly topics related to sexual morality when one is single. However, young adults may desire more community and social engagement. Additionally, leadership may be blind to the varied needs of ethnic subcultures among young adults. Minority young adults' concerns may go unnoticed or underrepresented within a majority cultural context.

Scharmer defines Emerging Complexity as characterized by disruptive change, which often occurs when a “solution to a problem is unknown”, the problem statement keeps changing, or the key stakeholders are not clear.¹⁰⁰ The vocational crisis in the United States is a good example of Emerging Complexity. The disruptive change is the

⁹⁹ Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*, 58.

¹⁰⁰ Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*, 59is.

decline in seminarians, which creates a need for greater lay involvement in Church ministry. This challenge is transforming our understanding of ministerial identity. The problem definition varies within the Catholic community – is the problem the shortage of priests, a lack of vocation culture, or a changing theology of ministry? A range of possible solutions is being employed. Some dioceses recruit priests from other countries to fill gaps and maintain a similar experience of the Church with ordained ministers. Other dioceses are experimenting with lay administrators or installing permanent deacons as parish community leaders. However, each of these choices reshapes ecclesial culture and ecclesiology in unanticipated ways. Finally, the stakeholders include the pastors, seminarians, lay ministers, bishops, and the faithful, each with different expectations. Additionally, the wider society holds certain expectations and influences what the Church should do and how it should handle this dynamic challenge.

Scharmer believes that a different way of thinking and working together, which few organizations and institutional leaders employ, is needed. Adaptive, dynamic challenges require people to think together in new ways that let solutions emerge from a deep sense of collective “knowing” that Scharmer calls *presencing* - a blending of two words, sensing and presence.¹⁰¹ Presencing describes a deep way of leading and creating change. It means slowing down, paying close attention, and connecting to both the current reality and the highest future possibility that wants to emerge. Instead of reacting to problems based on past habits, presencing invites people and organizations to open their minds, hearts, and wills to listen deeply to themselves, others, and the larger system in which they participate. In this state of awareness, they can sense what the future needs

¹⁰¹ Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*, 161.

and act from a place of clarity and purpose, allowing truly new ideas and innovations to emerge.

For a group to utilize the social technology of presencing, as Sharmer calls it, great attention must be given to the social field—the invisible space of relationships, mindsets, and collective awareness that shapes how people think, act, and create together.¹⁰² For Scharmer, it is a group's capacity to attend to both the visible—what is said and done—and the invisible—an individual's and group's inner source of *attention* and *intention*—that will enable humanity to resolve the dynamic challenges faced today. Scharmer states, “Collectively seeing...our inner places from which we operate in real time—may well be the single most important leverage point for shifting the social field in this century, for it represents the *only* part of our common consciousness that we can control completely.”¹⁰³ Expressed another way, “The aligning of our *attention*, *intention*, and *agency* is perhaps the most powerful force for transformation present on this planet now. The quality of our presence makes all the difference to us, to others, and to our planet.”¹⁰⁴

The quality of presence among people in the social field and its potential to transform institutions and the broader society reflect the Church's aims in reforming its structures to change the world. In Pope Francis' program for the Church's missionary activity, *Evangelii Gaudium*, he speaks about the inherent “missionary impulse” of the Church, “capable of transforming everything.”¹⁰⁵ He says everything about the Church

¹⁰² Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*, 8-10.

¹⁰³ Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*, 10.

¹⁰⁴ Scharmer, *Presencing*, 14.

¹⁰⁵ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*. (2013), no. 27, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

must be directed toward this divinely initiated work: its “customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, languages and structures.”¹⁰⁶ Therefore, if the Church is to renew its structures, it must take the time to understand organizational and relational structures, how they work, and how they influence people’s efforts. By understanding how different structures influence the work of the Church, pastoral leaders can make intentional decisions on which structures best satisfy the pastoral concerns in a particular time and place. The measure the Church uses to assess the structure’s success is clear. The structure “can only be understood in this light - as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented.”¹⁰⁷

Francis affirms the necessity of the particular Church, the diocese, to continue its own missionary conversion while it undertakes its effort to bring about the Reign of God. Thus, any structural change process initiated by a diocese should also serve as a vehicle for its own conversion and the conversion of its members. In other words, the pastoral conversion process of structural renewal is not merely a means to an end, but also a means of ongoing transformation of the People of God. Any method that treats the diocesan change process otherwise has fallen into the trap of secular society’s predilection for capitalism and its frequent objectification and utilization of people and things for purposes other than their created purpose.

Francis expresses the type of social field within the diocesan Church that he believes is necessary for the Church’s missionary impulse and the responsibility the bishop has in fostering such an environment. He views the relationship among the

¹⁰⁶ Francis, *EG*, no. 27.

¹⁰⁷ Francis, *EG*, no. 27.

members of the Church as “dynamic” and “open,” employing forms of “pastoral dialogue.” The role of the bishop is essential to leading structural renewal. Francis describes the role of the bishop as fostering missionary communion in his diocese. The bishop must guide the experience of the diocese to mirror the “ideal of the first Christian communities, in which the believers were of one heart and one soul.”¹⁰⁸ The bishop must “have a desire to listen to everyone and not simply those who would tell him what he would like to hear.”¹⁰⁹ One observes, in the words of *Evangelii Gaudium*, an explicit desire to reclaim the characteristics of trust and intimacy exhibited in the social field of the early Church, as expressed earlier in this thesis project, and Francis’s implicit claim to such a relationship for the Church’s missionary work.

For the sake of the *Missio Dei*, the field of organizational development is a key conversation partner. This school of thought has examined how organized groups interact and how those interactions shape their relationships and the broader society. The knowledge that emerges from viewing the diocese as a system, including the impact that structures have on interactions between individuals, the way power is utilized within the structure, and the leverage the bishop maintains in shaping the diocesan culture and leading change, are critical elements that actively influence the social field between the bishop and the presbyterate. Such an exploration, which will be the task of the following chapter, can guide the Church in its pursuit of helpful relational structures and practices

¹⁰⁸ Francis, *EG*, no. 28.

¹⁰⁹ Francis, *EG*, no. 28.

that enhance the conditions and interactions of this essential relationship, ultimately leading to greater missional impact.

Chapter 5: The Impact of Various Organizational Structures on Ecclesial Relationships

An organization is a structured network of relationships that imposes inherent conditions among people to achieve a common goal or purpose. Henry Mintzberg is an organizational theorist who has identified seven basic organizing structures found in society. No form is better than another. Each organizational form has its pros and cons. Each structure excels in a particular way and has its own disadvantages. Understanding these organizational structures clarifies the strengths and weaknesses inherent to the diocesan structure and illustrates the various structures that a parish within a diocese may exhibit. The innate structure of a diocese, and that of the different parishes and organizations within it, also illuminates each entity's predisposition to a specific type of strategy formation. Understanding basic organizing further conditions how leaders coordinate the work of the diocese or parish. Overall, this knowledge aids a diocese by leveraging its inherent structure to its most significant benefit, determining whether structural changes are possible, and identifying which changes could improve the diocese's missionary activities.

Mintzberg identifies four basic forms of an organization: the *personal enterprise*, the *programmed machine*, the *professional assembly*, and the *project pioneer*.¹¹⁰ Each has its own shape, structure, and preferred coordinating mechanism, whether through direct supervision, standardization of work or output, or direct communication through "mutual adjustment" among its members. The four "ideal types" of organizational forms are

¹¹⁰ Henry Mintzberg, *Understanding Organizations-Finally!: Structure in Sevens* ([S.l.]: Berrett-Koehler, 2023), 65-104.

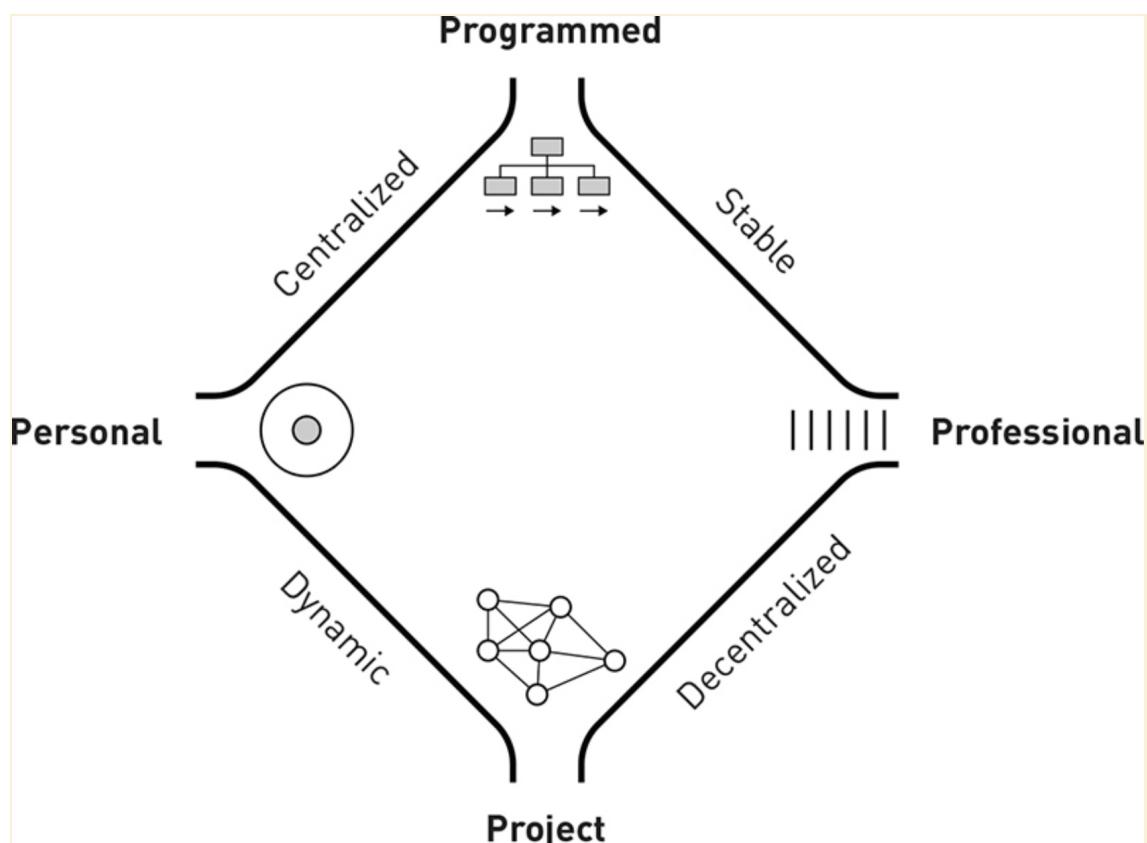
depicted in the graphic below, each with a logo that characterizes its nature.¹¹¹

Eventually, Mintzberg introduces three additional organizational forms. One of those — the *divisional form* — most closely approximates the structure of most Roman Catholic dioceses in the United States.

Diagram 1: Organizational Forms

The first of the four primary forms of organization is the *personal enterprise*.¹¹²

The Personal Enterprise is managed primarily by a leader who operates at the center of a hub of relationships. Strategy and action revolve around the individual's personality. The organization can easily adjust its strategy or position in the marketplace. Most start-up



¹¹¹ Mintzberg, *Understanding Organizations-Finally!*, 66.

¹¹² Mintzberg, *Understanding Organizations-Finally!*, 67-73.

companies and small businesses approximate this model. A good example of this organizational form is the family-owned restaurant.

Anecdotal data suggest that the *personal enterprise* is the form found in many parishes. In a *personal enterprise*, the pastor sits in the center of the staff and key volunteers. It means the community's responses tend to reflect the pastor's pastoral preferences. Most of the major decisions are made by the pastor. Staff and parishioners execute the vision of the pastor. At the extreme, this style can be autocratic, providing direct supervision to most people with significant leadership responsibilities. The structure is simple, flexible, and centralized, often experienced as a single large group. A feature of the structure allows a modest level of customization, capable of responding to a few variations in needs. It is a simple system, often small in size, and capable of dynamically responding to local environments. This form enables the parish to respond more nimbly to pastoral concerns. It is a form of organization best suited to a narrow, niche need, as direct supervision by the leader often limits the organization's overall capacity. The strengths of a *personal enterprise* tend to be its responsiveness to needs and a dedicated team that is comfortable with following the leader's direction. The role of the leader tends to focus on action—making arrangements and negotiating with their staff and external collaborators—and holds a high level of control over those managed.

Another form, the *programmed machine*, is what most people think of when they think of a medium-sized to large-sized organization.¹¹³ It is highly structured with layers of reporting. Its primary focus is performance, and it exploits standardized products and

¹¹³ Mintzberg, *Understanding Organizations-Finally!*, 74-85.

procedures, with simple, repetitive tasks handled by operators who may be unskilled in their roles. Large retail companies are a good example of this form.

In its most extreme form, the *programmed machine* conjures images of the negative realities of bureaucracy. The organization's shape is a chain of command sitting above a chain of operations. The conditions within a *programmed machine* are generally simple and stable. This organizational structure is typical of mature organizations, where control is typically exercised externally. The main force within the structure is efficiency. The primary strategy the organizational structure encourages is cost leadership—a particularly unimaginative approach to addressing the pressing and changing pastoral concerns within a diocese's boundaries. Its structural benefits include reliability, precision, and efficiency. The negative features of a *programmed machine* are its tendency toward impersonality and inflexibility. The key managerial role is control.

Despite the fact that some of its characteristics may seem contrary to the values of the Catholic Church, the central offices of most dioceses in the United States most closely resemble this form. The diocesan center includes a series of offices or departments built in a hierarchical chain of command. The diocesan structure is built for efficiency and control of the activity within the parishes and ministries it supports. It may not be efficient from the perspective of pastors' or parishes' needs, but it is often assumed to be the model that helps dioceses meet their implicit needs and thus "operate well." Examples of such implicit needs include disseminating information on liturgical rubrics, maintaining sacramental records, implementing administrative policies and procedures, providing catechetical formation and practices, and receiving information on sacramental counts and funds to support the diocese's activities.

Although there may be an inclination to reject this organizational form to more faithfully embody certain diocesan values and priorities, rethinking how to use it to leverage its control and efficiency to support evangelization could have a profound, salutary effect throughout the diocesan system. Some dioceses in the United States have been known to have done exactly this. Other dioceses are known to be taking steps toward leveraging the organizational form's strengths toward more missionary criteria.

The *professional assembly* is an organizational form that also values performance.¹¹⁴ However, coordination primarily occurs through standardized training and skills. This organizational form affords professionals relative autonomy, coordinated through highly professionalized standards. It is the most highly decentralized of the forms. Organizations such as hospitals with specialized doctors and nurses functioning alongside each other, universities with highly specialized departments and schools of learning, and law practices using a partner model of leadership and areas of legal specialization all fit into the professional assembly. Services are semi-customized. *Pigeonholing*, where individuals are placed within the organization based on their needs or category of expertise, is the approach of this form.

This form, in its purest form, is a meritocracy. The conditions of this organizational structure, like those of the *programmed machine*, are stable. However, unlike the previous organizational structure, the conditions are complex (as in an operating room or an orchestra). The main force operating in the system is proficiency. Its strategies are developed by bringing together people in multiple positions who are aware and in tune with what is happening within their respective areas of expertise. The

¹¹⁴ Mintzberg, *Understanding Organizations-Finally!*, 86-96.

advantages of organizations that use this structure are that they are dedicated and proficient. The disadvantages are that the system tends to be disjointed and overly political. The key role of managers in this structure is to communicate effectively, serve as liaisons between the various segments within the organization, and mediate among them. Given the size and resources needed, few parishes are likely to function using this organizational form. However, for larger, more professionalized parish staffs, this form may fit their reality. This form is more likely to be used in diocesan ministries, such as those of a diocesan university, high school, or hospital.

The fourth of Mintzberg's primary forms of organizing is the *project pioneer*.¹¹⁵ Innovation, open-ended problem-solving, and invention are the focus of this form. The workers exist in an "adhocracy"—a loose, organic structure that coordinates directly through mutual adjustment between teams and experts, rather than through a manager. Extensive use of matrix reporting structures exists, which encourages customization at the expense of efficiency. In the project pioneer, the main force at work in the structure is collaboration. Strategy develops through learning from emergent positions and perspectives from the work being done by the organization. Exploration is encouraged.

Parishes and diocesan ministries that value synodality and have a strong collaborative ethos among staff and parishioners would likely fall into the Project Pioneer organizational form. Pastoral and finance councils and staff are inclined to work in concert, planning for emerging pastoral concerns, exploring new ministry initiatives, and implementing robust evaluation processes.

¹¹⁵ Mintzberg, *Understanding Organizations-Finally!*, 97-104.

The overall structure of the diocesan system appears to conform most closely with the *divisional form*, with a central coordinating office, parishes attending to the diversity of people by geographical region, and many related organizations, associations, membership organizations, and nonprofits such as Catholic Charities, a college or university, and the Knights of Columbus.¹¹⁶ In the basic divisional structure, each sub-entity can operate with significant autonomy from the diocesan offices, yet is coordinated and controlled by specific measures. For example, controls for parishes include standardizing activities such as liturgical rubrics, religious education policies, and sacramental preparation requirements. Parishes also have standardized output goals, such as fundraising goals for a diocesan annual appeal. Dioceses also coordinate and control work by standardizing skills and knowledge through formalized seminary formation and degree requirements for certain pastoral positions, such as a director of religious education.

The *divisional form* can encompass two or more forms. Within the diocese's overall structure, the central offices almost always operate as a *programmatic machine*. True to the characteristics of the *divisional form*, each of the parishes, as well as the varied organizations and ministries associated with the diocese, can take on any of the other four forms. A parish is likely to take on one of three forms: the *personal enterprise*, the *programmed machine*, or the *project pioneer*. If the diocese includes a Catholic college or university, high schools, or hospitals, it is likely to take on the form of a *professional assembly*.

¹¹⁶ Mintzberg, *Understanding Organizations-Finally!*, 143-156.

Analyzing where the diocese is and is not efficient can help clarify whether its efforts are directed at the most critical elements within the system where organizational strength and efficiency can be supported. There are three other forces, however, that are present in every organizational form, including the *programmatic machine*. Two forces—the *overlay of separation* and *conflict*—work to pull the organization apart, while one force—the *infusion of culture*—pulls people together.¹¹⁷

The *overlay of separation* is an organizing mechanism that gives autonomy to various parts within the system. This mechanism typically relies on standardizing results to coordinate and control activity while delegating methods for producing those outcomes. This is reflected most prominently in the diocesan structure, where individual parishes operate with considerable independence to respond to the community's local needs. However, a diocese's expressed results can frequently be implicit and/or misaligned with their desired outcomes. For example, returning to a previously suggested organizational strategy, most dioceses do not have stated goals for their parish's evangelization efforts that align with each parish's resource capacity. Alternatively, an implicit result that may not directly align with the goals and strategies of a missionary church is the donation threshold for the parishes within a diocese for an annual appeal. This natural organizing force is helpful to the diocese in fulfilling the *Missio Dei* among the varied peoples and geographies within its boundaries. Yet, the challenge with this organizing force, assuming the correct results are standardized across the structure, is that there is a greater need for communication and coordination among the various parish entities to maintain alignment.

¹¹⁷ Mintzberg, *Understanding Organizations-Finally!*, 126-138.

The structural nature of the *divisional form* and the *programmatic machine*, more than other forms, necessitates an *overlay of separation* to manage the work of the organization, creating barriers to communication through silos and slabs.¹¹⁸ The pastoral leader is likely to be very familiar with the experience of silos. The necessity for specialization, whether geographical (as in a diocese with many parishes) or specific offices or ministries within the diocese or parish that require specialized training and skills, is a common way to organize work and contribute to the diocese's overall goals. However, such specialization into affinity groups of people who do similar work also limits information exchange with other specialized groups. Silos occur when vertical reporting barriers limit horizontal information exchange with different groups. “Slabs are horizontal barriers to the vertical flow of information, from one level of the hierarchy to another.”¹¹⁹ A diocese may experience slabs between parish pastors and the diocesan offices, for example. Mintzberg uses a metaphor to depict the solution to these organizational challenges. He describes, “it’s not seamlessness” between the silos and slabs “we need in our organizations but seams—tailored communication between the units.”¹²⁰

The second force found in all organizational forms is *conflict*. Mintzberg identifies two main reasons for conflict in organizations. The first is when an individual or group holds different perspectives on an issue of mutual concern. The second is when an individual or group seeks to gain or use power, referred to as *politics*. Both realities occur in organizations and are necessary to move a group forward. *Unhealthy conflict*,

¹¹⁸ Mintzberg, *Understanding Organizations-Finally!*, 49-50.

¹¹⁹ Mintzberg, *Understanding Organizations-Finally!*, 49.

¹²⁰ Mintzberg, *Understanding Organizations-Finally!*, 49.

which is not about the issue but becomes attacks on the person or group, can fracture and disrupt the organization's efforts toward its goals. Alternatively, *healthy conflict* can help groups uncover innovative solutions to the challenges the organization faces. *Politics*—the acquisition and use of power—may be used for altruistic or self-centered purposes within an organization. Used positively, *politics* can be utilized to overcome decision-maker bias, or when a decision-making system favors particular positions or people within the organization. *Power* and its use within a system will be discussed later in this chapter. However, for the moment, the essential point is how conflict serves as a separating force in the organizational system.

The common force experienced in all organizations that works in the opposite direction of *conflict* and the *overlay of separation* is the *infusion of culture*.¹²¹ If an organization can create and maintain a distinct culture, it can engage and mobilize its members. This is typically achieved through the stories members share about the people and work of the organization, which exemplify its lived values. This can be a slow, long-term process. Mintzberg identifies three stages that an organization tends to journey through to achieve a compelling culture:¹²² 1) a founding sense of mission—frequently established by a charismatic leader or defined by an exceptional event in the life of the organization; 2) the diffusion of beliefs through precedent and stories; 3) reinforcing the culture through identification and socialization. Mintzberg notes that creating a compelling culture is most challenging, but not impossible, for organizations that entail the *programmatic machine*, such as a diocese in its central office structure. This is due to

¹²¹ Mintzberg, *Understanding Organizations-Finally!*, 127-132.

¹²² Mintzberg, *Understanding Organizations-Finally!*, 130-131.

its ready reliance on rules and measures. The fact that the diocesan system's full organizational form is the *divisional form* further complicates the challenge of creating a unified culture. Each parish and diocesan apostolate has its own subculture, which may not always align with the culture of the diocesan offices.

Thus far, this section on organizational form has identified the various structures of organizing people. The organizational structure of a diocese most likely takes on the *divisional form*, with characteristics of two or more organizing forms. The central office, which facilitates all the ministries within the diocese, primarily through the parishes, operates as a *programmatic machine*. Each parish and ministry has its own organizational form. The forces at work within organizations have been explored. The force of *overlay of separation* breaks down the large organization into specialized subgroups. *Conflict* is a force regularly experienced in organizations between individuals and groups with different goals and perspectives. The *infusion of culture* serves to connect and pull everyone together within the diocese. The more distinct the culture, the more people will experience cohesion and synergy. Yet, the dominant force particular to the *programmatic machine*, with a widespread impact throughout the diocese, is efficiency. The challenge for dioceses as they seek to align their work ever more closely to achieve the most significant missionary effect is to recognize the strength of the diocesan office structure and direct it toward the most meaningful outcome for Christ's mission.

This can be a challenge for a couple of reasons. First, the *programmatic machine's* strategy formation tends to favor strategic planning. Because a *programmatic machine's* primary force is efficiency, it often becomes stuck using prior data and

information as the basis to inform future decisions. This frequently results in a lack of new ideas, ultimately culminating in something that looks more like strategic programming or an action plan. This method recycles prior strategic perspectives, often articulating them in a new way.

Additionally, it is challenging for a diocese to incorporate and plan for the various organizational forms exhibited by the parishes and related organizations. This is because each parish or organization is likely to have an approach to strategic formulation that aligns with its organizational form. Mintzberg identifies four different ways an organization can develop a strategy.¹²³ Strategy can be deliberate, expressing a desired future state through a plan. Yet, strategy can also be emergent or realized through the organization's activity. This is the case when a pastoral leader in a parish, for example, experiments with a new ministry format and achieves positive, desired results. Strategy can also manifest itself by identifying a particular position in the pastoral landscape or mission field. This approach to strategy may identify a parish's desire to minister more directly to a minority community within its boundaries. Finally, strategy can manifest from the perspective or vision of a leader or a group.

The different organizational forms tend to favor different approaches to strategy formation. The *programmed machine* tends to prefer a planning approach, such as the strategic planning mentioned above, which focuses on occupying various positions within a mission field, often determined by the leader or a leadership group representing the larger organization. Visioning is the strategy-formulation method adopted primarily by organizations that use the *personal enterprise*. In this approach, a strategy is developed

¹²³ Mintzberg, *Understanding Organizations-Finally!*, 109-112.

out of a deliberate perspective. Positions in the mission field emerge out of this vision.

Strategy that emerges from the act of practicing or doing ministry aligns with the organizational forms of the *professional assembly* and the *project pioneer*. For the *professional assembly*, strategy formation emerges from multiple places within the organization, among all people. For the *project pioneer*, strategy emerges from learning that occurs through trial and error while ministering. Strategy develops through all individuals when a particular approach is deemed successful and reinforced by the organization.

Given the variety of organizational forms within a diocese, how can the diocese's central office leverage its strengths as a *programmed machine* to the benefit of Christ's mission? Attentive to the various organizational forms reflected by the many entities it serves (primarily the parish), the central office can use its primary attribute of efficiency to focus its services to nurture each parish's and organization's form while leveraging the collective force of the *infusion of culture* in a targeted way to various groups to attend to the "seams" between the silos and slabs of the diocese, fostering unity among the multiple mission-delivery points within the diocesan structure.

An essential task for the central offices of a diocese is to be clear about how it will use the various coordinating mechanisms to guide the diocese's missionary activity. An organization has a variety of mechanisms available to coordinate and manage its work. Mintzberg identifies six different coordinating mechanisms: mutual adjustment, direct supervision, standardizing the work, standardizing output, standardizing skills and

knowledge, and standardizing norms.¹²⁴ Several mechanisms are often used within one structure. In the case of a diocese, all are likely to occur in one way or another.

A focus on specific coordination mechanisms within the diocese can guide the Church's missionary work. While there is always a need to support the proper management of parish staff and ministry leaders through ongoing formation within the diocese, direct supervision and mutual adjustment would not be the areas of primary focus. A diocesan office, as a *programmed machine*, also already likely has strong standardization of the work. Instead, a close examination of the diocese's expectations for

¹²⁴ Mutual adjustment is a coordination method between two or more people without a control in place. It is dependent upon the people in the relationship to adjust their work in relation to one another. This is a coordinating mechanism most likely experienced among parishioners in a ministry who are not identified as ministry coordinators. This type of coordination is also reflected in the idea of "fraternal correction" among bishops. No bishop generally has authority over another bishop, and they are expected to work collegially, resolving their disagreements directly without an intermediary.

Direct supervision is a standard method most people in ministry are familiar with. In this coordination mechanism, one person issues instructions to another person or several people about what they are responsible for doing. Most parish staff or diocesan departments use this method of coordination. Standardization of work is a coordination mechanism that imposes established rules across the organization. This is a typical approach taken in large bureaucracies and a frequent coordination approach of the Programmatic Machine organizational form that diocesan offices inhabit. Here is found the propensity for detailed procedures (think about liturgical rubrics).

Standardizing outputs is a coordinating mechanism that attempts to impose performance controls on its members. Standardizing skills or knowledge is a coordination mechanism that relies on learning experienced through prior training. This mechanism is firmly in place for any priest. However, there are many critiques about whether the current formation adequately prepares a priest for the responsibilities they are likely to assume within a diocese. For a sample of critiques see *America Magazine*, "The Changing Face of Seminary Formation: Group Therapy, Digital Detoxing, and More Listening" (June 24, 2024), *Commonweal*, "Dangerous Disconnects?", (December 23, 2019), and *Church Life Journal*, "Conversion and the Difficulty of Forming Priests in a Contemporary American Context", (Notre Dame, February 8, 2024). The standardization of skills and knowledge among Lay Ecclesial Ministers has, unfortunately, diminished significantly over the last few decades. According to the CARA Report Vol. 31 No. 2 from the Fall of 2025 the number of confirmed lay ministry programs in the U.S. has decreased by nearly a quarter in the last year, from 100 in 2023-2024 to 76 in the 2024-2025 academic year. The number of Lay Ecclesial Minister candidates enrolled in information programs decreased 15% within that same timeframe. Fewer laity are being formally trained for ministry today than they were a few decades ago.

The last coordinating mechanism Mintzberg identifies is the standardization of norms. Unlike the standardization of the work or output, which is an imposed mechanism or learned, like the standardization of skills and knowledge, this method of coordination relies on organization members to imbibe the shared beliefs inherent in the organization. This mechanism should come naturally to an institution that depends on the conversion of the heart and mind over to the way of Jesus Christ. However, the way an organization's shared beliefs are exhibited within its structure should always be examined. It is not a guarantee. Mintzberg, *Understanding Organizations-Finally!*, 39-44.

standardizing output, the renewal of standardizing skills and knowledge, and the standardization of cultural norms is the coordination mechanism that would likely be in order.

Two of these coordinating mechanisms—the *standardization of outputs* and *cultural norms*—fall into one of the conundrums of management identified by Mintzberg—the mysteries of measurement. Both outputs and cultural norms are challenging to measure. Yet, nonprofit organizations have identified measures that, if not directly, exhibit indirect success in these areas. Firstly, a diocese must express outputs that more readily indicate the goals of missionary discipleship – namely, conversion to Christ and the lived expression of Gospel values rather than simply participation- and align its practices to support these outputs. This means that the diocese's support must be directed to parish efforts that prioritize missionary discipleship.

Additionally, this means that greater evaluation of ministry activities is necessary to have a clearer sense of the ministry's impact on the desired outcome. This may be a new expectation in general for many pastoral leaders. However, as the adage goes, “what is not measured can not be managed.” The final document of the Synod on Synodality called for “periodic evaluation of all the ministries” of the Church and explains how it “assists the local Church in learning from experience, adjusting plans of action, determining the outcomes of its decisions in relation to its mission, and remaining attentive to the voice of the Holy Spirit.”¹²⁵ Furthermore, there is a tradition, at least in our standardization of the work as expressed in the Order of Christian Initiation of

¹²⁵ XVI General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, “For a Synodal Church: Communioto help parishes create more user-friendly websitesn, Participation, Mission Final Document,” October 26, 2024, no. 102, 100, https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale.pdf.

Adults, for observable methods of conversion. The instruction provides various observable criteria, including: 1) A desire to learn more about the life of Jesus, 2) a desire for greater involvement in the Christian community, 3) an increasing desire to pray and reception of the Eucharist, 4) demonstrating changes of behavior toward others that reflect Gospel values, and 5) an increase of desire for justice and serving others.¹²⁶ For example, how regularly do parish religious education programs include evaluative questions that ask participants whether they experience an increase in faith or closeness to God? Granted, such questions are subjective by nature; however, examples of how one may experience an increase in faith can be included to help characterize a respondent's experience.

An expressed effort to clarify, communicate, and reinforce a set of cultural norms desired by all parishes and ministries in a diocese would also help align members and ministries within the diocese. These cultural norms need to be specific and explicit, rather than take on an amorphous form, such as being “Gospel centered,” which neither directs nor aids in the measure of activity. Imagine if an expressed cultural norm of a diocese was the desire to be inviting to everyone. What would the diocese’s criteria to evaluate a parish’s welcoming processes look like? What mechanisms would a diocese implement to review how parishes register families for sacramental or religious education? What support could the diocese provide to help parishes create more user-friendly websites and encourage communication through social media? How would the signage be different in a parish’s facility? How would it change the focus and priority of the parish’s and diocese’s

¹²⁶ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “The Order of Chrcommunicates the Christian Initiation of Adults,” Magnificat.net (Magnificat, 2024), no. 42, [hin
<https://bookstore.magnificat.net/pub/media/flipbook/OCIA-USCCB-Web/4/>](https://bookstore.magnificat.net/pub/media/flipbook/OCIA-USCCB-Web/4/)

ecumenical and interreligious ministry? With a clearly stated set of cultural values, it can generate creativity and cohesion of agency throughout the diocese.

The coordinating mechanism of standardizing skills and knowledge is another area that a diocese can revisit to determine what is needed to organize its work. An honest assessment of the skills required of the diocese's pastoral leaders is needed. Here, the diocese must focus equally on both the *pastoral* and *leadership* elements of the various roles. Seminary formation largely focuses on the pastoral responsibilities of those in leadership, with minimal attention to the criteria and skills necessary to lead the People of God. Some dioceses, particularly amid the decline in ordained ministers, are beginning to recognize the necessity of certain skills for a priest to lead a community of faith. Skills such as collaboration, delegation, motivation, managing conflict, and change are equally essential to leaders of Christian communities as spiritual skills. As fewer parishes can attain professionally qualified Lay Ecclesial Ministers, dioceses will need to support parishes by resourcing them with quality accessible ministerial formation. Finally, the diocese can support all baptized Catholic adults with high-quality formation that helps them to live in response to Christ as missionary disciples.

Along with clearly established coordinating mechanisms, the diocese's central offices, leveraging its organizational form for efficiency, can match pastoral leaders with parishes based on managerial preferences and organizational form. Then the diocesan office's role becomes one of supporting parishes in developing and executing strategies tailored to the pastoral leader/parish to meet the coordinating conditions identified by the diocese. This would require dioceses to diagnose the organizational form implicit in their parishes and to take an inventory of potential pastors to understand their proclivity

toward each organizational form. If the parish's organizational form needed to change to better serve the *Missio Dei*, the diocese could introduce a pastor whose leadership style aligns with the proposed structural form and equip him to help lead this change.

Upon close analysis of the diocese's organizational form, it becomes clear how critical the role of the priest serving in parishes is within the diocese's overall structure. As Julie Battilana and Tiziana Casciaro explain, "driving change requires identifying and enlisting those who are well connected in the network of the organization."¹²⁷ In the United States, the priest still serves as a key connector to various groups of the Christian faithful throughout most of the diocese, primarily through the role of pastor. It should be expected that an organization that has sub-entities within it, like a diocese, can expect to encounter greater, even fierce resistance.¹²⁸ "Authority lets you command compliance, but you can never command commitment."¹²⁹ Anyone seeking to enact change, regardless of their position in the Church's hierarchy, must identify the right people with whom to collaborate. "Even the best change is unlikely to be adopted when placed in the hands of someone who isn't well connected to implement it."¹³⁰ For this reason, having strong relationships with priests who serve as a bridge to members of the Christian community is critical. In addition to serving as the ecclesial link between the parish community and the rest of the People of God in the diocese through the bishop, administering the sacraments, and attending to the pastoral care of the Christian community, the priest also must serve several organizational functions.

¹²⁷ Julie Battilana and Tiziana Casciaro, *Power, for All : How It Really Works and Why It's Everyone's Business*. (S.L.: Piatkus Books, 2023), 73.

¹²⁸ Battilana and Casciaro, *Power, for All*, 78.

¹²⁹ Battilana and Casciaro, *Power, for All*, 73.

¹³⁰ Battilana and Casciaro, *Power, for All*, 73.

The leader of a Christian community needs to balance several managerial functions in three areas: information, people, and the work of the community.¹³¹ In the area of information, the priest serves as a communication bridge with the diocese, is responsible for framing the content, controls its means, and determines the timing of distribution. Regarding the priest's organizational role with people, he must lead those in his care. He also serves as a link to external groups of the parish—not only to the diocese but also to organizations and entities in the surrounding community. The priest may also be affiliated with related associations and ministries that support the Church's ministries. Finally, the priest is organizationally responsible for the parish's work. This means doing some of the work himself by performing specific ministerial functions and tasks. It also results in “dealing” with others — making arrangements within the parish community and, more broadly, in the diocese — to advance the diocese's efforts. It is because of the ecclesial aspirations articulated earlier, as well as the organizational significance of the relationship in service to the *Missio Dei*, that this thesis project now turns to the episcopal-presbyteral social field to explore the necessary conditions needed to nurture the seeds of the Gospel throughout the diocese's ministries.

The Social Field between the Bishop and the Presbyterate

Reflecting on the communal and missionary nature of the People of God, the Final Document of the XVI General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops includes the “advice” of the presbyters as a necessary element. Without it, the document explains, “the

¹³¹ Mintzberg, *Understanding Organizations-Finally!*, 32-35.

identity of the Church is obscured, and its mission is hindered.”¹³² To determine the course for the Church, guided by the Spirit, the document calls for the Church to engage in ecclesial discernment. Such discernment is not an “organizational technique” but a “spiritual practice” that requires “interior freedom, humility, prayer, *mutual trust*, an openness to the new and a surrender to the will of God.”¹³³ Of the qualities identified, most of them may be enhanced by one’s personal spiritual practice. Only one on the list, mutual trust, requires and depends on the quality of the relationship among other members of the ecclesial community. The actions taken by those who are in relationship with one another each contribute to the level of trust. It requires the interaction between people to ultimately establish the mutual trust necessary for living synodally. Each person and, together, the collection of people will, over time, shape the conditions of the social field between them that foster or impede their relational trust. Mutual trust in the social field *is* a basic condition for a synodal Church. The social field between the bishop and the presbyterate must be one of mutual trust for synodality “to be expressed in the Church’s ordinary way of living and working... through the brotherhood of communion and co-responsibility and participation of the whole People of God in its life and mission.”¹³⁴

¹³² XVI General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, “For a Synodal Church”, no. 87.

¹³³ XVI General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, “For a Synodal Church”, no. 82. Emphasis is mine.

¹³⁴ XVI General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, “For a Synodal Church”, no. 30.

The Position of the Bishop in the Social Field of the Episcopal-Presbyteral Relationship

Ed Schein, a pioneer of organizational theory, has assessed that the role of the leader is highly influential on the culture of institutions. The leader is responsible for properly diagnosing the organizational culture and identifying elements inherent in it that enable and restrict its achievement of goals. Sometimes this means fostering greater cultural cohesion. Other times, it may encourage the diversification of cultural assumptions throughout the organization. To be effective in this role, the leader must be attuned to the external environment the organization seeks to influence (society) and “closely associated with the parts of the organization that are themselves well connected to the environment” (the parishes).¹³⁵ For the bishop of a diocese, this translates into effective use of the diocesan pastoral council and, occasionally, diocesan synods to help him attune himself to the pastoral needs of those in his care. It also affirms the importance of maintaining a strong, high-trust relationship with parish priests who are highly attuned to the pastoral needs of their respective communities. It affirms certain techniques used by some bishops who regularly travel to parishes, some even spending time in a community overnight or longer, to gain a sense of those they serve. This also affirms the effective use of structures, such as presbyteral councils, that should help connect a bishop to the needs of parishes throughout the diocese.

¹³⁵ Edgar H Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 5th ed. (Hoboken, New Jersey Wiley, 2017), 352.

The leader plays a crucial role in organizational culture transformation. Schein has identified six primary and six secondary mechanisms by which a leader shapes an organization's culture. They are listed in the table below.

Figure 1: Cultural Embedding Mechanisms

How Leaders Embed Their Beliefs, Values and Assumptions¹³⁶

Primary Embedding Mechanisms

- What leaders pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis
- How leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crises
- How leaders allocate resources
- Deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching
- How leaders allocate rewards and status
- How leaders recruit, select, promote, and excommunicate

Secondary Reinforcement and Stabilizing Mechanisms

- Organizational design and structure
- Organizational systems and procedures
- Rites and rituals of the organization
- Design of physical space, façades, and buildings
- Stories about important events and people
- Formal statements of organizational philosophy, creeds, and charters

It is beyond the scope of this thesis project to go into detail on each of these levers for embedding and changing an organization's culture. However, it identifies the significant influence and the variety of ways in which the leader shapes the development and change of an organization's culture. These mechanisms will inform the diagnosis of the narratives of priests in the human subject research later in this thesis project.

As evidenced in the exhibit above, everything a bishop says or does will be observed for cues about what he desires in the diocese's culture and working relationships, and will influence how priests operate within the system. Ultimately, any

¹³⁶ Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 183.

desired change to the culture must be positively associated with the bishop for any new cultural change to stick.¹³⁷ This can be a challenge, since, as noted earlier, an organization's culture serves as a stabilizing force. A considerable amount of resistance is expected from members of the organization, since any change disrupts the equilibrium that the culture has sought to maintain. The bishop's role is to set and communicate a positive vision for the diocese's future, remind the people why a change is needed and the consequences of not moving toward the articulated future, acknowledge and attend to the very real loss experienced, and initiate strategies to help with the anxiety experienced with living into the new reality proposed.¹³⁸

While it is true that the bishop, given his positional structure in the system, has tremendous influence on shaping the culture and how the diocese functions, it is also true that power in a hierarchical system, like a diocese, is not entirely controlled by the person at the top. One of the fallacies debunked by Battilana and Casciaro is that power is not ultimately positional. In their writing, they describe power as “the ability to influence another’s behavior...through persuasion or coercion” by having control over resources others value.¹³⁹ Therefore, knowing who holds power in a relationship is dependent on answering two fundamental questions: “What do people value? And who controls access to those valued resources?”¹⁴⁰ In their research, the two basic values that almost all human needs boil down to are a desire for safety —both physical and emotional —and self-esteem—a recognition of one’s inherent dignity. With this basic framework for

¹³⁷ Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 18.

¹³⁸ William Bridges, *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2009).

¹³⁹ Julie Battilana and Tiziana Casciaro, *Power, for All : How It Really Works and Why It's Everyone's Business*. (S.L.: Piatkus Books, 2023), X.

¹⁴⁰ Battilana and Casciaro, *Power, for All*, XVII.

understanding who has power in an organization, a map can be derived to identify, depending on the resource, who holds power in the system. A person in authority may have power, but this is only due to their “control over resources essential to the success of the organization.”¹⁴¹ Those who are connectors within the organization, serving as “in-betweens” — such as parish priests — are information brokers between networks and control access to valuable resources. Attention to these relationships within the system is crucial to the diocese's missional impact.

A bishop, given his position in the diocese, wields significant influence over the psychological safety experienced by the presbyterate. Priests remain vulnerable to the bishop because of the substantial control a bishop has over resources that shape their safety and self-identity. Work assignments and compensation are among the many ways a bishop's decisions impact the life of a priest. With a task as complex as leading the people of a diocese in its missionary activity, there is a great need for interdependency between a bishop and the presbyterate. “The greater the interdependency across hierarchical levels...the greater the need will be to make the subordinate feel psychologically safe.”¹⁴² Schein identifies four levels of relating among people and their effects on the organization's work:¹⁴³

Level -1: Exploitation, No Relationship or a Negative Relationship

Level 1: Acknowledgement, Civility, Transactional Role Relations

Level 2: Recognition as a Unique Person; Working Relationships

Level 3: Strong Emotions - Close Friendships, Love and Intimacy

¹⁴¹ Battilana and Casciaro, *Power, for All*, 84.

¹⁴² Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 171.

¹⁴³ Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 100-101.

Schein explains that leaders of organizations will never hold all the information necessary to guide a group of people forward and require a minimum of Level 2 relationships. This level of relationship includes characteristics such as “1) making and honoring commitments and promises to each other; 2) agreeing to not undermine each other or harm what we have agreed to do; and 3) agreeing not to lie to each other or withhold information relevant to our work.”¹⁴⁴ While it may be assumed that Church relationship structures may desire the closeness described in a Level 3 relationship, Schein suggests that such close relationships could lead to disproportionate loyalty to the person rather than to the organization's mission and goals. However, such intimacy can lead people to “not only agree not to harm each other but assume that they will actively support each other when possible or when needed and be more open” – qualities within a social field which would seem to strengthen bonds between the bishop and the presbyterate and lead to the mutual trust called for in a synodal church.¹⁴⁵

The Bishop’s Role in Establishing Trust in the Episcopal-Presbyteral Relationship

Trust is a necessity in all relationships within a diocese to live its synodal call to communion and mission. This includes the laity’s trust in other laypeople, the priests, deacons, and the bishop. It comprises the priest’s trust in the laity, their trust in one another as a presbyterate, their trust in the deacons they serve with, and their trust in the bishop. Mutual trust between the bishop and the presbyterate is integral to the Church’s capacity to discern synodally. Trust must be present throughout the episcopal-presbyteral system. The bishop must be trustworthy. The bishop must also be able to trust the

¹⁴⁴ Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 101.

¹⁴⁵ Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 101.

presbyterate. The same is true of the priests of the presbyterate. They must be reliable and have trust in the bishop. While there are actions that priests in the presbyterate can and should take to exhibit trustworthiness, this thesis project has demonstrated the critical role the bishop, as the pastoral leader of a diocese, has in shaping a culture of trust. Therefore, the focus of this research will be on the behaviors of the bishop and the practices he institutes in a diocese that foster trust within the episcopal-presbyteral relationship.

Trust is an aspect of a relationship that varies across relationships and over time. It is built through shared history, communication, and consistent behavior.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, the bishop must nurture trust through repeated, credible, and compassionate interactions, rather than presume by virtue of his ordination or his position. This translates into practical expressions such as maintaining consistent accessibility, genuinely listening to the priests of the presbyterate, and being transparent in his decision-making. Such actions cultivate relational credibility and demonstrate a trust that is mutual, not hierarchical. In their article, F. David Schoorman et. al. characterize three dimensions of trustworthiness: ability, benevolence, and integrity.¹⁴⁷ Taken together, these three dimensions create a perception of trustworthiness that makes priests more willing to be vulnerable, encouraging them to share their concerns honestly and engage collaboratively with the bishop.

Ability is defined as one's competence and effectiveness in fulfilling one's role. In the context of the bishop's role, this would mean pastoral, administrative, and

¹⁴⁶ F. David Schoorman, Roger C. Mayer, and James H. Davis, "An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust: Past, Present, and Future," *The Academy of Management Review* 32, no. 2 (March 2007): 346.

¹⁴⁷ Schoorman, "An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust," 344–54.

theological competence. The bishop would demonstrate this dimension through informed decisions that would be transparent and consistent with the mission the Church seeks to fulfill. The bishop exhibits his ability by communicating decisions clearly, following through on commitments, showing pastoral sensitivity, and administrative competence.

Benevolence is characterized by a genuine concern for another's well-being. It is demonstrated by a bishop toward the diocese's priests when he visits, listens to them, advocates for their well-being, and expresses empathy during crises. He may hold regular one-on-one check-ins, remember anniversaries, or visit priests during challenging assignments or when they are ill. Feltman, who in his work on trust would characterize this dimension as care, has determined that this element is the most important dimension of trustworthiness.¹⁴⁸ Priests trust a bishop who visibly cares about their holistic flourishing — spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical. Organizationally, this includes feeling that there is equitable treatment among the priests of the presbyterate, advocating for a priest's health and growth through opportunities like sabbaticals, and ensuring that clergy personnel systems reflect pastoral care rather than control.

Integrity is a person's capacity to act morally in a consistent manner. It is one's alignment between words, actions, and shared moral principles. A bishop exhibits his integrity when he models moral consistency and transparency. He demonstrates this dimension by honoring his promises and sharing the rationale for his decisions. When he makes mistakes, he admits them openly and seeks to rectify the situation. Organizationally, this is reflected through equitable treatment in priest assignments and, if done, evaluations. The perception of congruence between what the bishop preaches,

¹⁴⁸Charles Feltman, *The Thin Book of Trust: An Essential Primer for Building Trust at Work*, 3rd ed. (2008; repr., Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2024), 15.

what is written in diocesan communications, and what is enacted in personnel or financial decisions is critical. Minor inconsistencies that priests experience between a bishop's words and actions significantly and quickly erode their trust.¹⁴⁹ For example, a bishop who emphasizes synodality but rarely consults priests on appointments undermines trust, regardless of intentions.

There are specific actions a bishop can take to foster trust, satisfaction, and community among the priests of a presbyterate. Podsakoff et al. have identified six transformational behaviors empirically linked to building trust and elevating collective motivation in an organization.¹⁵⁰ They are:

1. *Articulating a clear vision* - that connects the diocese's activities to the *Missio Dei*.
2. *Providing a consistent model* - by living out the values the bishop proclaims.
3. Building unity around shared pastoral priorities by *fostering acceptance of group goals*.
4. *Setting high expectations* that inspire, not intimidate.
5. *Providing individualized support* by knowing his priests personally and mentoring them.
6. *Encouraging intellectual stimulation* through dialogue, innovative pastoral activities, and creativity.

However, the researchers found that these leadership behaviors do not necessarily ensure organizational outcomes. Substitutes for leadership – situational or contextual variables that can replace, enhance, or diminish the leadership behaviors – demonstrate that leadership effectiveness also depends on the systems, culture, and task design, not only

¹⁴⁹ Tony Simons, "Behavioral Integrity: The Perceived Alignment between Managers' Words and Deeds as a Research Focus," *Organization Science* 13, no. 1 (February 2002): 22.

¹⁵⁰ Philip M. Podsakoff et al., "Transformational Leader Behaviors and Their Effects on Followers' Trust in Leader, Satisfaction, and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors," *The Leadership Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (June 1990): 260.

the leader's traits or style.¹⁵¹ Therefore, leadership effectiveness arises from a combination of the bishop's personal influence and the systems he establishes in the diocese.

Trust can be communicated and supported through organizational systems. Steven M R Covey writes, "If you don't have the level of trust and the high-trust dividends you want in your organization, it's time to look at the principle of alignment. It's time to look at the structures and systems that communicate—far more eloquently than words—the underlying paradigms affecting cultural trust."¹⁵² Too much rigid oversight in a diocese signals mistrust, while too little structure can leave priests vulnerable.¹⁵³ Diocesan policies, procedures, and culture must embody the same high trust the bishop models. Such organizational "symbols", Covey notes, communicate more powerfully than rhetoric. A trustworthy bishop can fail if the diocese's systems communicate mistrust.¹⁵⁴ A bishop can build trust over time through repeated interactions. Annual clergy convocations, mentoring programs for new pastors, and peer learning communities all signal that the institution itself, not only the bishop, values the presbyterate's flourishing. Such practices elevate the bishop's benevolence into a systemic norm.

If there is mistrust in the system or the bishop personally violates trust, the repair mechanism typically needs to match the breach type—competence, benevolence, or integrity.¹⁵⁵ If integrity is violated, such as a perceived double standard, public

¹⁵¹ Podsakoff, "Transformational Leader Behaviors and Their Effects on Followers' Trust in Leader, Satisfaction, and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors," 260.

¹⁵² Stephen M R Covey and Rebecca R Merrill, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 246.

¹⁵³ Schoorman, "An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust," 346-347.

¹⁵⁴ Covey, *The Speed of Trust*, 247.

¹⁵⁵ See Schoorman, "An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust," 345-347.

acknowledgement and corrective action are vital. If benevolence is doubted — like when priests feel unseen by the bishop — pastoral outreach and listening sessions help restore relational capital. Instituting ritualized listening or reconciliation practices after diocesan conflict mirrors this principle.

When a bishop is appointed to a diocese, its cultural context will moderate the practices the bishop must adopt to build trust.¹⁵⁶ In some dioceses, the presbyterate's culture will value efficiency and organizational clarity. In other dioceses, personal presence and relational accessibility will matter more. A bishop will need to discern which trust dimension carries the most significant weight within the diocesan presbyteral culture and adopt behaviors accordingly.

Early in a bishop's tenure, integrity and competence judgments are likely to form quickly, while benevolence will develop more slowly.¹⁵⁷ A bishop will need to attend to practices of transparency and consistency in the first few months of leading the diocese. Pastoral warmth will be believed only after patterns of fairness and competence are established. Sustained trust requires steady demonstration of these behaviors and communication. Sudden shifts or unacknowledged reversals can dismantle years of progress in building trust.

The fruits of a high-trust ecclesial culture within the episcopal-presbyterate relationship yield what Covey calls “trust dividends” — accelerated collaboration, innovation, and loyalty.¹⁵⁸ In practice, this results in greater priestly engagement and

¹⁵⁶ See Schoorman, “An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust,” 345-347 and Podsakoff, “Transformational Leader Behaviors and Their Effects on Followers’ Trust in Leader, Satisfaction, and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors,” 288, 292-293.

¹⁵⁷ Schoorman, “An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust,” 345-346.

¹⁵⁸ Covey, *The Speed of Trust*, 262-270.

morale, a willingness to embrace pastoral restructuring or mission renewal, reduced polarization and “meeting after the meeting” behavior, and a credible witness of communion to the wider Church and world. Conversely, low-trust dioceses pay “trust taxes”: bureaucracy filled with cumbersome rules and regulations; politics—tactics to gain power that ultimately divide people and create unhealthy conflict; disengagement, or even worse, departure, of high-performing priests; and fraud—behavior that sabotages, obstructs, deceives, or disrupts.¹⁵⁹

Shifting Attention and Intention in the Episcopal-Presbyteral Social Field for Diocesan Transformation and Evangelization

Given the diocese's structure, with priests serving as critical bridges between the parish communities and the bishop, trust within the social field of the episcopal-presbyteral relationship is a necessary element. High trust within the social field aids the diocese's structural transformation, enabling it to adapt and respond to the Gospel across diverse contexts. It is trust that lubricates “the structure of relationships among individuals to change and gives rise to different collective behavior patterns.”¹⁶⁰ This field shift is difficult to observe because the change is internal, within the individual and each person in the group. The change occurs in where one's *attention* and *intention* lie. What is observable is how the individual and group act. Trust enables the network of relationships to access the subtler, deeper dimension of their social field more reliably and transparently.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Covey, *The Speed of Trust*, 257-262.

¹⁶⁰ Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*, 228.

¹⁶¹ Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*, 229.

Scharmer identifies four different sources from which our individual and collective attention and intention derive when we interact with others: Field 1, Habitual - from a self-centered place where our thoughts and actions emerge from old patterns and behaviors (I-in-me); Field 2, Subject-Object - acting from the periphery of one's organizational boundary. In this field, the person or group recognizes dissonance between what is and what could be and can openly express their perspectives with others (I-in-it); Field 3, Relational - acting from beyond one's periphery. Here, one can see with the eyes of another, with empathy and understanding. One sees oneself as part of a larger whole (I-in-you); and Field 4, Generative - acting from an attentiveness of the interconnected web of places and spaces within the social field. It is here where the person or group enters sacred space with "a profound sense of connection" where "collective creation emerges" (I-in-we/now).¹⁶² "Depending on what source we operate from, our actions will effect vastly different outcomes and results."¹⁶³

If the episcopal-prebyteral relationship operates out of Field 1, the bishop and the presbyterate operate from their internal biases and old habits. The diocesan structure centralizes most of its activities, relying on a hierarchical structure to maintain control and order. If the episcopal-presbyteral relationship operates out of Field 2, individual priests and the bishop can see the distinction between their ideas and the current reality. Participants in the system are comfortable surfacing differences with others in the group. Organizationally, the episcopal-presbyterate relationship becomes decentralized, with priests operating in a detached, loose association within the system. The culture is more

¹⁶² Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*, 238.

¹⁶³ Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*, 228.

competitive, and recognition of individuals tends to be based on how closely aligned a priest is with the bishop's vision and values. Suppose the bishop-presbyteral relationship reflects the I-in-you structure of Field three. In that case, the priests and the bishop have developed the capacity to step back and examine their relationship as a whole.

Participants can empathize with others' positions within the social field. Collaboration replaces the more autonomous structure of decentralization. A supportive network structure, capable of self-direction and agency at various points in the system, develops. Finally, in Field four, the presbyterate's and the bishop's mind, heart, and will integrate into a collective force attuned to one another, joining their consciousness in a generative way where innovative solutions emerge to resolve current pastoral challenges within the diocese.

Moving through the four fields requires the individual and group to make a few shifts.¹⁶⁴ From Field 1 to Field 2, it requires an opening of one's mind and suspension of preconceived notions. The move from Field 2 to Field 3 requires opening the heart, redirecting one's attention to the experiences and circumstances held by others, and a curiosity to understand another's intentions. Finally, the move from Field 3 to Field 4 requires an open will —the capacity to let go of past scripts — so that the group can generate a new collective future. This journey through the fields can only occur with increasing levels of trust.

Scharmer maintains that the deeper the source (field) from which a person or group operates, the more capable they are of recognizing their blind spots—why an individual or group behaves in a particular manner. As the person and group move

¹⁶⁴ Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*, 242.

through the four fields, the experience transforms social time, social space, the person within the social field, intersubjectivity, and the environment.¹⁶⁵ It is precisely because transformation occurs at every level – from the personal to the societal – that the change process of Theory U aligns so well with the organizational conversion called for by Francis and embodied in his program for reform. Moving through the four fields shifts the reality of the various levels of organizing: the personal (micro), interpersonal (meso), organizational (macro), and societal (mundo). An illustration of the field structures and their impact on the various spheres of relationships is reflected in the table below.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*, 237.

¹⁶⁶ Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*, 242.

Table 1: Field Structures and Spherical Impact

Field Structure of Attention	Micro Sphere: Individual Attention	Meso Sphere: Conversation and Language	Macro Sphere: Institutional Structure	Mundo Sphere: Governance Mechanism
1. I-in-me	DOWNLOADING	DOWNLOADING	CENTRALIZED	HIERARCHY
OPENING AND SUSPENSION				
2. I-in-it	SEEING	DEBATE	DE-CENTRALIZED	MARKET
DEEP DIVE AND REDIRECTION				
3. I-in-you	SENSING	DIALOGUE	NEWWORKED	DIALOGUE
LETTING GO AND LETTING COME				
4. I-in-we	PRESENSING	COLLECTIVE PRESENCE	INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM	SYSTEM SENSING AND SEEING ITSELF

In this chapter, the episcopal-presbyteral relationship was examined through the lens of organization. The structure of the diocese both influences and is influenced by the relationship between the bishop and the presbyterate. The ability to influence the structure is partially based on the power a bishop has by virtue of his position within the relational system. He controls many factors that directly affect a priest's safety and self-esteem, the two basic concerns shared by everyone. As the leader of the diocese, the bishop's decisions shape the bishop-presbyteral culture and the activities that support it.

The position of the priest in the diocese, particularly in relation to the various Christian communities and apostolates, also means they have considerable positional power and influence. This practical pastoral reality, along with the Church's historical and theological rationale for a close, trusting connection, demonstrates why attention to the episcopal-presbyteral relationship is so critical to the diocese's evangelization efforts.

Among the elements identified as necessary for a synodal Church, mutual trust is the only one that depends on the quality of interactions with others. For this reason, the qualities needed in a trusting relationship between a bishop and the presbyterate were identified. When a trusting relationship exists, loyalty, collaboration, and innovation thrive in the diocese. High trust in the social field enables the bishop and the presbyterate to shift their attention from old, unhelpful patterns of behavior to generative solutions adaptable to the varied pastoral contexts within the diocesan structure.

Before outlining the experiences of priests in the social field from various presbyterates, the next chapter summarizes the research methodology, philosophical framework, and methods used in the human-subject research. The researcher's theology of ministry is also expressed, along with some potential limitations and biases to consider as one reviews the results of this study.

Chapter 6: Research Methodology

Theory U as Meta-Method

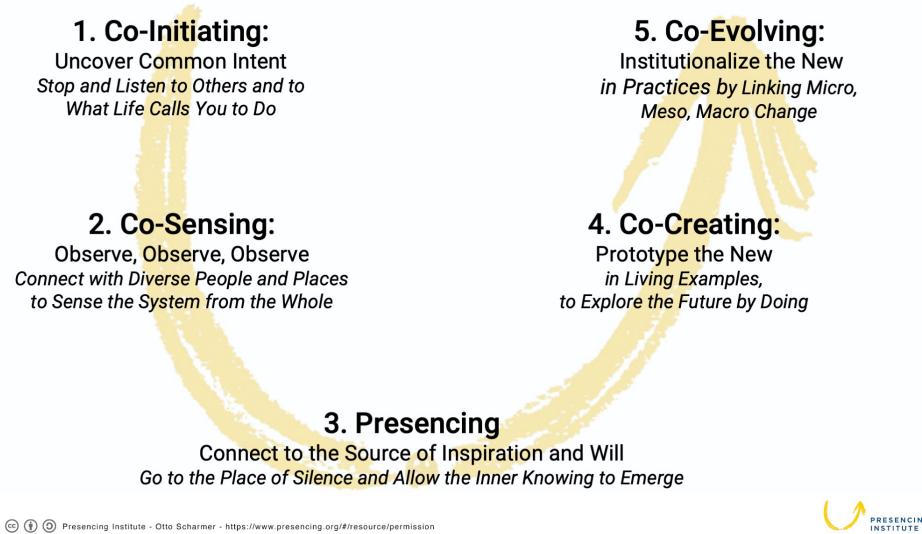
The interpretive framework for this thesis is Theory U, a methodology for organizational change described earlier in this thesis project, developed by C. Otto Scharmer. Described as a “social technology,” Theory U integrates science, social transformation, and the evolution of consciousness. It provides a meaningful structure for examining ecclesial relationships, particularly the social field between the bishop and presbyterate, and serves as a framework for the research of this project.¹⁶⁷

Theory U aligns closely with the principles of synodality and practical theology (see Figure 1). It offers a collaborative, reflective process for addressing complex challenges. It begins with co-initiating, in which participants connect through shared motivations and a sense of purpose. In this thesis project, co-initiating is reflected in the introduction, which outlines the research focus, its ministerial context, and the researcher’s personal call to this work.

¹⁶⁷ See graphic below.

Diagram 1:

Theory U: 1 Process, 5 Movements



The second phase, co-sensing, calls for deep engagement between the various conversation partners in this project. The curiosities and motivations of the author of this project interact with the history and theology of the Catholic Church, the discipline of organizational science, and the experience of those at the center of the research question—Catholic priests. In a synodal spirit, this thesis project listens to priests' lived experiences, grounding the research in real-life pastoral realities. This stage moves beyond abstract theorizing to authentic encounter.

Presencing, the third phase, invites stillness and reflection, allowing new insights to surface. In this project, this phase corresponds to the conclusions derived from integrating the research and analysis, in which the findings are synthesized through a theological and pastoral lens. Here, Christian discernment and social-scientific practices are in dialogue, informing the researcher's understanding.

Co-creating follows, focusing on developing practical solutions collaboratively. In this thesis project, the full implementation of these insights will be left to the intended audience, who may further develop this research.

Finally, co-evolving aims at long-term transformation, embedding insights into sustainable ecclesial structures. It emphasizes institutional integration and continued growth, supporting ongoing renewal within the episcopal-presbyteral relationship and the diocesan structure.

Using Theory U as a meta-method reflects the goals of practical theology, which—like Theory U—is interventionist, critically constructive, and performance-oriented. Both prioritize real-world transformation rooted in deep reflection and communal participation. Practical theology moves toward the eschatological promise, while Theory U envisions human systems capable of resolving complex challenges through generative action.

The journey of Theory U echoes the Paschal Mystery—a spiritual dynamic of “letting go” and “letting come.” As Scharmer notes, transformation requires shedding what is nonessential to make room for what is emerging.

In both synodality and Theory U, key themes emerge: deep listening, discernment, inclusion of the marginalized, and attention to both visible systems and the invisible relational dynamics beneath them. Transformation, in this view, arises not only from content but from the quality of participation and the shared commitment to discovering what is yet to be.

Philosophical Framework and Theology of Ministry

The philosophical framework shaping my theology of ministry — and, consequently, my research question and approach to this thesis project — is best articulated through the contemporary theological development of synodality in the Roman Catholic Church.

At its core, synodality, as an ecclesial expression of the doctrine of the Trinity, implies that reality is fundamentally relational, shaped by the shared experiences of the faith community through prayer, dialogue, and discernment. The Church, as the People of God, comes to understand itself and its divine mission through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, particularly when “the entire body of the faithful...from the Bishops down to the last of the lay faithful...show universal agreement.”¹⁶⁸ As stated earlier, synodality is “the specific way of living and operating of the Church as the People of God who journey together, gathering in the assembly and taking an active part in her evangelizing mission.”¹⁶⁹ This framework emphasizes the inseparability of visible ecclesial structures from the Church’s invisible spiritual dimension and the social dynamics that shape them.

Within a synodal philosophical and ecclesiological framework, knowledge is acquired through participatory and dialogical methods of discernment. Truth is co-constructed—mediated by the Holy Spirit—through the interplay of experiential, theological, and scriptural knowledge, where revelation, reason, and tradition

¹⁶⁸ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, Vatican, November 21, 1964, no. 12. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

¹⁶⁹ International Theological Commission, “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church (2 March 2018),” [www.vatican.va](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_en.html), March 2, 2018, no. 6. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_en.html.

dynamically interact. This approach prioritizes listening as a mode of knowing, particularly emphasizing attentiveness to diverse perspectives and marginalized voices.

Key values of synodality include inclusivity and co-responsibility. Every member of the Church, by virtue of their Baptism, has a voice in discerning its path.¹⁷⁰ Attentive to the eschatological destination of all creation, synodality values justice, human dignity, and solidarity.¹⁷¹ These principles guide ecclesial engagement and decision-making. Acknowledging the “there-but-not-yet” circumstances of the Church in relation to the eschaton, synodality values humility and openness. For this reason, synodality is committed to engaging multiple perspectives, particularly those traditionally excluded from decision-making.¹⁷²

A synodal approach to research naturally informs methodological choices, favoring approaches that reflect dialogue and communal engagement. Narrative inquiry —fostering dialogical exploration and deeper collective understanding — would be particularly suitable. Research should be iterative and reflexive, demonstrating how knowledge evolves through dialogue and discernment rather than adhering to fixed conclusions.

¹⁷⁰ International Theological Commission, “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church (2 March 2018),” nos. 51-55, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_en.html#.

¹⁷¹ XVI General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission Final Document,” no. 121, December 22, 2025, https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale.pdf.

¹⁷² XVI General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission Final Document,” nos. 47-48, December 22, 2025, https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale.pdf.

Phenomenology as Qualitative Research Method

This research project seeks to explore the behaviors and practices within the social field between a bishop and his priests that contribute positively to the Church's missionary activity in a diocese. Using a phenomenological research approach, this thesis study aims to describe the common lived experiences of individuals within this social field.

To achieve this goal, the study will employ a mixed-method approach, utilizing interviews and a survey to identify the essential characteristics of a positive social field that fosters Christ's mission. The survey questions were developed based on key behaviors and practices that help cultivate a positive social field. Literature on trust — a foundational element for synodality and a positive social field — will provide the framework for these questions. The survey questionnaire and summary of the survey results are located in Appendix A.

Research questions were developed with input and feedback from researchers at the Center for the Applied Research on the Apostolate and Catholic University. Test interviews were held with two individuals—one a lay Catholic who has consulted with bishops and diocesan staff and contributed to the ongoing formation of hundreds of clergy for more than 20 years. The second reviewer of the survey is a priest of an archdiocese who has served as a pastor in at least two parishes, currently serves in, or has served in, archdiocesan leadership positions, including director of clergy personnel, director of ongoing clergy formation, dean, and member of the clergy personnel review board. These test interviews served two primary purposes. First, they contributed to refining and clarifying the survey questions and ensured the questions effectively captured the desired insights. Second, the test interviews leveraged the perspectives of

these individuals, who understand and have supported the life and ministry of priests.

Because of their roles, these individuals were well-positioned to provide valuable insight into the nature of the episcopal-presbyteral social field.

This approach aligns with best practices in social science research, as iterative refinement of survey instruments improves their effectiveness. Additionally, this methodology aligns with the collaborative and participatory values of both synodality and Theory U, reinforcing a research process that prioritizes dialogue and discernment.

Following the refinement of the survey and interview questions, an electronic survey was administered. Seventy-six priests across seven dioceses representing all four major regions of the United States completed the survey.

Table 2: Survey Participants by Diocese and Region

Diocese	Region	Priests Participated
Albany	Northeast	6
Altoona–Johnstown	Northeast	25
Fall River	Northeast	6
Subtotal – Northeast		37
Cheyenne	West	14
San Diego	West	13
Subtotal – West		27
St. Paul and Minneapolis	Midwest	6
Subtotal – Midwest		6
San Angelo	South	6
Subtotal – South		6
Grand Total		76

The purpose of the survey was to assess the prevalence of conditions identified as positive contributors to the social field and to determine whether these conditions correlate with the presbyterate's sense of unity with the bishop. Furthermore, the survey sought to discover if a positive correlation exists between the presbyterates' felt sense of unity and their perception of their diocese as vibrant and mission-focused. Additionally, the survey served as a basis for selecting interview participants, allowing for a more nuanced exploration of the social field conditions. While the survey was not anonymous, participants' identities were protected in accordance with proper research protocols that ensure confidentiality and minimize direct associations between individual responses and identities.

From the pool of survey respondents, 17 priests agreed to participate in further in-depth interviews.¹⁷³ These interviews explored the conditions in the diocese's episcopal-presbyteral social field and how they influence the Church's ability to fulfill its mission, from the perspective of the participating priests. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and tagged to identify specific characteristics that contribute to either a positive or negative social field.

This research project employs a phenomenological approach to understanding and defining the essential elements of a positive episcopal-presbyteral social field. By combining an iterative process of surveys and interviews, this analysis provides practical insights into how the relational dynamics between a bishop and the presbyterate in a diocese shape the Church's missionary activity. The methodology aligns with the values of synodality and Theory U, ensuring a collaborative and iterative process that both

¹⁷³ The interview script and questions are listed in Appendix B.

reflects and advances the Church’s commitment to co-responsible leadership and discernment.

Methodological Limitation

This research aims to identify consistent positive qualities within the episcopal-presbyteral social field while acknowledging the limitations of a small sample of priest participants from a single presbyterate, both for survey completion and for interviews. To achieve this, the study employs phenomenology as its research method. As Creswell explains, the goal of phenomenological research is to “reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence.”¹⁷⁴ By including participants from multiple episcopal-presbyteral social fields, this approach increases the potential diversity of conditions that can be explored, even within a limited sample size. In contrast, an ethnographic or case study approach, which would focus on one or two social fields, could provide greater reliability in assessing social field conditions within a specific diocese. However, such an approach would not effectively achieve the primary objective of this study: to identify a variety of conditions and recognize consistent patterns across multiple social fields. Using a phenomenological approach allows for a broader examination of shared experiences and recurring themes, making it better suited for the research goals.

Limitations of the Research Approach

This research project focuses explicitly on Catholic priests as research subjects, as they are both primary influencers and direct recipients of the conditions within the episcopal-presbyteral social field. As a result, laypeople, including women, will not be

¹⁷⁴ John W Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2013), 76.

included as research participants. While the episcopal-presbyteral social field undoubtedly affects and is influenced by other members of the ecclesial community, the primary focus of this research is the direct impact of the bishop on the diocese's evangelization efforts through the relationship between bishops and priests. It is acknowledged that laypeople, religious men and women, and particularly women—who are absent from the category of ordained ministers—contribute to shaping this social field. However, given the limitations on the number of research participants in this qualitative study and its specific interest in understanding how the bishop's attitudes and behaviors affect the social field and impact the life and ministry of priests, the inclusion of other participant categories has been excluded.

This thesis project combines quantitative and qualitative methods, drawing on a limited number of priest participants from several dioceses and on interviews with some of those priests from various episcopal-presbyteral social fields across dioceses in the United States. Due to the relatively small sample size in each presbyterate (the smallest presbyterate had six priests who participated in the survey), the results cannot be considered statistically valid. However, their quantitative responses to the survey and the lived experiences shared by research participants are expected to offer valuable insights into the conditions necessary to foster a positive social field. Rather than producing definitive statistical conclusions, the findings should be understood as observations that highlight potential patterns and trends, serving as a foundation for future qualitative and quantitative research.

Cultural Bias

Any qualitative research study will inevitably be shaped by some degree of cultural bias. The researcher's cultural background as a white, United States American, cisgender male, and the limited sample size of research participants are likely to influence the interpretation of results. The pool of interview candidates is relatively small and primarily drawn from the researcher's existing network. As a result, the participants may not be fully representative of the cultural diversity within the U.S. priesthood.

Additionally, a participant's race, ethnicity, and cultural background are likely to shape their perceptions of positive social field conditions. For example, a priest from a culture that prioritizes group cohesion may express disagreement with a bishop differently than a priest from a culture that values individual agency and independence. The researcher's own racial and ethnic blind spots may lead to misinterpretations of these cultural dynamics or to interview questions that overlook how positive social field conditions function in intercultural exchanges. Cultural bias is inherently constrained by the study's qualitative approach and participant selection process.

In the next chapter of this thesis project, the experiences of priests from several presbyterates will be characterized to understand the actions of the bishop and the practices within their dioceses that foster a trusting, synodal relationship that supports the diocese's evangelization efforts.

Chapter 7: Research Analysis: Emerging Patterns from Priestly Lived Experience

Framework for Analysis

A positive social field between the bishop and the presbyterate is characterized by behaviors that build trust, such as presence, respect, approachability, openness, listening, dialogue and consultation, and collaboration. Diocesan structural practices that invite dialogue, shared discernment, and transparent decision-making reinforce the bishop's behaviors and help establish a positive social field. When combined, the resulting condition on priests is anticipated to be high relational trust (unity), which generates the collaborative energy that fosters evangelization throughout the diocese.

An analysis of the survey data indicates that attitudes and behaviors that support unity in the episcopal-presbyterate social field have a high positive correlation with the diocese's missionary vibrancy. The survey included four questions, each containing six to seven statements about attitudes and behaviors the priest has observed in his local ordinary. That list is generally summarized into four descriptive categories under one general heading of Mission-Oriented Behavior Indicators:

Table 3: Mission-Oriented Behavior Categories and Bishops' Attitude/Behavior Statements

Mission-Oriented Behavior Indicators Attitude/Behavior Category	Bishops' Attitude/Behavior Statements
Collaboration (Question 15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views priests as collaborators • Respects dignity of priest • Emphasizes mutual respect • Prioritizes mission over authority • Fosters partnership w/ presbyterate • Fosters shared mission w/ presbyterate • Focuses on relationship, not control
Openness (Question 16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspends habits of judgement • Understands perspective of others • Hold positions lightly • Curious about others' ideas • Comfortable with sitting in discomfort • Leans into stillness
Approachability (Question 17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approachable, open to honest dialogue • Openly admits mistakes • Humbly listens to others • Supports and encourages creativity • Demonstrates empathy with priests • Fosters mutual trust • Fosters mutual accountability
Consultation (Question 18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consults on decisions that affect priests • Supportive during personal or pastoral crisis • Communicates decisions transparently • Fosters psychological safety with priests • Encourages collaboration in presbyterate • Encourages input from diverse voices

Question 14 in the survey measures the priest participants' overall sense of cohesion and mutual trust within the bishop-presbyteral social field. It asks the question, "How would you describe the unity between your bishop and the priests of your diocese?" The responses were measured on a weighted average four-point Likert scale: Very weak, Somewhat weak, Somewhat strong, and Very strong. Question 20 serves as the dependent outcome measure for the diocese's missionary vitality. The priest participants responded to this statement: "I would recommend my diocese as a vibrant, mission-oriented local Church."

Table 4: Survey Dimension and Question

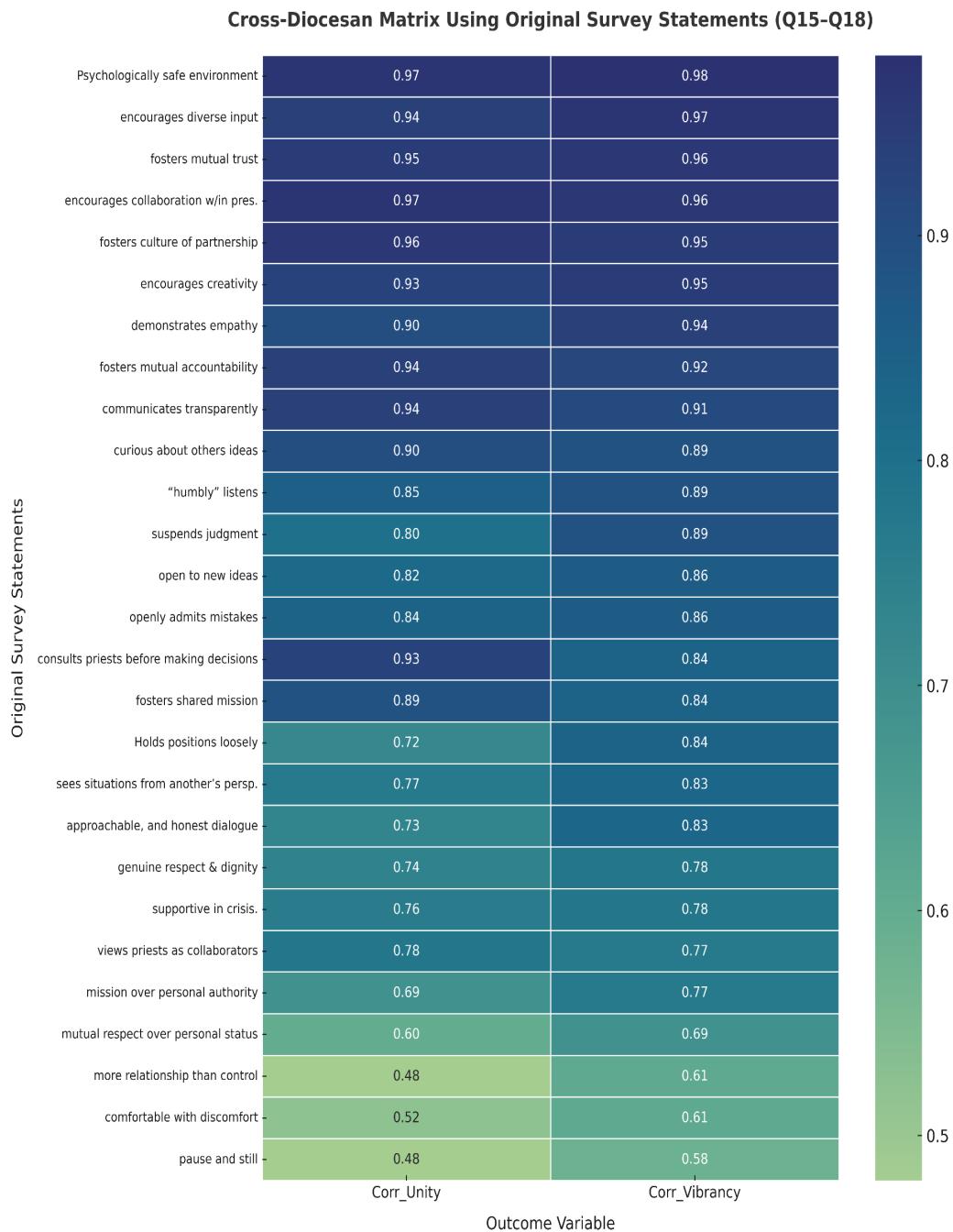
Dimension	Survey Question
Unity (Question 14)	"How would you describe the unity between your bishop and the priests of your diocese?"
Mission Vibrancy (Question 20)	"I would recommend my diocese as a vibrant, mission-oriented local Church."

When compared, the quantitative findings from the Mission-Oriented Behavior Indicators (Questions 15-18) are highly correlated with Unity between the bishop and presbyterate (Question 14) and Mission Vibrancy (Question 20).¹⁷⁵ The table below presents the correlation strength between each attitude/behavior statement in questions 15-18 and the two key diocesan outcomes—Relational Unity (Question 14) and Missionary Vibrancy (Question 20). A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was generated to compare each attitude/behavior with Unity and Missionary Vibrancy. A score of .50-.69 indicates a strong relationship. A score of 0.70-1.00 indicates a very strong relationship between the

¹⁷⁵ See an description of correlation evidence as it relates to this survey analysis in Appendix B.

two conditions, demonstrating a consistent association. *Almost all* attitudes and behaviors (24 out of 27) exhibit a strong or very strong correlation with the priest's experience of unity between the bishop and the presbyterate. *All* attitudes and behaviors have a strong or very strong association with the priest's determination of the diocese as vibrant and missionary.

Table 5: Cross-Diocesan Matrix of Mission-Oriented Behavior Indicators with Unity and Mission Vibrancy



An analysis of the data reveals a consistent pattern linking the weighted average of relational Unity to Missionary Vitality across dioceses.

Examples of Behavioral Drivers

Seventeen priests who completed the survey were interviewed afterward. Interview excerpts from priests that exemplify the top four behavioral drivers most strongly correlated with episcopal-presbyteral unity and mission vibrancy were selected to illustrate how these behaviors appear in practice. Given the exceptionally high mutual correlation between the behavioral drivers and both unity and mission vibrancy, they deserve special attention from bishops. The following section offers a narrativized analysis of selected quotes from priest participant interviews that depict the behavioral drivers at work in the episcopal-presbyteral relationship.¹⁷⁶

My bishop fosters an environment in which priests feel psychologically safe.

Responses that align with this behavior suggest that psychological safety is a foundational condition that shapes priests' willingness to engage openly with their bishop and one another. Where psychological safety is present, priests seem to describe a relational climate marked by trust, vulnerability, and freedom to speak honestly, even in moments of disagreement or tension.

Priests seem to illustrate this safety through concrete relational experiences such as being able to approach the bishop without fear, feeling free to express dissenting opinions, and encountering a posture of genuine attentiveness in moments of conflict.

¹⁷⁶ A compilation of responses corresponding to the top ten behavioral drivers are provided in Appendix D.

One respondent notes that the bishop's habit of asking clarifying questions, especially when a priest is “on the hot seat”, creates a sense of safety that priests then replicate in their own pastoral leadership. Others describe small but symbolically powerful gestures of availability and physical presence that communicate comfort, attentiveness, and engagement.

Especially striking in these responses is the embodied and affective language priests use. Safety is communicated not through policies or procedures, but through tone, posture, availability, and demeanor. Priests describe how the bishop sits, listens, asks questions, or makes time. Psychological safety, in this sense, emerges as a deeply relational phenomenon that shapes both unity and missionary vibrancy at their roots.

My bishop encourages input from diverse voices within the presbytery.

Responses that highlight this behavior indicate that priests associate diversity of input with a leadership style that actively seeks out multiple perspectives before reaching a decision. Encouraging diverse voices appears to function less as a commitment to inclusion and more as a practical willingness to engage complexity without rushing to a conclusion.

Sample responses highlight bishops who deliberately solicit opinions from everyone in the room, demonstrate conciliatory instincts, and seek to understand the whole pastoral landscape before acting. At the same time, priests recognize that consultation does not imply indecision. As one respondent noted, while his bishop consults extensively, once a decision is made, it is carried forward with clarity and resolve.

The language priests used seems notable for its balance between openness and authority. Terms such as conciliatory, consensus, and consult coexist with descriptions of firmness and direction. This pairing of portrayals suggests that priests do not experience consultation as a weakness but as a disciplined form of discerning leadership that strengthens trust and shared ownership of the mission.

My bishop fosters mutual trust.

Priest responses that reflect this behavior portray trust as something cultivated through personal knowledge, fairness, and demonstrated confidence in priests' abilities. Trust is experienced when priests sense that the bishop knows them well enough to match assignments to gifts and allows latitude in how ministry is carried out.

Several respondents describe moments when trust enabled risk-taking, such as launching new initiatives, reimagining ministries, or exercising creativity, because priests felt supported rather than monitored. Other priests emphasized the importance of fairness, noting that trust is reinforced when bishops are perceived as consistent, even when decisions are personally disappointing.

What stands out in these responses is how trust seems to propel the priest's missionary discipleship. Trust is repeatedly linked to confidence, freedom, and missionary risk rather than functioning merely as reassurance. Mutual trust appears as a catalyst that emboldens priests to act creatively in the service of Christ's mission.

My bishop encourages collaboration within the presbyterate.

Responses that reflected this behavior suggest that collaboration is experienced as a cultural norm rather than a mandated activity. Where collaboration is encouraged, priests describe environments in which shared problem-solving, peer learning, and collective responsibility are actively modeled and supported by the bishop.

Illustrative responses point to bishops who intentionally create structures and rhythms, both formal and informal, that bring priests together for dialogue, reflection, and mutual support. In such contexts, collaboration extends beyond functional cooperation and becomes a means of strengthening relational bonds within the presbyterate. The language priests used in the quotes frequently emphasized togetherness and shared endeavor. Collaboration is framed as a communion in practice, reinforcing that relational unity is not ancillary to mission but constitutive to it.

Social Field Unity and Missionary Vibrancy in the Diocese

Before moving into the analysis of the research, I must be explicit about what my research says explicitly and what it does not. This preliminary research indicates that priests who experience the bishop exhibiting several of the behavior indicators for a positive social field also perceive their diocese as a missionary-vibrant one. It demonstrates that these behaviors, when experienced by priests in their bishop, lead to an experience of the fruits of the Holy Spirit's activity: communion and mission. This thesis project uncovers *one way* the Holy Spirit works within the communion of the Church, *not the only way*. This thesis project in no way claims that a diocese with a low experience of

positive social field conditions between the bishop and the presbyterate is not missionary.

There are likely multiple factors that contribute to a diocese's missionary vibrancy. With more in-depth research, further nuance about the factors that contribute to a diocese's missionary vibrancy is likely to be uncovered. In this way, this thesis project is not conclusive but the start of a conversation about the impact of the episcopal-presbyteral relationship on the *Missio Dei*.

Dioceses where priests report strong unity are also those that experience the diocese as evangelizing and vibrant. In each instance, the weighted average of the Mission Behavior Indicators also correlates positively with Unity and Mission Vibrancy, except for San Angelo and Saint Paul-Minneapolis, whose positions would alternate based on their Mission Behavior Indicators.

The dioceses were grouped into three classifications for mission vibrancy¹⁷⁷: Constrained – dioceses whose mission vibrancy is limited by the episcopal-presbyterate social field; Developing – dioceses whose mission vibrancy is mixed with limiting and supporting behaviors in the social field; and High Performing – dioceses that maintain a high mission vibrancy through predominantly supportive social field conditions.

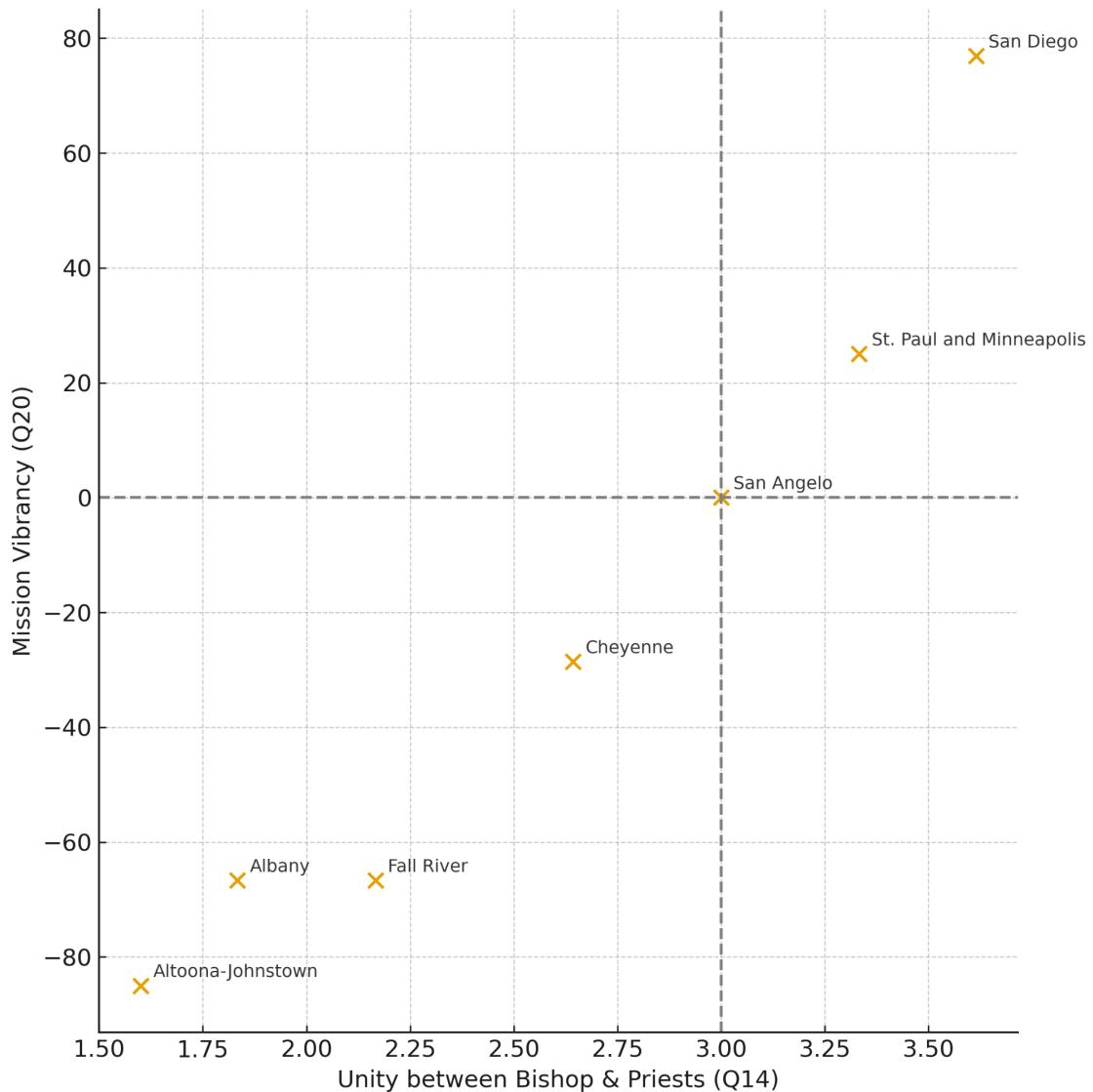
¹⁷⁷ For a more detailed breakdown of how attitudes and behaviors inform and explain each diocese's overall scores on Unity and Mission Vibrancy go to Appendix E.

Table 6: Diocesan Mission Vibrancy Classification

Diocese	Classification	Mission Vibrancy (Q20)	Unity (Q14)	Mission Behavior Indicators (Q15-18)
Altoona-Johnstown	Constrained	-85.00	1.64	2.87
Albany	Constrained	-66.67	2.00	3.25
Fall River	Constrained	-66.67	2.50	3.21
Cheyenne	Developing	-28.57	3.21	3.52
San Angelo	Developing	0.00	3.67	4.25
St. Paul and Minneapolis	High-Performing	25.00	4.17	3.83
San Diego	High-Performing	76.92	4.62	4.50

The graph below shows the dioceses according to the correlation between unity and mission vibrancy. The horizontal axis represents relational unity (Question 14) and the vertical axis represents Mission Vibrancy (Question 20). High-performing dioceses (upper-right) exhibit both relational unity and missional strength, while low-performing dioceses (lower-left) display social field fragmentation and a diminished sense of evangelizing synergy.

Graph 1: Relational Unity–Missionary Vibrancy



Taken together, the Mission Behavior Indicator data (Questions 15–18) confirms that specific episcopal behaviors consistently predict diocesan unity (Question 14) and the perceived vibrancy of mission (Question 20). Each behavior represents a micro-expression of leadership that strengthens the relational field. The high correlation in this small sample directionally implies that the more present these behaviors are in the episcopal-presbyteral relationship, the greater the unity and mission vibrancy. The

converse also appears to be true. The fewer Mission Behavior Indicators present, the more fragmented the social field, and the less mission vibrancy is perceived by the presbyterate in the diocese. This suggests that interpersonal leadership behaviors are not merely beneficial for the group's cohesion but also an organizational catalyst for the Church's evangelization. The quality of the social field between the bishop and the presbyterate aids in the flourishing of the *Missio Dei*.

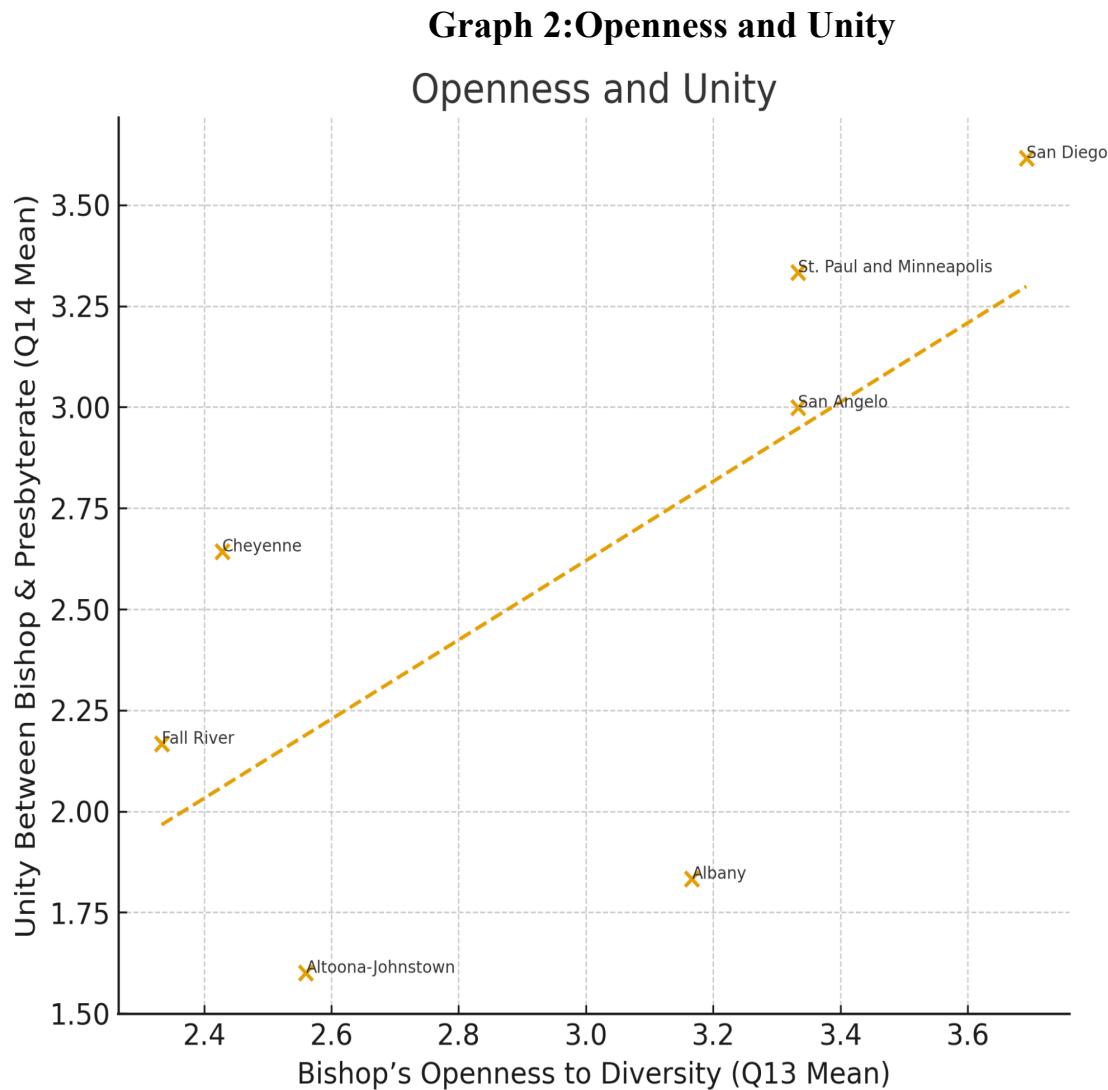
Theological Diversity within the Episcopal-Presbyteral Social Field and Its Impact on Mission Vibrancy

The survey asked priests to indicate their theological views and their perception of their bishop's views on matters of doctrine. A publicly available state-of-the-art AI large language model was used to analyze the relationship between the presbyterate's theological views, the perceived theological views of the diocesan bishop, and how the bishop's openness to diverse theological views correlates with the unity between the bishop and presbyterate and mission vibrancy in the diocese. The large language model summarized "our" analysis as follows¹⁷⁸:

The analysis revealed that the amount of theological diversity present within a diocese—whether in the presbyterate (Question 11) or in priests' perceptions of the bishop (Question 12)—did not show meaningful relationships with either unity or missionary vibrancy. In the dioceses studied, higher or lower theological diversity alone did not predict stronger unity ($r = -.21$ for presbyterate diversity; $r = .08$ for bishop diversity) nor higher mission-oriented climate as measured by Net Promoter Score ($r = -.12$ and $r = .04$, respectively). In contrast, **the bishop's openness to accommodating the diversity of theological views (Question 13) demonstrated a strong positive association with both unity ($r = .68$) and missionary vibrancy ($r = .78$). Dioceses in which priests perceived the bishop as highly accommodating of theological difference also reported**

¹⁷⁸ This analysis was generated using OpenAI's ChatGPT (GPT-5.1, accessed November 15, 2025). The text is reproduced here verbatim. Note that I added the emphasis (in boldface) to highlight the essential findings.

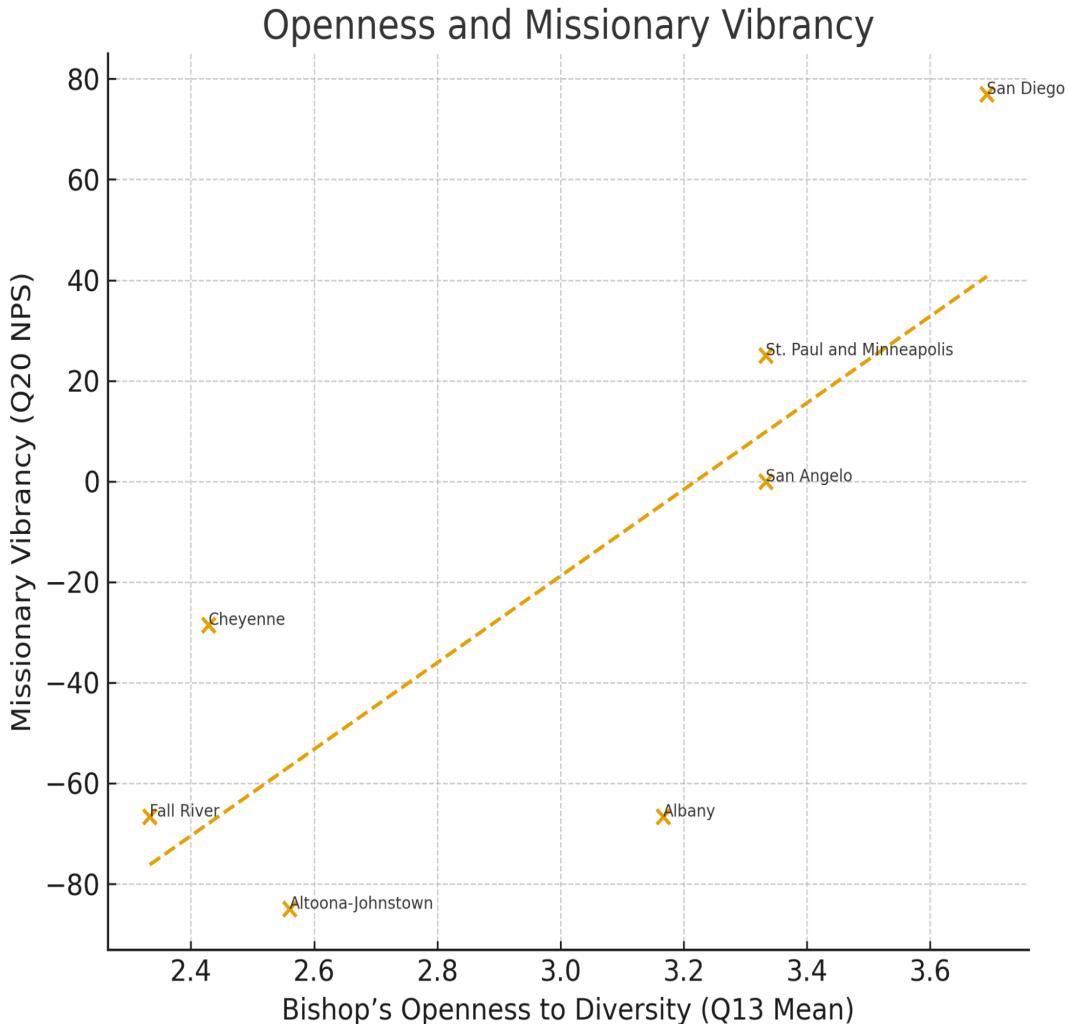
the strongest levels of relational unity and the highest willingness among priests to recommend their diocese as vibrant and mission-oriented.



Graph 2. Scatterplot illustrating the relationship between the bishop's openness to accommodating theological diversity (Question 13) and perceived unity between the bishop and presbyterate (Question 14). The regression line demonstrates a strong positive association, indicating that greater openness is linked to higher levels of unity within the diocesan social field.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ This figure description is reproduced verbatim from analysis generated by ChatGPT (OpenAI, GPT-5.1; accessed November 15, 2025).

Graph 3: Openness and Missionary Vibrancy



Graph 3. Scatterplot illustrating the relationship between the bishop's openness to accommodating theological diversity (Question 13) and missionary vibrancy (Question 20 Net Promoter Score). The regression line shows a strong rising trend, suggesting that the bishop's openness substantially predicts priests' likelihood of recommending their diocese as vibrant and mission-oriented.¹⁸⁰

These findings indicate that the *handling* of diversity, rather than *the presence* of diversity, plays the decisive role in shaping the social field of diocesan life. This aligns closely with Theory U and field theory: mission vitality grows not from homogeneity of

¹⁸⁰ This figure description is reproduced verbatim from analysis generated by ChatGPT (OpenAI, GPT-5.1; accessed November 15, 2025).

perspectives but from leadership behaviors that create high-quality relational conditions capable of integrating diverse viewpoints toward shared purpose.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Missionary discipleship moves at the speed of *quality relationships*. From the beginning, the Gospel spread across diverse cultures and languages through the witness of believers whose lives embodied the message they proclaimed. “Institutionally it was a network of local churches stitched together across several cultural zones by lines of communication and personal relationships...Key to the network that made up the great Church were the bishops.”¹⁸¹ Personal relationships built on mutual trust were intrinsic to how the Gospel spread and how the Church maintained its unity. As the Church developed and the relational structures have changed through the centuries, the trust that has kept the soil of the social field between the bishop and the presbyterate fertile has faded.¹⁸² When low trust permeates the ordained's relational structure, it infiltrates the entire diocesan system and contributes to the waning missionary vibrancy of the Church. Today, for every person who joins the Catholic Church in the United States, eight people leave.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Dale T Irvin and Scott W Sunquist, *History of the World Christian Movement: Earliest Christianity to 1453*, 8th ed., vol. 1 (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2001), 189.

¹⁸² Trust reported by diocesan priests in their bishop has modestly increased from 49% in 2022 to 53% in 2025. Brandon Vaidyanathan et al., “Morale, Leadership, and Pastoral Priorities: Highlights from the 2025 National Study of Catholic Priests” (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, October 2025), 10.

¹⁸³ Gina Christian, “Pew: US Christianity Downturn Leveling, but Catholics Suffer ‘Greeperienceswasatest Net Losses,’” *Our Sunday Visitor*, February 27, 2025, <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/news-commentary/pew-us-christianity-downturn-leveraffirming-but-catholics-suffer-greatest-net-losses/>.

A Summary of the History, Theology, Organizational Theory, and Research on the Episcopal-Presbyteral Social Field and Its Effect on the Diocese's Mission Vibrancy

In an effort to affirm and reprioritize the necessity of a positive social field between the bishop and the presbyterate for the Church's missionary vibrancy, its historical, theological, and organizational relationship has been examined and placed in dialogue with the experiences of priests from several presbyterates throughout the United States. The results from this study indicate that attention to the social field between the bishop and the presbyterate is not only helpful for the experience of unity but also shapes the priest's perception of the diocese as missionary.

The presbyterate's first responsibility, even before they evolved into serving as pastors of Christian communities or holding any sacramental responsibility, was to serve as a cohort of trusted advisers to the bishop. Presbyters maintained an intimate knowledge of the community they were charged to serve, along with an equally personal relationship with their bishop. This close relationship maintained communion among its members as the Church continued its rapid expansion throughout the early centuries of Christianity.

The theology of the Second Vatican Council captures this early pastoral practice and expresses the *communio* desired in the episcopal-presbyteral social field. In *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, the priest's relationship is described as one "united with the bishop in a bond of charity, humility, and obedience", who are "cooperators of the episcopal order." Bishops should treat priests as "brothers and friends." *Lumen Gentium* names priests "prudent cooperators" and "co-workers." *Christus Dominus* describes the relationship between bishop and priest as one having "trusting familiarity", where

bishops “embrace priests with a special love” and remain “ready to listen to them.” All of these qualifiers express the substance of the relationship that emerged among these pastoral leaders as they strove to care for the Church’s pastoral needs in the earliest days. Surely this relationship between bishop and presbyterate was also intended to inform the relationships among all Christians in the community.

Examining the field of organizational development, this thesis project explored the opportunities and limitations of structure and position within the network of interpersonal relationships and their impact on the diocese’s evangelization efforts. After arguing for a systematic approach toward aligning the diocese’s relationships with the *Missio Dei*, the types of organizational forms and their inherent structural forces were explored. Of the forms, the diocesan structure is the one that most aligns with the *divisional form*. This organizational type incorporates multiple forms into its structure to address needs that cannot be addressed with a single form. In the case of a diocese, the needs that the *divisional form* satisfies are both geographical and pastoral – serving many different parishes in different locations with varied pastoral concerns. The central office of a diocese is likely to serve as a *programmed machine*, whose primary organizing force is efficiency. The various parishes, associations, and ministries within a diocese can take any of the four different forms – each with its own organizing force: *personal enterprise*, with a force of limited, localized adaptation to pastoral needs; *project pionner*, with an organizational force for collaboration; and the *professional assembly*, with an organizing force of proficiency. Parishes and ministries can also serve as a *programmed machine*, which prioritizes efficiency.

Critical realist theory was used to illustrate how organizational culture, positions, and individuals can influence the relational structure of a group. Power is determined by who controls resources valued by others in a system. In a diocese, a bishop wields significant power because he controls and influences the resources valued within the diocesan structure. Priests, because they serve as connectors between parishes and ministries within the diocesan system, also wield significant influence. Due to his position and control over resources, a bishop is the primary influencer on how the diocese is structured to support Christ's mission and the effectiveness of the episcopal-presbyteral social field.

The human subject research revealed that the more trust-building attitudes and behaviors the bishop exhibited in the episcopal-prebyteral social field, the higher the sense of unity and missionary vibrancy among priests in the diocese. These attitudes and behaviors are generally expressed as collaboration, openness, approachability, and consultation. The findings further revealed that the bishop's openness to accommodating a diversity of theological views was an important factor in the priest's sentiments that the diocese was missionally vibrant.

The Journey Toward Restoring the Episcopal-Presbyteral Social Field and Structural Alignment of the Diocesan System for Mission

What is the primary mission field for the local ordinary of a diocese? In other words, where should a bishop prioritize his attention to have the most significant missionary impact? How many bishops have answered this question for themselves? If

not explicitly expressed, it may be implicit in what the bishop pays most attention to.¹⁸⁴ For many, a likely answer may be that the bishop's mission field is the territory of the diocese placed into a bishop's care. This is undoubtedly the case; however, a focus this broad makes it challenging to prioritize and effect substantive change. Systems theory in organizational development asks: What is the lever within the system that would have the most significant impact on the outcomes desired by the diocese?

This thesis project argues that for the sake of the *Missio Dei*, the primary mission field for the bishop – the lever that would have the most significant impact within the diocese – is his relationship with the presbyterate. This is not to say that the presbyterate is his only mission field. But it is through these primary relationships that the bishop sows Christ's mission throughout the territory in his charge. As demonstrated in this thesis project, the Church's history and theology both make this case. The question of leverage arises from organizational theory. The rationale for and aspiration of this relationship are found in authoritative teaching. The research in this thesis project shows strong signs that when a bishop prioritizes this relationship, it bears a positive impression on the diocese's missionary activity.

If the argument that a bishop's primary mission field is his presbyterate is accepted, the next reasonable question might be: How much time should a bishop dedicate to this primary mission field to properly leverage it and have a significant impact on the diocese's mission vibrancy? The answer to this question would be challenging to

¹⁸⁴ Ed Schein explains that one of the primary mechanisms a leader has to communicate his values within a culture is to be explicit about what he pays attention to. When done intentionally and consistently it is an important driver of vision and priorities. Consistency of attention, not intensity, is the critical element. Edgar H Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 5th ed. (Hoboken, New Jersey Wiley, 2017), 186-189.

address fully, in part because this thesis project intentionally focused on the presbyterate's experience. Without an understanding of bishops' lived experiences across different dioceses, this question cannot be adequately addressed. However, from interviews with priests from various dioceses across regions and of varying sizes, some general directives can be identified.

It seems reasonable to assume that if the bishop's primary mission field is the presbyterate, then a large (dare it be said, the largest?) portion of the bishop's time and the diocese's resources would be dedicated to supporting this relationship and equipping this group for their ministry. There is a danger here for such emphasis to appear to be highly clerical. However, this is not the case *if* the purpose for this emphasis is not solely for the sake of the priest but primarily for Christ's mission. The bishop prioritizes his attention and the diocese's resources on the presbyterate precisely so they can be successful in serving the People of God.

If the bishop recognizes that one of the most effective levers he controls for strengthening missionary vibrancy in his diocese is to prioritize the presbyterate as his primary mission field, what specific actions does this thesis project propose he take? Beyond the obvious actions which would attend to the priest ahead of their entry into the presbyterate—their selection and formation—two main proposals emerge for the bishop and the diocese to prioritize: 1) Strategies that build unity and trust between the bishop and the priests, with a special emphasis on embracing a broad theological tent among the presbyterate, and 2) Reconstituting the relationship between the parish community, its pastor, and the diocesan office.

Strategies for closeness and trust in the episcopal-presbyteral social field

A good first step for any diocese would be to do a trust audit of the presbyterate. A survey and interviews, similar in approach to the one conducted in this thesis project, can be done anonymously to ascertain how unified the presbyterate feels with their bishop and which trust-building behaviors are present or absent in their social field.¹⁸⁵

This thesis project explains how trust develops over time when trust-building behaviors are consistently present in a social field. If a bishop is new to a diocese or seeking to make a concerted effort to prioritize the episcopal-presbyteral relationship, it will be important to demonstrate the ability to create and maintain meaningful commitments that support this relationship. Additionally, demonstrating his ability to lead the diocese pastorally, theologically, and administratively will be essential to maintaining the presbyterate's confidence. Staff who exercise responsibility in these areas need to consistently demonstrate competence, lest the priests become cynical and erode trust in their bishop. As one priest interviewed said, “[The bishop] surrounds himself with people who have the same kind of dedication he has.” Therefore, accountability to high standards of excellence for roles related to the diocese's pastoral, theological, and administrative work is essential. If there is a breach of confidence involving the bishop or his staff in any of these areas, a quick and sincere acknowledgement of any misstep is critical, followed by meaningful action to implement remedies. If poor performance

¹⁸⁵ The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) has conducted a “Cultivating Unity” program inclusive of research using questionnaires and listening sessions in advance of a convocation. The program “provides an understanding of the priests’ views of unity” in the presbyterate. CARA generously provided a copy of their survey questions used in this program which formed the basis for some questions in this thesis project’s presbyterate survey. See more information about this program here: <https://cara.georgetown.edu/dioceses>.

persists, it is essential that the bishop take appropriate yet pastoral measures to rectify the situation, while being transparent about the steps being taken and the desired outcome.

The three most strongly correlated behavioral drivers of the bishop with unity and mission vibrancy from this thesis project's survey are psychological safety (correlation of .97 to unity and .98 to mission vibrancy), the encouragement of diverse input (correlation of .94 to unity and .97 to mission vibrancy), and mutual trust (correlation of .95 to unity and .96 to mission vibrancy). In light of this information, bishops can instruct their chancery cabinet and communications team to meticulously screen all diocesan communication against a criterion of authentic vulnerability and transparency. Diocesan staff may be permitted to flag communications with the bishop that do not adequately articulate the intentions and purposes behind decisions, policies, and practices. This approach can help align diocesan communications with the value of transparency.

Creating spaces where a bishop can be vulnerable with the presbyterate was a common theme reflected in a few interviews. As one priest said, regarding his bishop, "...I've already said there could be more transparency, I think there's been more transparency than any of the previous bishops, and [I'd like to hear] maybe even more about his own personal journey...I think that is a powerful witness." Another priest expressed his appreciation for how honest and vulnerable the bishop has been with him, "I just feel an ability to be open and honest and friendly with him, and he is very open and honest himself about struggles or problems that may be going on."

Holding retreats with the priests, during which the bishop could share his own vulnerability, was one approach taken in a diocese to foster greater intimacy with the presbyterate. Given the power difference between the roles, it cannot be guaranteed that

priests will automatically feel equally vulnerable; however, the extended time in informal settings, such as a retreat, lends itself to casual moments in which stronger relationships can form. Priests indicated the value of having the bishop present throughout convocations and making special efforts to be present at crucial moments for the priest, such as anniversary celebrations and pastoral visits when a priest is in the hospital.

Benevolent efforts, or pastoral care, toward the presbyterate will take time but have lasting effects. Several priests interviewed indicated that a pastoral care visit or intervention significantly impacted their trust in the bishop. Others highlighted how the bishop was supportive of their personal growth and development by sending them for additional formation they desired. The bishop's physical presence and sense of availability were mentioned by several of the priests interviewed as essential factors in their trust in their bishop. When comparing the time the current bishop spent with the presbyterate to that of a prior bishop, one priest linked the bishop's lack of presence to the presbyterate's trust, saying, “[Priests] don't trust him now, because he's never present.” The priest continued, sadly noting that the time the bishop spends outside the diocese has become a running joke among the presbyterate.

The bishop can charge the vicar for clergy, vicar general, or another appropriate diocesan position with developing strategies to ensure the bishop continually builds goodwill with the presbyterate. By communicating to the diocesan staff that the episcopal-presbyterate relationship is a central priority and by engaging them in designing supportive strategies, the bishop compounds the structural forces in its support. This approach leverages the diocese's inherent structural efficiency to benefit this relationship.

A challenge within the Church is pastorally attending to the vast diversity of theological views held by the People of God. This is also true of presbyterates. What is clear from the priests surveyed in this study is that theological homogeneity is not a precondition for unity between the bishop and the presbyterate, nor for mission vibrancy. Instead, what matters most is a bishop who is capable of accommodating the diversity of theological views that are held within the presbyterate. This finding bodes well for a Church that has always been theologically diverse. It is instructive for bishops and any pastoral leader to recognize the value of attending pastorally to the wide range of theological views within the Church, to serve the communion and evangelizing purposes of the Church effectively. As one priest indicated in an interview, the bishop permitted a pastoral decision that emerged from a theological perspective different from his own. The priest relayed the bishop's response to their differing theological views: "It's against what I would prefer, but I will allow it." In another example, a bishop refused the use of the Knights of Columbus' ceremonial sword by parishioners at a parish celebration when the bishop was attending, explaining that native American parishioners in attendance viewed the sword as a symbol of violence and oppression. However, the bishop did not ban the use of the swords completely, recognizing they have a different symbolic value to members of the association. Another priest indicated how the bishop's worship preferences weren't imposed on the presbyterate. He explains, "[The bishop] is honest in pointing out what is good..obviously he has his own preferences, but he doesn't let those be seen in the public...he's going to acknowledge what's good in every [liturgical] situation." These examples show a bishop's flexibility in accommodating different theological viewpoints in the presbyterate.

Bishops can demonstrate their commitment to theological diversity by ensuring that the presbyteral council and leadership roles, such as deans, include priests with varying theological perspectives. It is also essential for the bishop to appoint diocesan leaders who are equally capable of embracing the breadth of theological diversity within the Church.

A final proposal that emerges from this study, to build a strong bond of trust between the bishop and the presbyterate, is for the bishop and the diocese to establish predictable, transparent decision-making practices. Broad consultation with the presbyterate when diocesan decisions are likely to impact priests and their ministry is critical. Timely, regular communication with priests about decisions that reflect fairness and demonstrate unbiased choices is essential. Of particular interest to priests are transparent frameworks for clergy assignments and personnel decisions, in which the criteria, values, and decision-making processes used by the bishop and diocesan staff are published.

Reconstituting the relationship between parish community, its pastor, and the diocesan office

Another outcome from this thesis project is the necessity to align the relationships in the diocese in a manner that supports priests in their primary mission delivery points—in the parishes and ministries of the diocese. Mission vibrancy is not solely dependent on the episcopal-presbyteral relationship. The systems and structures that support priests in their pastoral contexts are also critical components. As previously discussed, the diocese is a complex, interdependent system, not a collection of isolated parishes. Diocesan processes need to emphasize time over space in that processes must not merely respond

to immediate needs but also attend to and anticipate the future through enduring discernment processes that adapt to an ever-changing landscape of pastoral needs. A healthy mission ecosystem requires alignment between the priest, the people, and the diocesan offices that support them.

Emerging from this thesis project, the following priorities emerge: 1) Reorienting diocesan structures toward mission rather than administration; 2) Creating a cross-functional pastoral life and transition team; 3) Implementing a standardized pastoral appointment discernment process; 4) Establishing a shared formation track for parish pastoral leaders; and 5) Developing an early-intervention relational support mechanism.

In 2022, demonstrating the use of one of the leader's mechanisms for culture change, Pope Francis created the Dicastery for Evangelization as the primary Vatican office in the Roman Curia, superseding the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, which had previously held this position. The move sent an important signal to the universal Church – the Church's primary responsibility is the spread of the Gospel by word and deed. Dioceses need to do some similar internal restructuring to ensure that evangelization is the integrating principle for all diocesan departments. Measures that emphasize evangelization should be developed and shared among diocesan offices and parish staff. These measures would be used in regular mission reviews of parishes, which would incorporate parish feedback through various means, including synodal listening sessions and mission impact evaluations.

Many dioceses have become susceptible to over-bureaucratization, with offices operating in silos and limited cross-functional communication and collaboration. Integration of clergy personnel, evangelization, finance, human resources, and ministry

formation into cross-functional pastoral life and transition teams can help to build the “seams” between diocesan departments aligned with the Church’s evangelizing mission. Such teams would maintain an ongoing understanding of the various parishes’ cultures. Its responsibility would be to provide onboarding support for new pastors, accompany parishes during pastor transitions, and address any early tensions or cultural misalignments between the pastoral leader and the community. Such an inter-disciplinary approach is attentive to the complexity of parish life. It supports adaptive, relational dynamics rather than viewing ministry as a technical challenge.

Pastoral leader transitions in parishes are critical. They are sensitive moments in the life of a parish community. Instituting a standardized pastoral appointment discernment process shifts clergy placement from an event to a process. Essential elements in the process include a cultural assessment of the parish community. This would entail the parish’s history, charisms, wounds, expectations, theological identity, emerging pastoral needs, and its current organizational form. A matching process between the parish and a priest would consider his strengths, leadership style, and theological posture. Attentive to the welfare of the parish community and the priority of missionary vibrancy, alternative leadership approaches would be clearly and transparently articulated as part of the overall pastoral appointment process if a suitable priest cannot be matched with the parish. The appointment process would include a structured transition plan, including listening sessions between parishioners and the incoming pastor, as well as preparation for the incoming priest.

A diocese that is systematically aligned for mission prioritizes formation that supports the ongoing learning of parish pastoral leaders as a collective – priests, pastoral

staff, and parish lay leaders. Areas of focus would include the leadership competencies needed to guide and support a community of faith in its missionary mandate. Such leadership competencies, theologically integrated, would consist of organizational development skills, strategies for accompaniment and synodal leadership, conflict resolution and dialogue skills, and change and transition management. Combined formation among leaders of the parish community builds a co-responsible Church through shared mental models and relational trust.

The research of this thesis project indicates that a healthy social field supports unity and missionary vibrancy. A diocese that appreciates the relational complexity within communities of faith recognizes that ongoing monitoring and support of the hidden social field of its members are necessary to sustain the parish's capacity for communion and evangelization. Therefore, a diocese needs early-intervention mechanisms that can provide relational support to parishes when needed. Conflict mediation teams, coaches for new pastors and pastoral councils, as well as peer-learning groups for pastors in similar contexts, are examples of strategies a diocese can employ to nurture a positive social field in parishes.

The Synodal Dimension of the Episcopal-Presbyteral Social Field

Serena Noceti explains how the term reform “refers to the complex dynamics by which an organization or institution gives itself ‘a new form’, thus configuring itself differently...it touches the very ‘figure’ of the church, its overall historical ‘configuration,’ and not just some of its dimensions, activities, or practices.”¹⁸⁶ For

¹⁸⁶ Serena Noceti, *Reforming the Church: A Synodal Way of Proceeding* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2023), 88-89.

reform to occur, it must happen at three levels: through personal conversion of one's attitudes and behaviors, through corporate practices shaped by customs and habits, and institutional structures.¹⁸⁷ In its evolved articulation of synodality, the Church has developed a theological vision that will require implementation at each level.

Focusing on the relationship between the bishop and the presbyterate, this thesis project has addressed each level of reform against the backdrop of the theological vision of synodality. This project's research has examined the synodal attitudes and behaviors of certain U.S. bishops in their relationships with their priests. It has explored the impact of those attitudes and behaviors on the social field, which, in turn, shapes the culture and habits within this ecclesial relationship. Finally, in an attempt to develop a more synodal structure in the diocese, this thesis project sought to understand how various organizational forms enable or hinder the Church's evangelizing efforts toward the *Missio Dei*.¹⁸⁸ Taken together it is the hope that this work has contributed to the ongoing 'synodalization' of the Church and leads to greater mission vitality, bringing the world ever closer to God's reign.

¹⁸⁷ Kristin M Colberg and Jos Moons, SJ, *The Future of Synodality: How We Move Forward from Here* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2025), 121.

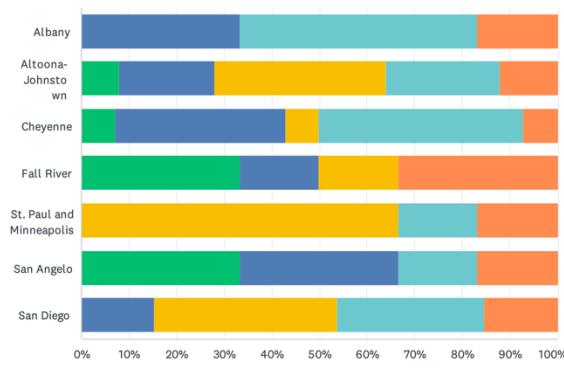
¹⁸⁸ Colberg and Moons state how important it is to understand organizing structures as a preliminary step for developing a more synodal Church. They write, "developing more synodal structures should start with renewing the appreciation of structures and institutions." Colberg and Moons, *The Future of Synodality*", 130.

Appendix A: The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey Survey and Summary

Q1 Age group

Answered: 76 Skipped: 1

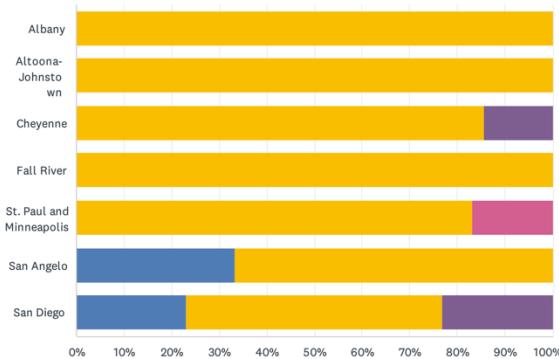


█ 35 and under
 █ 36-50
 █ 51-64
 █ 65-75
 █ 76+

	35 AND UNDER	36-50	51-64	65-75	76+	TOTAL
Albany	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	7.89% 6
Altoona-Johnstown	8.00% 2	20.00% 5	36.00% 9	24.00% 6	12.00% 3	32.89% 25
Cheyenne	7.14% 1	35.71% 5	7.14% 1	42.86% 6	7.14% 1	18.42% 14
Fall River	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	7.89% 6
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	66.67% 4	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	7.89% 6
San Angelo	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	7.89% 6
San Diego	0.00% 0	15.38% 2	38.46% 5	30.77% 4	15.38% 2	17.11% 13
Total Respondents	7	17	20	21	11	76

Q2 Which race/ethnicity best describes you?

Answered: 76 Skipped: 1



Prefer not to...
 Hispanic/L...
 White/Cauc...
 Native Ame...
 Black or Afr...
 Asian/Paci...
 Multiple Ra...

	PREFER NOT TO ANSWER	HISPANIC/LATINO	WHITE/CAUCASIAN (NOT HISPANIC)	NATIVE AMERICAN, AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKAN NATIVE	BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER	MULTIPLE RACE/ETHNICITY (PLEASE SPECIFY)	TOTAL
Albany	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7.89% 6
Altoona-Johnstown	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 25	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	32.89% 25
Cheyenne	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	85.71% 12	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	14.29% 2	0.00% 0	18.42% 14
Fall River	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7.89% 6
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	83.33% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	7.89% 6
San Angelo	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	66.67% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7.89% 6
San Diego	0.00% 0	23.08% 3	53.85% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	23.08% 3	0.00% 1	17.11% 13
Total Respondents	0	5	65	0	0	5	1	76

#	ALBANY	DATE
	There are no responses.	
#	ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN	DATE
	There are no responses.	
#	CHEYENNE	DATE
	There are no responses.	
#	FALL RIVER	DATE
	There are no responses.	

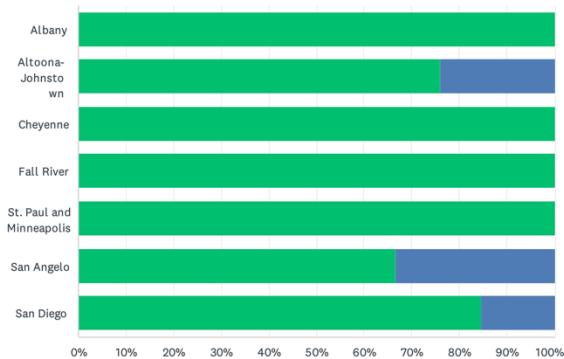
The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

#		DATE
1	ST. PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS Human	7/1/2025 10:36 AM
#	SAN ANGELO There are no responses.	DATE
#	SAN DIEGO There are no responses.	DATE

Q3 What is your canonical status?

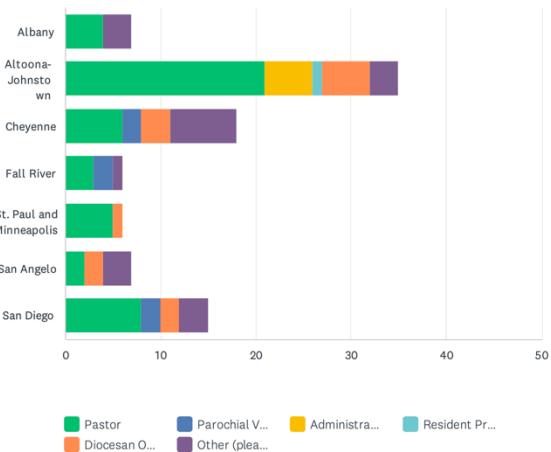
Answered: 76 Skipped: 1



	DIOCESAN PRIEST	RELIGIOUS ORDER PRIEST	TOTAL	
			Count	Percentage
Albany	6	0	6	7.89%
Altoona-Johnstown	19	6	25	32.89%
Cheyenne	14	0	14	18.42%
Fall River	6	0	6	7.89%
St. Paul and Minneapolis	6	0	6	7.89%
San Angelo	4	2	6	7.89%
San Diego	11	2	13	17.11%
Total Respondents	66	10	76	

Q4 What position(s) do you hold in the diocese? Select as many as apply.

Answered: 76 Skipped: 1



	PASTOR	PAROCHIAL VICAR/ASSOCIATE	ADMINISTRATOR	RESIDENT PRIEST/PRIEST-IN-RESIDENCE	DIOCESAN OFFICIAL (VICAR GENERAL, VICAR FOR CLERGY, CHANCELLOR, ETC.)	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	TOTAL
Albany	66.67% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 0	9.21% 7
Altoona-Johnstown	84.00% 21	0.00% 0	20.00% 5	4.00% 1	20.00% 5	12.00% 3	46.05% 35
Cheyenne	42.86% 6	14.29% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	21.43% 3	50.00% 7	23.68% 18
Fall River	50.00% 3	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	7.89% 6
St. Paul and Minneapolis	83.33% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	7.89% 6
San Angelo	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	50.00% 3	9.21% 7
San Diego	61.54% 8	15.38% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15.38% 2	23.08% 3	19.74% 15
Total Respondents	49	6	5	1	13	20	76

#	ALBANY	DATE
1	Retired	6/28/2025 3:22 PM
2	Retired	6/7/2025 2:36 PM
3	Regional Episcopal Vicar; Head-of-School	6/6/2025 2:58 PM
#	ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN	DATE
1	retired but have covered 52 parishes	8/19/2025 3:23 PM
2	Sacramental Minister	8/19/2025 2:29 PM
3	Senior Priest, High School Chaplain	8/19/2025 1:42 PM
#	CHEYENNE	DATE

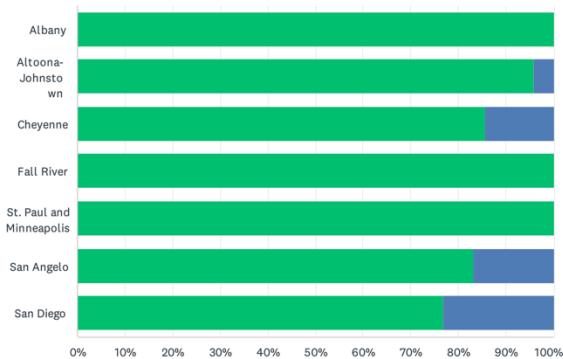
The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

1	Priest without an assignment	7/1/2025 5:29 PM
2	Retired	6/22/2025 12:29 PM
3	retire priest/pastor	6/18/2025 8:30 PM
4	Director of the Office of Worship	6/18/2025 6:24 PM
5	Retired	6/18/2025 3:51 PM
6	Retired	6/18/2025 2:43 PM
7	retired	6/17/2025 4:52 PM
#	FALL RIVER	DATE
1	Retired pastor, assisting with weekend and daily Masses.	6/16/2025 8:21 PM
#	ST. PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS	DATE
	There are no responses.	
#	SAN ANGELO	DATE
1	Full-time studies	6/17/2025 9:43 PM
2	retired religious	6/17/2025 12:18 PM
3	Presbyteral Council member	6/16/2025 11:29 PM
#	SAN DIEGO	DATE
1	Retired Pastor	7/9/2025 3:31 PM
2	Seminary Rector	7/1/2025 4:44 PM
3	Retired Pastor	6/28/2025 6:57 PM

Q5 Is English your first language?

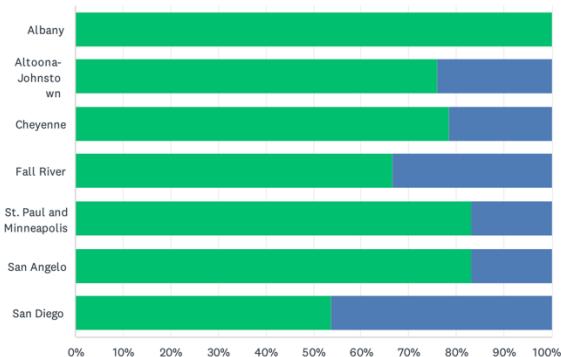
Answered: 76 Skipped: 1



	YES	NO	TOTAL
Albany	100.00% 6	0.00% 0	7.89% 6
Altoona-Johnstown	96.00% 24	4.00% 1	32.89% 25
Cheyenne	85.71% 12	14.29% 2	18.42% 14
Fall River	100.00% 6	0.00% 0	7.89% 6
St. Paul and Minneapolis	100.00% 6	0.00% 0	7.89% 6
San Angelo	83.33% 5	16.67% 1	7.89% 6
San Diego	76.92% 10	23.08% 3	17.11% 13
Total Respondents	69	7	76

Q6 Were you born outside of the United States?

Answered: 76 Skipped: 1



	NO	YES	TOTAL
Albany	100.00% 6	0.00% 0	7.89% 6
Altoona-Johnstown	76.00% 19	24.00% 6	32.89% 25
Cheyenne	78.57% 11	21.43% 3	18.42% 14
Fall River	66.67% 4	33.33% 2	7.89% 6
St. Paul and Minneapolis	83.33% 5	16.67% 1	7.89% 6
San Angelo	83.33% 5	16.67% 1	7.89% 6
San Diego	53.85% 7	46.15% 6	17.11% 13
Total Respondents	57	19	76
	IF YES, WHAT COUNTRY?		TOTAL
Albany		0	0
Altoona-Johnstown		1	1
Cheyenne		3	3
Fall River		0	0
St. Paul and Minneapolis		1	1
San Angelo		1	1
San Diego		6	6
#	ALBANY	DATE	
	There are no responses.		
#	ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN	DATE	

The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

1	Poland	8/19/2025 2:36 PM
#	CHEYENNE	DATE
1	Vietnam	6/30/2025 3:55 PM
2	Vietnam	6/19/2025 6:15 AM
3	India	6/17/2025 12:47 PM
#	FALL RIVER	DATE
	There are no responses.	
#	ST. PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS	DATE
1	Japan	6/29/2025 9:45 PM
#	SAN ANGELO	DATE
1	Mexico	6/16/2025 11:29 PM
#	SAN DIEGO	DATE
1	Ireland	7/9/2025 3:31 PM
2	Philippines	7/4/2025 12:40 PM
3	MEXICO	7/3/2025 2:07 PM
4	Philippines	6/30/2025 3:43 PM
5	India	6/28/2025 7:10 PM
6	Mexico	6/28/2025 5:33 PM

Q7 What year were you ordained?

Answered: 76 Skipped: 1

WHAT YEAR WERE YOU ORDAINED?		TOTAL
Albany		100.00% 6
Altoona-Johnstown		100.00% 25
Cheyenne		100.00% 14
Fall River		100.00% 6
St. Paul and Minneapolis		100.00% 6
San Angelo		100.00% 6
San Diego		100.00% 13
Total Respondents	76	76
# ALBANY		DATE
1	1987	6/28/2025 3:22 PM
2	1983	6/20/2025 12:28 PM
3	2011	6/9/2025 6:55 PM
4	1966	6/7/2025 2:36 PM
5	1979	6/6/2025 3:34 PM
6	2013	6/6/2025 2:58 PM
# ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN		DATE
1	1976	8/26/2025 1:14 PM
2	2000	8/20/2025 7:05 PM
3	2007	8/20/2025 1:07 PM
4	1977	8/20/2025 11:31 AM
5	1975	8/20/2025 9:29 AM
6	2015	8/20/2025 9:27 AM
7	1984	8/20/2025 8:27 AM
8	2009	8/19/2025 9:17 PM
9	2002	8/19/2025 4:46 PM
10	1993	8/19/2025 3:50 PM
11	1967	8/19/2025 3:23 PM
12	2006	8/19/2025 2:56 PM
13	1979	8/19/2025 2:46 PM
14	1993	8/19/2025 2:36 PM
15	2006	8/19/2025 2:34 PM
16	1992	8/19/2025 2:29 PM
17	1987	8/19/2025 2:15 PM
18	2022	8/19/2025 2:12 PM
19	1969	8/19/2025 1:47 PM
20	2000	8/19/2025 1:45 PM
21	2021	8/19/2025 1:44 PM

The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

22	1971	8/19/2025 1:42 PM
23	2009	8/19/2025 1:39 PM
24	1992	8/18/2025 3:37 PM
25	1996	8/11/2025 11:38 AM
#	CHEYENNE	DATE
1	1986	7/9/2025 6:43 PM
2	2022	7/2/2025 8:11 PM
3	2006	7/1/2025 5:29 PM
4	2021	6/30/2025 3:55 PM
5	1983	6/22/2025 12:29 PM
6	2015	6/19/2025 6:15 AM
7	1984	6/18/2025 8:30 PM
8	2009	6/18/2025 6:24 PM
9	2005	6/18/2025 3:51 PM
10	2014	6/18/2025 3:48 PM
11	1976	6/18/2025 2:43 PM
12	2014	6/18/2025 2:30 PM
13	1968	6/17/2025 4:52 PM
14	1994	6/17/2025 12:47 PM
#	FALL RIVER	DATE
1	2018	6/18/2025 1:10 PM
2	1972	6/16/2025 8:21 PM
3	2000	6/9/2025 1:55 PM
4	1965	6/9/2025 1:21 PM
5	2023	6/9/2025 1:14 PM
6	2018	6/9/2025 12:34 PM
#	ST. PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS	DATE
1	2005	7/10/2025 5:07 PM
2	1995	7/9/2025 10:09 AM
3	2005	7/2/2025 7:20 PM
4	1996	7/1/2025 10:36 AM
5	1997	6/29/2025 9:45 PM
6	2000	6/27/2025 10:36 AM
#	SAN ANGELO	DATE
1	2015	6/18/2025 3:06 PM
2	2021	6/17/2025 9:43 PM
3	1968	6/17/2025 12:18 PM
4	2013	6/16/2025 11:29 PM
5	2017	6/16/2025 3:07 PM
6	1986	6/16/2025 12:39 PM
#	SAN DIEGO	DATE
1	1971	7/9/2025 3:31 PM
2	2012	7/4/2025 12:40 PM
3	2001	7/3/2025 2:07 PM
4	1983	7/3/2025 11:48 AM
5	1992	7/1/2025 4:44 PM
6	1987	7/1/2025 2:07 PM

The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

7	1994	6/30/2025 4:08 PM
8	2001	6/30/2025 3:43 PM
9	2025	6/29/2025 5:37 PM
10	1994	6/28/2025 7:10 PM
11	1971	6/28/2025 6:57 PM
12	1977	6/28/2025 6:05 PM
13	2010	6/28/2025 5:33 PM

Q8 What year were you born?

Answered: 76 Skipped: 1

WHAT YEAR WERE YOU BORN?		TOTAL
Albany		100.00% 6
Altoona-Johnstown		100.00% 25
Cheyenne		100.00% 14
Fall River		100.00% 6
St. Paul and Minneapolis		100.00% 6
San Angelo		100.00% 6
San Diego		100.00% 13
Total Respondents	76	76
#	ALBANY	DATE
1	1951	6/28/2025 3:22 PM
2	1953	6/20/2025 12:28 PM
3	1982	6/9/2025 6:55 PM
4	1942	6/7/2025 2:36 PM
5	1952	6/6/2025 3:34 PM
6	1975	6/6/2025 2:58 PM
#	ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN	DATE
1	1950	8/26/2025 1:14 PM
2	1968	8/20/2025 7:05 PM
3	1970	8/20/2025 1:07 PM
4	1950	8/20/2025 11:31 AM
5	1949	8/20/2025 9:29 AM
6	1983	8/20/2025 9:27 AM
7	1951	8/20/2025 8:27 AM
8	1982	8/19/2025 9:17 PM
9	1976	8/19/2025 4:46 PM
10	1964	8/19/2025 3:50 PM
11	1941	8/19/2025 3:23 PM
12	1976	8/19/2025 2:56 PM
13	1952	8/19/2025 2:46 PM
14	1960	8/19/2025 2:36 PM
15	1966	8/19/2025 2:34 PM
16	1963	8/19/2025 2:29 PM
17	1959	8/19/2025 2:15 PM
18	1995	8/19/2025 2:12 PM
19	1942	8/19/2025 1:47 PM
20	1968	8/19/2025 1:45 PM
21	1994	8/19/2025 1:44 PM

The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

22	1945	8/19/2025 1:42 PM
23	1982	8/19/2025 1:39 PM
24	1964	8/18/2025 3:37 PM
25	1969	8/11/2025 11:38 AM
#	CHEYENNE	DATE
1	1959	7/9/2025 6:43 PM
2	1994	7/2/2025 8:11 PM
3	1960	7/1/2025 5:29 PM
4	1984	6/30/2025 3:55 PM
5	1952	6/22/2025 12:29 PM
6	1981	6/19/2025 6:15 AM
7	1951	6/18/2025 8:30 PM
8	1978	6/18/2025 6:24 PM
9	1954	6/18/2025 3:51 PM
10	1988	6/18/2025 3:48 PM
11	1950	6/18/2025 2:43 PM
12	1986	6/18/2025 2:30 PM
13	1942	6/17/2025 4:52 PM
14	1964	6/17/2025 12:47 PM
#	FALL RIVER	DATE
1	1983	6/18/2025 1:10 PM
2	1946	6/16/2025 8:21 PM
3	1972	6/9/2025 1:55 PM
4	1938	6/9/2025 1:21 PM
5	1991	6/9/2025 1:14 PM
6	1990	6/9/2025 12:34 PM
#	ST. PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS	DATE
1	1966	7/10/2025 5:07 PM
2	1952	7/9/2025 10:09 AM
3	1973	7/2/2025 7:20 PM
4	1964	7/1/2025 10:36 AM
5	1971	6/29/2025 9:45 PM
6	1948	6/27/2025 10:36 AM
#	SAN ANGELO	DATE
1	1988	6/18/2025 3:06 PM
2	1994	6/17/2025 9:43 PM
3	1941	6/17/2025 12:18 PM
4	1983	6/16/2025 11:29 PM
5	1991	6/16/2025 3:07 PM
6	1960	6/16/2025 12:39 PM
#	SAN DIEGO	DATE
1	1845	7/9/2025 3:31 PM
2	1972	7/4/2025 12:40 PM
3	1972	7/3/2025 2:07 PM
4	1951	7/1/2025 11:48 AM
5	1960	7/1/2025 4:44 PM
6	1956	7/1/2025 2:07 PM

The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

7	1961	6/30/2025 4:08 PM
8	1971	6/30/2025 3:43 PM
9	1981	6/29/2025 5:37 PM
10	1963	6/28/2025 7:10 PM
11	1946	6/28/2025 6:57 PM
12	1949	6/28/2025 6:05 PM
13	1975	6/28/2025 5:33 PM

Q9 If you are associated with any ecclesial movements, please indicate which one(s).

Answered: 23 Skipped: 54

IF YOU ARE ASSOCIATED WITH ANY ECCLESIAL MOVEMENTS, PLEASE INDICATE WHICH ONE(S).			TOTAL
Albany			100.00% 2
Altoona-Johnstown			100.00% 8
Cheyenne			100.00% 2
Fall River			100.00% 2
St. Paul and Minneapolis			100.00% 1
San Angelo			100.00% 2
San Diego			100.00% 6
Total Respondents	23		23
# ALBANY			DATE
1 Association	Knights of Columbus and Holy Sepulchre		6/28/2025 3:22 PM
2	Vatican Council II		6/20/2025 12:28 PM
# ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN			DATE
1 Ecclesial Movement	Pax Christi USA		8/20/2025 11:31 AM
2 Association	Fraternity of Priests		8/20/2025 9:27 AM
3	Divine renovation		8/20/2025 8:27 AM
4	ongoing formation of priests		8/19/2025 2:33 PM
5 Association	Knight of Columbus		8/19/2025 2:36 PM
6 Religious Community	Franciscan Friar		8/19/2025 2:34 PM
7	NA		8/19/2025 1:42 PM
8 Association	St Vincent DePaul		8/19/2025 1:39 PM
# CHEYENNE			DATE
1 Association	Association O United States Catholic Priests		6/17/2025 4:52 PM
2	None		6/17/2025 12:47 PM
# FALL RIVER			DATE
1	None		6/16/2025 8:21 PM
2 Association	NFPC (was)		6/9/2025 1:21 PM
# ST. PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS			DATE
1	no		6/29/2025 9:45 PM
# SAN ANGELO			DATE
1 Association	Misioneros Servidores de la Palabra		6/16/2025 11:29 PM
2 Association	Ecclesial Movement	Cursillo, Awakening, Search, Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, Knights of Columbus	6/16/2025 12:39 PM
# SAN DIEGO			DATE
1 Association	Ecclesial Movement	Regnum Christi, Cursillo, Militia Immaculata, Legion of Mary, Society of St. Vincent the Paul, International Association of Faith and Light, Opus Dei, Knights of Columbus	7/4/2025 12:40 PM
2 Association	Apostolic Sodales		7/3/2025 11:48 AM
3	none		7/1/2025 2:07 PM
4	Na		6/29/2025 5:37 PM

The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

5	Association	Knights of Columbus	6/28/2025 7:10 PM
6	Association	Ecclesial Movement	6/28/2025 6:57 PM

Q10 What (arch)diocese in the United States will serve as the context of the bishop-presbyterate relationship you will be using for your responses?

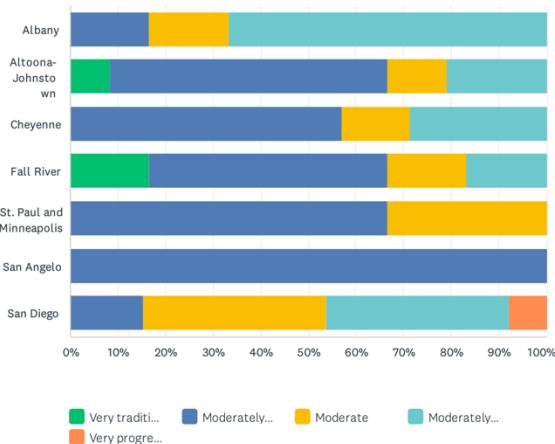
Answered: 77 Skipped: 0

▲ We're sorry. We cannot display a chart for a question with this many options.

	ARCHDIOCESE OF ANCHORAGE-JUNEAU	ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA	ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE	ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON	ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO	ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI	ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER	ARCHDIOCESE OF DETROI
Albany	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.1 0
Altoona-Johnstown	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.1 0
Cheyenne	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.1 0
Fall River	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.1 0
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.1 0
San Angelo	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.1 0
San Diego	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.1 0
Total Respondents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Q11 You would describe your view on most matters pertaining to theology and doctrine as:

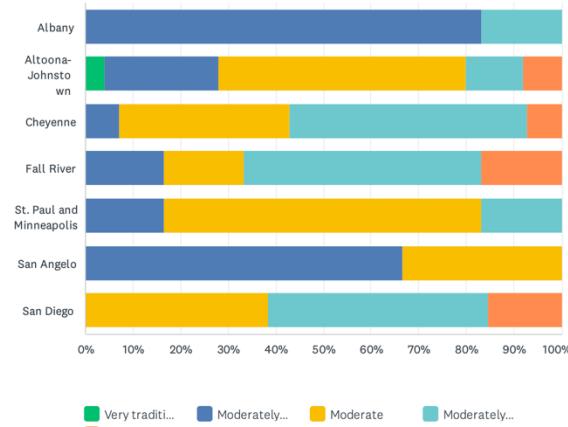
Answered: 75 Skipped: 2



	VERY TRADITIONAL	MODERATELY TRADITIONAL	MODERATE	MODERATELY PROGRESSIVE	VERY PROGRESSIVE	TOTAL
Albany	0.00%	16.67%	16.67%	66.67%	0.00%	8.00%
Altoona-Johnstown	8.33%	58.33%	12.50%	20.83%	0.00%	32.00%
Cheyenne	0.00%	57.14%	14.29%	28.57%	0.00%	18.67%
Fall River	16.67%	50.00%	16.67%	16.67%	0.00%	8.00%
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00%	66.67%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	8.00%
San Angelo	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	8.00%
San Diego	0.00%	15.38%	38.46%	38.46%	7.69%	17.33%
Total Respondents	3	38	14	19	1	75

Q12 You would describe the bishop's view on most matters pertaining to theology and doctrine as:

Answered: 76 Skipped: 1

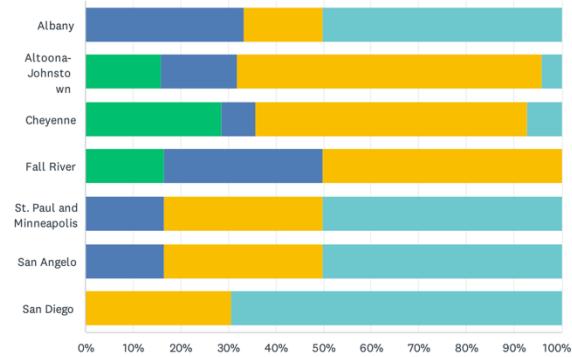


█ Very traditional...
 █ Moderately traditional...
 █ Moderate
 █ Moderately progressive...
 █ Very progressive...

	VERY TRADITIONAL	MODERATELY TRADITIONAL	MODERATE	MODERATELY PROGRESSIVE	VERY PROGRESSIVE	TOTAL
Albany	0.00%	83.33%	0.00%	16.67%	0.00%	7.89%
Altoona-Johnstown	4.00%	24.00%	52.00%	12.00%	8.00%	32.89%
Cheyenne	0.00%	7.14%	35.71%	50.00%	7.14%	18.42%
Fall River	0.00%	16.67%	16.67%	50.00%	16.67%	7.89%
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00%	16.67%	66.67%	16.67%	0.00%	7.89%
San Angelo	0.00%	66.67%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	7.89%
San Diego	0.00%	0.00%	38.46%	46.15%	15.38%	17.11%
Total Respondents	1	18	30	21	6	76

Q13 How well does the bishop accommodate the diversity of theological views present in the presbyterate of the diocese?

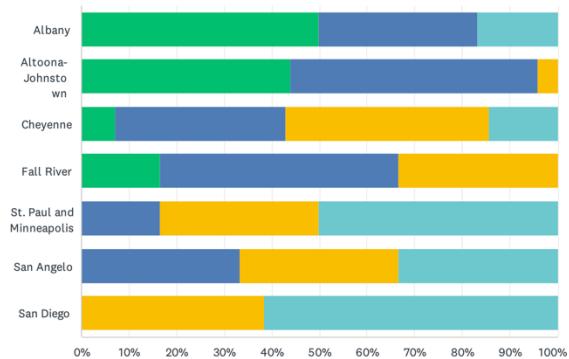
Answered: 76 Skipped: 1



	NOT WELL AT ALL	NOT VERY WELL	MODERATELY WELL	VERY WELL	TOTAL
Albany	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	7.89% 6
Altoona-Johnstown	16.00% 4	16.00% 4	64.00% 16	4.00% 1	32.89% 25
Cheyenne	28.57% 4	7.14% 1	57.14% 8	7.14% 1	18.42% 14
Fall River	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	50.00% 3	0.00% 0	7.89% 6
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	50.00% 3	7.89% 6
San Angelo	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	50.00% 3	7.89% 6
San Diego	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	30.77% 4	69.23% 9	17.11% 13
Total Respondents	9	11	36	20	76

Q14 How would you judge the unity between the bishop and the priests of the diocese?

Answered: 76 Skipped: 1



	VERY WEAK	SOMEWHAT WEAK	SOMEWHAT STRONG	VERY STRONG	TOTAL
Albany	50.00% 3	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	7.89% 6
Altoona-Johnstown	44.00% 11	52.00% 13	4.00% 1	0.00% 0	32.89% 25
Cheyenne	7.14% 1	35.71% 5	42.86% 6	14.29% 2	18.42% 14
Fall River	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	7.89% 6
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	50.00% 3	7.89% 6
San Angelo	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	7.89% 6
San Diego	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	38.46% 5	61.54% 8	17.11% 13
Total Respondents	16	26	18	16	76

Q15 Rate each statement:

Answered: 75 Skipped: 2

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	8.00% 6	3.67
Altoona-Johnstown	16.67% 4	25.00% 6	20.83% 5	29.17% 7	8.33% 2	32.00% 24	2.88
Cheyenne	7.14% 1	21.43% 3	21.43% 3	7.14% 1	42.86% 6	18.67% 14	3.57
Fall River	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	83.33% 5	0.00% 0	8.00% 6	3.67
St. Paul and Minneapolis	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	66.67% 4	8.00% 6	3.83
San Angelo	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	66.67% 4	8.00% 6	4.67
San Diego	7.69% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15.38% 2	76.92% 10	17.33% 13	4.54
My bishop demonstrates genuine respect for the dignity of each priest.							
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	8.00% 6	3.50
Altoona-Johnstown	12.50% 3	20.83% 5	25.00% 6	33.33% 8	8.33% 2	32.00% 24	3.04
Cheyenne	7.14% 1	21.43% 3	21.43% 3	14.29% 2	35.71% 5	18.67% 14	3.50
Fall River	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	8.00% 6	3.33
St. Paul and Minneapolis	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	8.00% 6	3.50
San Angelo	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	66.67% 4	8.00% 6	4.50
San Diego	7.69% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15.38% 2	76.92% 10	17.33% 13	4.54
My bishop emphasizes mutual respect more than personal status.							
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	8.00% 6	3.67
Altoona-Johnstown	4.17% 1	16.67% 4	25.00% 6	50.00% 12	4.17% 1	32.00% 24	3.33
Cheyenne	7.14% 1	7.14% 1	21.43% 3	28.57% 4	35.71% 5	18.67% 14	3.79
Fall River	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	8.00% 6	3.00
St. Paul and Minneapolis	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	8.00% 6	3.33
San Angelo	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	66.67% 4	33.33% 2	8.00% 6	4.33
San Diego	7.69% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15.38% 2	76.92% 10	17.33% 13	4.54

The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

My bishop prioritizes the mission over maintaining personal authority.

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	8.00% 6	3.83
Altoona-Johnstown	8.33% 2	20.83% 5	29.17% 7	33.33% 8	8.33% 2	32.00% 24	3.13
Cheyenne	7.14% 1	21.43% 3	14.29% 2	21.43% 3	35.71% 5	18.67% 14	3.57
Fall River	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	8.00% 6	3.00
St. Paul and Minneapolis	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	8.00% 6	3.67
San Angelo	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	8.00% 6	4.17
San Diego	7.69% 1	0.00% 0	15.38% 2	7.69% 1	69.23% 9	17.33% 13	4.31

My bishop fosters a culture of partnership with the presbyterate.

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	8.00% 6	2.50
Altoona-Johnstown	20.83% 5	37.50% 9	25.00% 6	16.67% 4	0.00% 0	32.00% 24	2.38
Cheyenne	7.14% 1	28.57% 4	14.29% 2	35.71% 5	14.29% 2	18.67% 14	3.21
Fall River	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	0.00% 0	8.00% 6	3.00
St. Paul and Minneapolis	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	8.00% 6	3.67
San Angelo	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	8.00% 6	4.00
San Diego	7.69% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15.38% 2	76.92% 10	17.33% 13	4.54

My bishop fosters a culture of shared mission with the presbyterate.

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	8.00% 6	2.83
Altoona-Johnstown	20.83% 5	50.00% 12	16.67% 4	12.50% 3	0.00% 0	32.00% 24	2.21
Cheyenne	7.14% 1	7.14% 1	35.71% 5	28.57% 4	21.43% 3	18.67% 14	3.50
Fall River	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	66.67% 4	0.00% 0	8.00% 6	3.50
St. Paul and Minneapolis	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	8.00% 6	3.67
San Angelo	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	50.00% 3	8.00% 6	4.33
San Diego	7.69% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	23.08% 3	69.23% 9	17.33% 13	4.46

The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

My bishop focuses more on relationship than control.							
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	66.67% 4	8.00% 6	4.00
Altoona-Johnstown	16.67% 4	12.50% 3	50.00% 12	16.67% 4	4.17% 1	32.00% 24	2.79
Cheyenne	21.43% 3	21.43% 3	21.43% 3	14.29% 2	21.43% 3	18.67% 14	2.93
Fall River	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	8.00% 6	2.83
St. Paul and Minneapolis	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	8.00% 6	3.33
San Angelo	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	8.00% 6	3.83
San Diego	7.69% 1	7.69% 1	0.00% 0	23.08% 3	61.54% 8	17.33% 13	4.23

Q16 Rate each statement:

Answered: 72 Skipped: 5

My bishop suspends habits of judgment to see with fresh eyes.							
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	8.33% 6	3.17
Altoona-Johnstown	13.04% 3	21.74% 5	39.13% 9	26.09% 6	0.00% 0	31.94% 23	2.78
Cheyenne	7.14% 1	28.57% 4	14.29% 2	28.57% 4	21.43% 3	19.44% 14	3.29
Fall River	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	2.67
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	25.00% 1	50.00% 2	0.00% 0	5.56% 4	3.25
San Angelo	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	8.33% 6	3.67
San Diego	0.00% 0	7.69% 1	15.38% 2	23.08% 3	53.85% 7	18.06% 13	4.23

My bishop sees situations through the eyes of another person.							
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	8.33% 6	3.50
Altoona-Johnstown	8.70% 2	43.48% 10	26.09% 6	17.39% 4	4.35% 1	31.94% 23	2.65
Cheyenne	7.14% 1	28.57% 4	35.71% 5	21.43% 3	7.14% 1	19.44% 14	2.93
Fall River	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	2.67
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	50.00% 2	25.00% 1	5.56% 4	4.00
San Angelo	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	66.67% 4	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	3.50
San Diego	0.00% 0	15.38% 2	7.69% 1	38.46% 5	38.46% 5	18.06% 13	4.00

My bishop can let go of firmly held positions.							
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	8.33% 6	3.33
Altoona-Johnstown	4.35% 1	30.43% 7	47.83% 11	17.39% 4	0.00% 0	31.94% 23	2.78
Cheyenne	14.29% 2	42.86% 6	14.29% 2	21.43% 3	7.14% 1	19.44% 14	2.64
Fall River	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	2.50
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 2	25.00% 1	25.00% 1	5.56% 4	3.75
San Angelo	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	50.00% 3	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	3.33
San Diego	0.00% 0	7.69% 1	0.00% 0	61.54% 8	30.77% 4	18.06% 13	4.15

The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

My bishop is open to new ideas.							SurveyMonkey
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00%	33.33%	0.00%	16.67%	50.00%	8.33%	3.83
Altoona-Johnstown	17.39%	26.09%	4.35%	47.83%	4.35%	31.94%	2.96
Cheyenne	0.00%	28.57%	35.71%	14.29%	21.43%	19.44%	3.29
Fall River	0.00%	0.00%	66.67%	33.33%	0.00%	8.33%	3.33
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	5.56%	4.75
San Angelo	0.00%	16.67%	16.67%	33.33%	33.33%	8.33%	3.83
San Diego	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	30.77%	69.23%	18.06%	4.69
My bishop is curious about the ideas of others.							SurveyMonkey
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00%	33.33%	16.67%	16.67%	33.33%	8.33%	3.50
Altoona-Johnstown	13.64%	27.27%	22.73%	36.36%	0.00%	30.56%	2.82
Cheyenne	0.00%	14.29%	42.86%	14.29%	28.57%	19.44%	3.57
Fall River	0.00%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	0.00%	8.33%	3.00
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	5.56%	4.75
San Angelo	0.00%	16.67%	0.00%	16.67%	66.67%	8.33%	4.33
San Diego	0.00%	7.69%	7.69%	15.38%	69.23%	18.06%	4.46
My bishop is comfortable with sitting in discomfort.							SurveyMonkey
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00%	16.67%	16.67%	33.33%	33.33%	8.33%	3.83
Altoona-Johnstown	8.70%	26.09%	30.43%	34.78%	0.00%	31.94%	2.91
Cheyenne	7.14%	0.00%	35.71%	28.57%	28.57%	19.44%	3.71
Fall River	33.33%	16.67%	16.67%	33.33%	0.00%	8.33%	2.50
St. Paul and Minneapolis	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	5.56%	3.25
San Angelo	0.00%	33.33%	0.00%	16.67%	50.00%	8.33%	3.83
San Diego	0.00%	7.69%	15.38%	30.77%	46.15%	18.06%	4.15

The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

My bishop can pause and lean into stillness.							
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	8.33% 6	3.33
Altoona-Johnstown	8.70% 2	4.35% 1	39.13% 9	34.78% 8	13.04% 3	31.94% 23	3.39
Cheyenne	0.00% 0	7.14% 1	28.57% 4	42.86% 6	21.43% 3	19.44% 14	3.79
Fall River	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	2.50
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	25.00% 1	50.00% 2	0.00% 0	5.56% 4	3.25
San Angelo	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	8.33% 6	3.67
San Diego	0.00% 0	7.69% 1	15.38% 2	46.15% 6	30.77% 4	18.06% 13	4.00

Q17 Rate each statement:

Answered: 72 Skipped: 5

My bishop is approachable and open to honest dialogue with priests.							
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	8.33% 6	3.83
Altoona-Johnstown	19.05% 4	23.81% 5	9.52% 2	33.33% 7	14.29% 3	29.17% 21	3.00
Cheyenne	7.14% 1	35.71% 5	14.29% 2	14.29% 2	28.57% 4	19.44% 14	3.21
Fall River	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	8.33% 6	3.17
St. Paul and Minneapolis	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	50.00% 2	5.56% 4	3.75
San Angelo	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	8.33% 6	4.17
San Diego	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7.69% 1	7.69% 1	84.62% 11	18.06% 13	4.77

My bishop openly admits when he makes a mistake.							
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	8.33% 6	2.67
Altoona-Johnstown	22.73% 5	13.64% 3	27.27% 6	31.82% 7	4.55% 1	30.56% 22	2.82
Cheyenne	7.14% 1	7.14% 1	28.57% 4	21.43% 3	35.71% 5	19.44% 14	3.71
Fall River	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	66.67% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	2.33
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 2	50.00% 2	0.00% 0	5.56% 4	3.50
San Angelo	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	8.33% 6	3.50
San Diego	0.00% 0	7.69% 1	15.38% 2	38.46% 5	38.46% 5	18.06% 13	4.08

My bishop "humbly" listens to others.							
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	8.33% 6	3.33
Altoona-Johnstown	18.18% 4	13.64% 3	18.18% 4	31.82% 7	18.18% 4	30.56% 22	3.18
Cheyenne	7.14% 1	21.43% 3	28.57% 4	14.29% 2	28.57% 4	19.44% 14	3.36
Fall River	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	2.67
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	75.00% 3	5.56% 4	4.75
San Angelo	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	8.33% 6	4.17
San Diego	0.00% 0	8.33% 1	0.00% 0	16.67% 2	75.00% 9	16.67% 12	4.58

The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

My bishop supports and encourages creativity in pastoral ministry.							
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	8.33% 6	3.17
Altoona-Johnstown	18.18% 4	9.09% 2	36.36% 8	27.27% 6	9.09% 2	30.56% 22	3.00
Cheyenne	14.29% 2	7.14% 1	28.57% 4	35.71% 5	14.29% 2	19.44% 14	3.29
Fall River	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	3.17
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	75.00% 3	5.56% 4	4.75
San Angelo	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	33.33% 2	8.33% 6	4.00
San Diego	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7.69% 1	7.69% 1	84.62% 11	18.06% 13	4.77

My bishop demonstrates empathy in his interactions with priests.							
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	8.33% 6	3.50
Altoona-Johnstown	27.27% 6	22.73% 5	22.73% 5	22.73% 5	4.55% 1	30.56% 22	2.55
Cheyenne	14.29% 2	7.14% 1	21.43% 3	28.57% 4	28.57% 4	19.44% 14	3.50
Fall River	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	2.83
St. Paul and Minneapolis	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	75.00% 3	5.56% 4	4.00
San Angelo	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	33.33% 2	8.33% 6	4.00
San Diego	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	23.08% 3	76.92% 10	18.06% 13	4.77

My bishop fosters mutual trust.							
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	8.33% 6	2.50
Altoona-Johnstown	22.73% 5	36.36% 8	9.09% 2	27.27% 6	4.55% 1	30.56% 22	2.55
Cheyenne	7.14% 1	28.57% 4	35.71% 5	7.14% 1	21.43% 3	19.44% 14	3.07
Fall River	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	2.83
St. Paul and Minneapolis	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	75.00% 3	5.56% 4	4.00
San Angelo	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	33.33% 2	8.33% 6	4.17
San Diego	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	30.77% 4	69.23% 9	18.06% 13	4.69

The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

My bishop fosters mutual accountability.							
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	8.33% 6	2.33
Altoona-Johnstown	13.04% 3	30.43% 7	30.43% 7	21.74% 5	4.35% 1	31.94% 23	2.74
Cheyenne	0.00% 0	14.29% 2	28.57% 4	35.71% 5	21.43% 3	19.44% 14	3.64
Fall River	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	2.83
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	50.00% 2	5.56% 4	4.00
San Angelo	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	8.33% 6	3.33
San Diego	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15.38% 2	30.77% 4	53.85% 7	18.06% 13	4.38

Q18 Rate each statement:

Answered: 72 Skipped: 5

My bishop consults priests before making decisions that significantly affect parish life or presbyteral ministry.							
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	2.33
Altoona-Johnstown	8.70% 2	30.43% 7	30.43% 7	30.43% 7	0.00% 0	31.94% 23	2.83
Cheyenne	0.00% 0	7.14% 1	21.43% 3	35.71% 5	35.71% 5	19.44% 14	4.00
Fall River	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	66.67% 4	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	3.33
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	75.00% 3	5.56% 4	4.50
San Angelo	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	50.00% 3	8.33% 6	4.50
San Diego	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7.69% 1	38.46% 5	53.85% 7	18.06% 13	4.46

My bishop is supportive during times of personal or pastoral crisis.							
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	66.67% 4	8.33% 6	4.17
Altoona-Johnstown	21.74% 5	13.04% 3	17.39% 4	21.74% 5	26.09% 6	31.94% 23	3.17
Cheyenne	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7.14% 1	42.86% 6	50.00% 7	19.44% 14	4.43
Fall River	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	8.33% 6	3.50
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	25.00% 1	50.00% 2	5.56% 4	4.25
San Angelo	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	33.33% 2	8.33% 6	4.00
San Diego	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7.69% 1	15.38% 2	76.92% 10	18.06% 13	4.69

My bishop communicates decisions in a transparent way.							
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00% 0	83.33% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	8.33% 6	2.50
Altoona-Johnstown	21.74% 5	26.09% 6	17.39% 4	30.43% 7	4.35% 1	31.94% 23	2.70
Cheyenne	0.00% 0	14.29% 2	28.57% 4	21.43% 3	35.71% 5	19.44% 14	3.79
Fall River	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	2.67
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	50.00% 2	5.56% 4	4.00
San Angelo	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	33.33% 2	8.33% 6	4.17
San Diego	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7.69% 1	46.15% 6	46.15% 6	18.06% 13	4.38

The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

My bishop fosters an environment in which priests feel psychologically safe.

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	8.33% 6	2.67
Altoona-Johnstown	21.74% 5	21.74% 5	34.78% 8	17.39% 4	4.35% 1	31.94% 23	2.61
Cheyenne	7.14% 1	28.57% 4	14.29% 2	21.43% 3	28.57% 4	19.44% 14	3.36
Fall River	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	2.67
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	50.00% 2	5.56% 4	4.00
San Angelo	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	33.33% 2	8.33% 6	4.00
San Diego	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46.15% 6	53.85% 7	18.06% 13	4.54

My bishop encourages collaboration within the presbyterate.

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	8.33% 6	3.50
Altoona-Johnstown	13.04% 3	21.74% 5	34.78% 8	30.43% 7	0.00% 0	31.94% 23	2.83
Cheyenne	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	35.71% 5	35.71% 5	28.57% 4	19.44% 14	3.93
Fall River	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	66.67% 4	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	3.33
St. Paul and Minneapolis	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	75.00% 3	5.56% 4	4.50
San Angelo	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	8.33% 6	4.00
San Diego	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	30.77% 4	69.23% 9	18.06% 13	4.69

My bishop encourages input from diverse voices within the presbyterate.

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Albany	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	8.33% 6	3.33
Altoona-Johnstown	18.18% 4	27.27% 6	31.82% 7	22.73% 5	0.00% 0	30.56% 22	2.59
Cheyenne	0.00% 0	42.86% 6	0.00% 0	28.57% 4	28.57% 4	19.44% 14	3.43
Fall River	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	0.00% 0	8.33% 6	3.00
St. Paul and Minneapolis	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	75.00% 3	5.56% 4	4.00
San Angelo	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	8.33% 6	3.83
San Diego	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46.15% 6	53.85% 7	18.06% 13	4.54

Q19 In one word, how would you describe the bishop-presbyterate relationship?

Answered: 67 Skipped: 10

IN ONE WORD, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE BISHOP-PRESBYTERATE RELATIONSHIP?		TOTAL
Albany		100.00% 6
Altoona-Johnstown		100.00% 20
Cheyenne		100.00% 14
Fall River		100.00% 5
St. Paul and Minneapolis		100.00% 4
San Angelo		100.00% 6
San Diego		100.00% 12
Total Respondents	67	67
# ALBANY		DATE
1 Excellent		6/28/2025 3:54 PM
2 poor		6/20/2025 12:34 PM
3 frustrated		6/9/2025 7:10 PM
4 antiquated		6/7/2025 2:47 PM
5 Supportive		6/6/2025 3:39 PM
6 Surfacy		6/6/2025 3:04 PM
# ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN		DATE
1 Distant		8/26/2025 1:19 PM
2 adequate		8/20/2025 7:09 PM
3 Strained		8/20/2025 1:14 PM
4 Mixed		8/20/2025 11:37 AM
5 respectful		8/20/2025 9:34 AM
6 weak		8/20/2025 8:33 AM
7 Decimated		8/19/2025 9:35 PM
8 neutral		8/19/2025 4:50 PM
9 invisible		8/19/2025 4:02 PM
10 non-existent		8/19/2025 3:00 PM
11 Fair		8/19/2025 2:59 PM
12 Weak		8/19/2025 2:53 PM
13 Strained		8/19/2025 2:40 PM
14 Guarded and poor.		8/19/2025 2:24 PM
15 distant		8/19/2025 2:01 PM
16 Somewhat weak		8/19/2025 1:55 PM
17 amicable		8/19/2025 1:51 PM
18 Confused		8/19/2025 1:43 PM
19 Distant		8/19/2025 12:11 PM
20 supportively transactional		8/11/2025 11:44 AM
# CHEYENNE		DATE

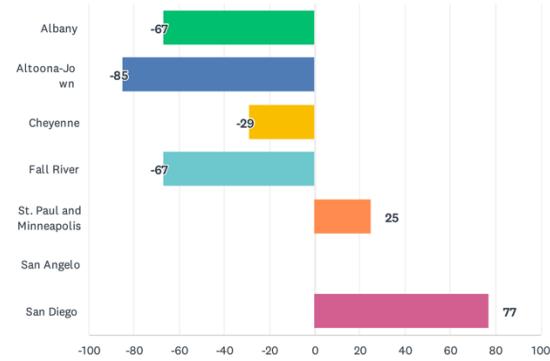
The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

1	Strained	7/9/2025 7:01 PM
2	terrible	7/2/2025 8:24 PM
3	Political	7/1/2025 5:42 PM
4	Ok	6/30/2025 4:02 PM
5	fair	6/22/2025 12:39 PM
6	Easy-going and Good	6/19/2025 6:21 AM
7	Healthy	6/18/2025 8:41 PM
8	Guarded	6/18/2025 6:48 PM
9	Commendable	6/18/2025 3:56 PM
10	schizophrenic	6/18/2025 3:54 PM
11	Good	6/18/2025 2:48 PM
12	surface-level	6/18/2025 2:38 PM
13	good	6/17/2025 5:02 PM
14	Not strong	6/17/2025 12:58 PM
#	FALL RIVER	DATE
1	Authoritarian	6/18/2025 1:14 PM
2	Good	6/16/2025 8:29 PM
3	Adversarial	6/9/2025 2:22 PM
4	supportive	6/9/2025 1:36 PM
5	Cordial	6/9/2025 12:43 PM
#	ST. PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS	DATE
1	Respectful	7/10/2025 5:12 PM
2	Collaborative	7/9/2025 10:16 AM
3	Ambiguous	7/1/2025 10:44 AM
4	great	6/27/2025 10:41 AM
#	SAN ANGELO	DATE
1	Static	6/18/2025 3:09 PM
2	Safe	6/17/2025 9:57 PM
3	strong with those who share his theology; not so strong with those who do not. (I realize that is more than one word.)	6/17/2025 12:35 PM
4	Excellent	6/16/2025 11:40 PM
5	Reliable	6/16/2025 3:12 PM
6	respect	6/16/2025 12:47 PM
#	SAN DIEGO	DATE
1	Excellent	7/9/2025 3:38 PM
2	collaborative, transparent, trustworthy	7/4/2025 12:48 PM
3	Growing	7/3/2025 3:25 PM
4	very good	7/3/2025 11:55 AM
5	Collegial	7/1/2025 4:51 PM
6	Good	7/1/2025 2:12 PM
7	Collaborative	6/30/2025 4:12 PM
8	care	6/30/2025 3:56 PM
9	Healthy	6/28/2025 7:20 PM
10	Friendly	6/28/2025 7:04 PM
11	Positive	6/28/2025 6:10 PM
12	Good	6/28/2025 5:37 PM

Q20 How likely is it that you would recommend your diocese to others as a vibrant and mission-oriented local Church?

Answered: 69 Skipped: 8



	DETRACTORS (0-6)	PASSIVES (7-8)	PROMOTERS (9-10)	TOTAL	NET PROMOTER® SCORE
Albany	83.33% 5	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	8.70% 6	-67
Altoona-Johnstown	85.00% 17	15.00% 3	0.00% 0	28.99% 20	-85
Cheyenne	50.00% 7	28.57% 4	21.43% 3	20.29% 14	-29
Fall River	66.67% 4	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	8.70% 6	-67
St. Paul and Minneapolis	25.00% 1	25.00% 1	50.00% 2	5.80% 4	25
San Angelo	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	8.70% 6	0
San Diego	0.00% 0	23.08% 3	76.92% 10	18.84% 13	77
Total Respondents	36	15	18	69	

Q21 What factors in the relationship between your bishop and the presbyterate contributed to your score in Question 20 about recommending your diocese as vibrant and mission-oriented?

Answered: 65 Skipped: 12

WHAT FACTORS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUR BISHOP AND THE PRESBYTERATE CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR SCORE IN QUESTION 20 ABOUT RECOMMENDING YOUR DIOCESE AS VIBRANT AND MISSION-ORIENTED?			TOTAL
Albany		100.00%	9.23%
	6	6	6
Altoona-Johnstown		100.00%	30.77%
	20	20	20
Cheyenne		100.00%	21.54%
	14	14	14
Fall River		100.00%	6.15%
	4	4	4
St. Paul and Minneapolis		100.00%	4.62%
	3	3	3
San Angelo		100.00%	9.23%
	6	6	6
San Diego		100.00%	18.46%
	12	12	12
Total Respondents	65		65
# ALBANY			DATE
1	All my previous answers, answer this.		6/28/2025 3:54 PM
2	The bishop is not around much		6/20/2025 12:34 PM
3	Preoccupation of diocesan leaders with myriad lawsuits, bishop's inability to make tough decisions after consulting and empathizing with everyone and then commit necessary assets/resources to a single direction or initiative, the inability of the presbyterate to adjust to his entrepreneurial leadership style after the previous bishop's hierarchical leadership style -- too many priests, including pastors, don't know how to take initiative and unite their people behind a vision they discern with them, instead, they wait for the bishop to tell them what to do, and he simply doesn't know what to tell them in most cases		6/9/2025 7:10 PM
4	The bishop is facing diocesan bankruptcy proceedings and a need to restructure the diocese and lacks vision.		6/7/2025 2:47 PM
5	Question is too vague to answer		6/6/2025 3:39 PM
6	The bishop's words are all about inclusion, connection, unity and collaboration. But he is often absent from the diocese and from the places he is most needed. He shares his cell phone widely, but doesn't check in with priests in times of struggle or celebration, even though our presbyterate is very small (and therefore very overworked). He mistakes availability for presence.		6/6/2025 3:04 PM
# ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN			DATE
1	Bishop doesn't seem pastoral in relationships with priests		8/26/2025 1:19 PM
2	I don't hold Bishop totally responsible but we are in decline		8/20/2025 7:09 PM
3	Stagnancy, indecision, inability to make decisions at the highest levels - literally stretching over more than a decade, punishment of priests for insignificant complaint from parishioners - before consulting the priest.		8/20/2025 1:14 PM
4	Just observation		8/20/2025 11:37 AM
5	bishop lacks vision.		8/20/2025 9:34 AM
6	There is no vision and the relationship between Bishop and presbyterate is poor.		8/20/2025 8:33 AM
7	Lack of communication. Lack of follow through with decisions. Awkward encounters with bishop. Basically he communicates with certain priests only when he is angry with them. Lack of empathy and understanding in difficult pastoral situations in the parishes.		8/19/2025 9:35 PM
8	zero factors		8/19/2025 4:50 PM
9	He has little to no communication or interaction with presbyterate outside of the chancery. It has been over five years since he and I had a meaningful conversation.		8/19/2025 4:02 PM
10	Bishop cares more about doing his homework from Rome than about the priests, laity, parishes, or anything else affecting the diocese.		8/19/2025 3:00 PM

The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

11	Bishop ignites the presbyters and deacons to get involved in all different kind of ministries like prison, hospital or campus chaplaincy, and also in charitable activity to oversees mission churches in Africa and South America	8/19/2025 2:59 PM
12	Collaboration and decision making	8/19/2025 2:53 PM
13	As a religious priest, this bishop does not communicate with me at all. My understanding is that he does not communicate well even with his diocesan clergy.	8/19/2025 2:40 PM
14	We are struggling. I am convinced that our Bishop is a good and holy man, but his report with his clergy is at a very low, low. Priests feel as though they are on their own and existing without a common vision or mission. Our Bishop does not interfere in our good actions, but we are not engaged with him or he with us. I think to say we exist in survival mode is accurate. We do not understand the disconnect and that makes it even worse.	8/19/2025 2:24 PM
15	The bishop wants the diocese to succeed; however, he remains very distant from his priests - unfortunately I believe that he view the mission of the diocese as "his" mission.	8/19/2025 2:01 PM
16	Have ties with a mission parish and its diocese	8/19/2025 1:55 PM
17	We have inconsistent follow-through on transformative projects	8/19/2025 1:51 PM
18	We are a very poor diocese struggling to pay basic bills and keep the most basic functions running.	8/19/2025 1:43 PM
19	It is difficult for the bishop to establish a vision. Thus, diocesan ministry seems to be scattered among many, sometimes disparate, priorities. It is hard to discover a unifying vision.	8/19/2025 12:11 PM
20	Relative openness to new ideas, genuine concern for the diocesan Church	8/11/2025 11:44 AM
#	CHEYENNE	DATE
1	We are in the midst of a capital campaign, that while it has some solid and noble goals, the campaign feels more imposed than organic. The Bishop sees himself as collaborative, but many don't experience him that way. However, he does have some good ideas.	7/9/2025 7:01 PM
2	The Bishop has presented himself as a critic and a policy enforcer whose attention is a source of great anxiety. He employs scare tactics to exert control and compliance and remains completely oblivious to the power discrepancy between the Bishop and the Priest. He does not seem to like priests and views them mostly as problems to solve. The only priests who seem to have a good relationship with him are those who are hyper-compliant. Alternative views, new ideas, and differing opinions are met with suspicion and, more dangerously, passive-aggressive, Machiavellian undermining.	7/2/2025 8:24 PM
3	Because the priests continue to focus on the needs of the people. They are very concerned about their parish flock.	7/1/2025 5:42 PM
4	Somewhat peaceful here	6/30/2025 4:02 PM
5	we have made progress but have a long way to go	6/22/2025 12:39 PM
6	We work together as one team and one mission.	6/19/2025 6:21 AM
7	Communication between the Bishop and the presbyterate is very good. The bishop very knowledgeable, good listener and he does challenge the presbyterate.	6/18/2025 8:41 PM
8	Our bishop is very mission-oriented. The rural nature and large geography can result in a lone ranger attitude among our priests.	6/18/2025 6:48 PM
9	Trust, his honesty, his forthrightness, his empathy, his adherence to the Gospel message of Jesus!!!	6/18/2025 3:56 PM
10	clergy shortage, discouraging more "traditional" vocations, "mission" exclusionary of more "traditional" expressions of worship and spirituality, resources spread very thin and little-to-no growth in vibrancy in the faith	6/18/2025 3:54 PM
11	Bishop seems to be rigid in his pastoral care and theology. He is not open nor tolerant of other views.	6/18/2025 2:48 PM
12	We generally agree on the mission (proclaim the gospel), but we are divided about how best to accomplish the mission.	6/18/2025 2:38 PM
13	In my 57 years of experience I have felt most comfortable with this bishop	6/17/2025 5:02 PM
14	Let it be a mission church always to continue what Jesus's showed us.	6/17/2025 12:58 PM
#	FALL RIVER	DATE
1	Bishop is approachable, listens, and respects the priest. He is interested in his priests physical, spiritual, and emotional health.	6/16/2025 8:29 PM
2	The lay professionals who are often paid to advise the bishop prevent the bishop from having a healthy relationship with the priests. The rank and file priests have become dehumanized property of the diocesan power structure. If a priest says something or makes a decision that produces even minimal criticism he is likely to lose his position and maybe his career.	6/9/2025 2:22 PM
3	welcoming, encouraging, involving, supporting	6/9/2025 1:36 PM
4	Several priests asked to go on leave. It's hard to be positive when priests are gone without any knowledge of what happened.	6/9/2025 12:43 PM
#	ST. PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS	DATE
1	He is always seeking the input of the priests. He wants to hear from everyone. He initiated the Synod which tells us that he knows things need to change	7/10/2025 5:12 PM

The Bishop-Presbyterate Relationship Priest Questionnaire

SurveyMonkey

2	Welcomes a diversity of gifts	7/9/2025 10:16 AM
3	Our ordinary plays favorites while pretending to be collaborative and open. If he likes you, he will listen to you. If he doesn't, he hears but doesn't listen. A once open system for assignments has now gone dark in which he is functionally dismissing his assignment board's input and making decisions on his own, based on his likes and dislikes.	7/1/2025 10:44 AM
#		
	SAN ANGELO	DATE
1	I think the bishop underestimates the impact of our diocese, seeing it as small and insignificant.	6/18/2025 3:09 PM
2	It often seems that our parishes are focused solely on maintenance, but our bishop has provided supportive encouragement to his priests to go beyond maintenance in recent years. However, a strong vision of a clear direction forward is not always cast or adopted.	6/17/2025 9:57 PM
3	I don't see him or the vast majority of the USCCB willing to get involved in the mess that's going on in the country. "It's political and we can get involved in politics." It's also a question of morality – in my mind.	6/17/2025 12:35 PM
4	He is a great Pastor, Father, Teacher, and humble person. His experience at the mission has made him a wise and spiritual guide for us. He is a great inspiration for me and my brothers.	6/16/2025 11:40 PM
5	The Bishop focuses on having a pastoral plan and seeks collaboration with clergy and laity in forming these plans. He is transparent about the need to reach the people where they are and he encourages priests to find ways to ministry to the people without forcing the people to come to the priest.	6/16/2025 3:12 PM
6	The sense of mission is sometimes bogged down by interruptions and less essential factors.	6/16/2025 12:47 PM
#		
	SAN DIEGO	DATE
1	As it now is our diocese has in place the essential element of Synodality Pathway for moving forward. Our pastors are for the very most part on board with the principles and ideals of the Synodality Pathway and are continuing to reimagine their Parish pastoral Councils and Finance Councils etc.	7/9/2025 3:38 PM
2	collaboration, diversity, moderately traditional presbytery from where the bishop came from,	7/4/2025 12:48 PM
3	We still need to create more ways for the presbyterate to interact more often so we may get to know each other better	7/3/2025 3:25 PM
4	Knowing him for many years.	7/3/2025 11:55 AM
5	I would have given a higher score except for our looming bankruptcy.	7/1/2025 4:51 PM
6	respect for diversity in the diocese	7/1/2025 2:12 PM
7	Approachability, with genuine care and concern.	6/30/2025 4:12 PM
8	He is a migrant himself, and he came to our diocese to pursue his vocation to the priesthood, which he was locally ordained. He knows our clergy and the people very well. It is to his advantage to be assigned here as our local ordinary, shepherding the Lord's flock that he knows.	6/30/2025 3:56 PM
9	Bishop cares and supports priests, and we have a healthy relationship between bishop and priests.	6/28/2025 7:20 PM
10	Our bishop has not yet been installed, but as auxiliary he served very well as Vicar for Clergy, showing himself to be a very good listener.	6/28/2025 7:04 PM
11	Being seen as a collaborator in mission and diocesan life.	6/28/2025 6:10 PM
12	We collaborate together, priests and bishop	6/28/2025 5:37 PM

Appendix B: Interview Script

Interview Introduction Script for Doctoral Research Project

“Hello, and thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. My name is Peter Denio, and I’m a Doctor of Ministry candidate at Catholic Theological Union. This interview is part of my doctoral research project, which explores the relationship between diocesan bishops and their respective presbyterates, and how that relationship influences active priestly participation in the *missio Dei* (God’s mission).

This conversation will take approximately 60-90 minutes. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to decline to answer any question or to stop the interview at any time, for any reason, without any objection.

Although 100% confidentiality can never be guaranteed, as a researcher with full approval of the Institutional Review Board for Human Subject Research at my sponsoring institution, I am committed to keeping everything you share in the strictest of confidence and all human sources will be thoroughly anonymized. No individual names, names of dioceses, parishes, etc., or any other personally identifying information will be used in my research findings or any publication resulting from them. The recording and notes from this interview will be securely stored using encrypted technology. I am the only researcher on this project, and no one else but myself and, in certain rare circumstances, my dissertation director, will have access to the interview data.

The insights you share will be used to inform my dissertation and may also be shared in future academic presentations or publications. As indicated above, any and all identifying details that could possibly be used to reconstruct individual or community identities will be removed to preserve anonymity. Once the project is complete, all raw data with identifying information will be securely destroyed.

If you have any questions now or at any point in the future, I have provided you with my email and phone number through prior email communication.

Finally, I want to confirm verbally that you understand what this interview involves and that you consent to participate and have this interview recorded for purposes related to this research only. Do you agree to proceed?”

Central Research Question: What elements of the Bishop-Presbyterate (E-P) relationship enhance, support, advance, inspire, frustrate, impede or otherwise hinder your efforts to actively participate in the *Missio Dei* (Mission of God) in your diocese?

Reminders to Self:

- Ask about *their* experience and observations not others
- Inform them that they should feel free to ask you to stop recording if they decide to share highly sensitive personal information/experiences
- Attend to the person's meaning-making

Defining God's Mission

1. In your own words, how would you describe Christ's mission that he handed over to the Church?
2. What does Christ's mission tangibly look like to you when lived out by the Church?
3. In what ways has your priestly ministry contributed to the fulfillment of Christ's mission? Can you give examples of this from your past or present ministerial experience?

Episcopal-Presbyterate Culture and Its Impact on the *Missio Dei*

1. Describe your relationship with the priests of your diocese
 - a. How would you describe the relationship among the priests in the diocese?
2. Describe your relationship with the (arch)bishop.
 - a. How would you characterize the relationship between the priests and the (arch)bishop?

Diocesan Culture that Supports Missionary Activity

3. Can you recall any experiences you had through **diocesan events/activities** or **unplanned incidents** that have helped you in your role as priest?

4. What are the ways your (arch)bishop directly contributes (either positively or negatively) to the success of your priestly ministry?
5. **How has the relationship between the (arch)bishop and the presbyterate impacted the way you minister in the (arch)diocese? Do you have a story about how that relationship has made an impact?**
6. **If you were bishop what would you do specifically in your relationship with the presbyterate to ensure they were able to support and guide the Church in mission?**
7. Is there anything else you feel would be important for me to hear that has not surfaced in the questions above but would be helpful for this research project?

Appendix C: Explanation of Correlation¹⁸⁹

Statistical Justification: Correlation Evidence

- Each item from Q15–Q18 (e.g., *collaboration, openness, approachability, consultation*) was quantitatively scored across multiple dioceses using Likert-scale averages.
- Using those diocesan-level averages, Pearson correlation coefficients (see explanation below) were computed between each behavior and the outcome measures (Q14 unity and Q20 vibrancy).
- The direction and magnitude of those correlations show consistent positive associations:
 - Items emphasizing *collaboration, openness, and consultation* have coefficients between $r \approx 0.70$ –0.95 with both unity and mission vibrancy.
 - Behaviors with low relational or communicative content (e.g., administrative clarity statements) show weaker or nonsignificant correlations.
- Because the data were drawn from independent diocesan samples and multiple items aligned in the same direction, the correlation pattern is robust rather than random, reflecting a link between relational leadership behaviors and diocesan vitality.

Understanding Pearson Correlation Coefficients (r)

A Pearson correlation coefficient—often denoted as r —is a statistical measure used to describe the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two variables.

- The value of r always ranges from –1.00 to +1.00.
- A positive value (e.g., +0.85) means that as one variable increases, the other tends to increase as well.

¹⁸⁹ Content in Appendix B was produced using OpenAI's ChatGPT (GPT-5). The generated material has been copied nearly verbatim, with only minor stylistic and formatting edits for clarity.

- A negative value (e.g., -0.70) means that as one variable increases, the other tends to decrease.
- A value close to 0 indicates little or no linear relationship.

In the context of this research study:

- When r between a behavioral item (for example, “*Seeks input before major decisions*”) and Unity (Q14) is high and positive, it means that where this behavior is more frequently experienced by priests, perceptions of unity are also stronger.
- Similarly, a high positive r between the same behavior and Mission Vibrancy (Q20) indicates that dioceses where this behavior is practiced more consistently are also those where priests are more likely to describe their diocese as vibrant and mission-oriented.

Interpreting the Magnitude of r

Although interpretation varies by field, in leadership and social science research, the following general guidelines are commonly used:

Absolute Value of r	Strength of Relationship	Interpretation Example
0.10–0.29	Weak	Relationship exists but modest (e.g., minor influence).
0.30–0.49	Moderate	Relationship noticeable, may suggest meaningful association.
0.50–0.69	Strong	Relationship substantial; likely meaningful in practice.
0.70–1.00	Very Strong	Relationship very close; indicates strong, consistent association.

In this thesis proposal's findings, the correlations between key attitudes and behaviors (Q15–Q18) and Unity (Q14) or Mission Vibrancy (Q20) often fall in the strong to very strong range ($r \approx 0.70\text{--}0.95$). This indicates that these relational behaviors are highly predictive of how priests experience both unity and missionary vitality within their diocese.

Appendix D: Narrative Examples of Bishop's Behavioral Drivers

My bishop fosters an environment in which priests feel psychologically safe. —

Corr(Mission Vibrancy)=0.98, Corr(Unity)=0.97

1. “They’re not afraid to approach him...to be able to express their opinion if it might be different. So I think it’s a healthy atmosphere overall.”
2. “You know with whom you can be vulnerable.” (describing the relationship with the bishop as a person with whom he can be vulnerable.)
3. “I was not a unique candidate, but someone who came with a history, and he treated it with the utmost dignity.”
4. “Yeah, always accessible. [The bishop] would sit in a chair... put the left leg under [his other leg], that’s a symbol you are quite comfortable and [expresses] engagement to me.”
5. “[In conflict] he asks a lot of questions... in the sense of, I really want to understand everything that’s going on here. And what do you think about this?... even if you’re the one on the hot seat... that makes me feel safe... and inspires me to handle conflicts in similar matters in a similar way.”
6. “Matter of fact, he started now twice a month he’s available as a bishop, if you want to see him for anything, to get in touch with him. And twice, twice a month, he’s available for whatever purpose.”
7. “Every couple of months we have a Zoom meeting for all the priests and the diocese with the bishop.”

My bishop encourages input from diverse voices within the presbyterate. —

Corr(Mission Vibrancy)=0.97, Corr(Unity)=0.94

1. “If you wanted to work in the diocese...you had to work with a consensus model...[and] be able to work with women.”
2. “He’s very conciliatory. He wants to know everybody’s opinion in the room. He wants to understand the whole situation.”
3. “He consults and consults and consults... but he says, ‘Once I’ve made a decision... [I’m] kind of like a rhinoceros in the road.’”

My bishop fosters mutual trust. — Corr(Mission Vibrancy)=0.96, Corr(Unity)=0.95

1. “He’s got to know his priests... he knew our strengths and our weaknesses... so when he would ask you to do something... ‘I need you, because you could do this

and this and this'... he puts them in assignments that would help the mission of the church."

2. "Knowing that I'm supported by my bishop and that... he's invested in me... he cares about me... has given me confidence to kind of go out and to minister... to take this ministerial risk... implementing this program or moving in a certain direction."
3. "He... asked me to restart [Project Rachel] and to build it up and to kind of rethink it... I felt very able to kind of take some latitude with, okay, how do we form this? What do we do? What's our vision?"
4. "He trusted me. He trusted my integrity, my abilities, my skills, my pastoral creativity."
5. "Our bishop is fair. That's the best word to describe him... he doesn't have favorites, he doesn't choose sides... sometimes I wish he would have taken my side... but ultimately... it's fair."
6. "I can trust that if I need some help or need a question answered from downtown, it will get responded to in a timely basis."

My bishop encourages collaboration within the presbyterate. — Corr(Mission Vibrancy)=0.96, Corr(Unity)=0.97

1. "We have a convocation, which I really think is worth it. They're high quality... a big investment... I don't think guys feel it like a burden... inspirational fellowship are the major goals... that helps... across generations."
2. "Programs for priestly health and development were continually being presented, not just in convocation, but sporadically throughout the years."

My bishop fosters a culture of partnership with the presbyterate. — Corr(Mission Vibrancy)=0.95, Corr(Unity)=0.96

1. "Now, seven years in, [priests] want to be a part of the team. They want to lead the way [the bishop] leads. They want to join in this... it's impossible for us to carry on the mission, isolated and alone... it has to happen together."
2. "[The bishop would say] 'we were going to have a board meeting... You all are coming ... I'll just fix your dinner.' He fixed dinner for the whole group... he's done that for several groups... 'come over for dinner.'"
3. "He introduced a new program for the diocese... a three year program... building stronger priests, stronger parishes and stronger church... on all three levels of the Diocese... for the lay people... the parishes, and for us as priests."

4. “It’s an incentive, really, not just focusing on us as priests, but on the diocese and our relationship with the bishop.”
5. “He showed up for every day [of convocation and retreat]… he stayed… he made an attempt to stay after confirmations and have a meal… he showed up in everything priestly, priestly anniversary… he just showed up.”

My bishop supports and encourages creativity in pastoral ministry. — Corr(Mission Vibrancy)=0.95, Corr(Unity)=0.93

1. “Knowing that I’m supported by my bishop… has given me confidence… to take this ministerial risk… implementing this program, or… moving in a certain direction.”
2. “He kind of asked me to restart this [Project Rachel] ministry and to build it up and to kind of rethink it… I felt very able to take some latitude with, okay, how do we form this? What do we do? What’s our vision?”
3. “He trusted me. He trusted my integrity, my abilities, my skills, my pastoral creativity.”
4. “The Bishop… said to me, ‘I think people who’ve suffered divorce have needs beyond just the tribunal…’ and… sent [me] to the North American Conference for separated and divorced Catholics… that meeting was life changing… I learned… about the Beginning Experience Program… a weekend experience of healing… those weekends were terrific, life changing for me.”
5. “Immediately [the bishop] said, ‘You need to go to this meeting for diocesan pastoral council people’… it opened to me a freer experience of church that was life changing for me.”
6. “Not second guessing the priests of the Diocese… really empowering them to do what they were ordained to do… and that doesn’t mean you’re abdicating your responsibilities canonically… but just essentially letting priests… do what they were called to do.”

My bishop demonstrates empathy in his interactions with priests. — Corr(Mission Vibrancy)=0.94, Corr(Unity)=0.90

1. “I was… someone who came with a history, and he treated it with the utmost dignity.”
2. “He came… after my classmate… died… he said to us, very vulnerably, I’ve never… had this kind of sorrow… ‘Do you really want me to do the Eucharist for

you?"... we just couldn't pray... And he just sat with us... Didn't offer us pious platitudes. Just sat with us."

3. "[The bishop's] life's work is bringing Jesus to others... in terms of programming, reaching out to all persons in the spirit of inclusivity and compassion."
4. "He took the bull by the horns... these particular priests... were going to be excused from the priesthood. And yet he gave them... vocational counseling for a year, gave them any pension... kept them on the insurance rolls for a while. Compassion... always expressing the compassion of Christ."
5. "[The bishop] would wait till he could visit [the priest] and find him in a stupor. He'd say, [name], arrangements are going to be made tomorrow for you to go to [treatment]."
6. "When I was sick and crippled with fibromyalgia... [the bishop] was on vacation... [The bishop said to the vicar general] 'You give [name] anything he needs'... I went to a premier... program... Came back rejuvenated... with aftercare money... [The diocese] took care of us."

My bishop fosters mutual accountability. — Corr(Mission Vibrancy)=0.92,

Corr(Unity)=0.94

1. "He's taken men off the job, not for moral problems, but maybe for ways in which they did minister which he felt was not profitable... set up a team... sent them... to a program... hopes... they will be able to return to ministry... it's an attempt to reach out to the men... struggling to capture the essence of our ministry."
2. "Perhaps, seeing him handle conflict has been encouraging... he asks a lot of questions... 'What was your thought process when you did X, Y, and Z?'... that makes me feel safe... and inspires me to handle conflicts... in a similar way."
3. "When he has to have a difficult conversation, he doesn't carry it over... we did what we need to do. Now shake the dust off and let's get about the business. Don't carry that crap around with us."

My bishop communicates decisions in a transparent way. — Corr(Mission Vibrancy)=0.91, Corr(Unity)=0.94

1. "Even if a decision was made that [the priests] didn't like... [the bishop] was pretty open and honest with guys."

2. “When we were ready to get ordained, he said to us, what do you think about your first assignment?... the day of [priest’s pastoral] assignments...he tells you why [you are going to the assignment].
3. “[The bishop] said there’s four ways to exercise leadership... people you’re leading need to know what level you’re at, and you need to be honest in your communication about it. If you’re operating at level one but communicating you’re level three, people... are going to lose confidence in your leadership ability.”
4. “This was a fun one where his preference got overrided... [about installing an altar rail]... He said, ‘I really don’t like altar rails... but... okay, I know it’s against what I would prefer, but I’ll allow it...’”

My bishop is curious about the ideas of others. — Corr(Mission Vibrancy)=0.89, Corr(Unity)=0.90

1. “When he first came, he did gatherings with every group, the priests, the religious, the deacons, ‘What are the priorities of the Diocese? What do we need to give attention to?’”

Appendix E¹⁹⁰: Diocesan Breakdown of Attitudes and Behaviors

Attitude/Behavior Level Analysis: Q15–Q18 informing Q14 (Unity) and Q20 (Mission Vibrancy)

Statements from each question block were analyzed at the item level. For each diocese, statements are flagged as **Strength** (≥ 4.0), **Mixed** (3.01–3.99), or **Risk/Constraint** (≤ 3.0). WA=Weighted Average

Altoona-Johnstown

Unity (Q14 Weighted Average): 1.64

Recommend as **Constrained**, Mission-Oriented (Q20 Weighted Average): -85.00

Q15 – Collaboration

Mixed: My bishop emphasizes mutual respect more than personal status. — WA=3.33

Mixed: My bishop prioritizes the mission over maintaining personal authority. — WA=3.13

Mixed: My bishop demonstrates genuine respect for the dignity of each priest. — WA=3.04

Risk/Constraint: My bishop views priests as collaborators in ministry. — WA=2.88

Risk/Constraint: My bishop focuses more on relationship than control. — WA=2.79

Risk/Constraint: My bishop fosters a culture of partnership with the presbyterate. — WA=2.38

Risk/Constraint: My bishop fosters a culture of shared mission with the presbyterate. — WA=2.21

Interpretation: 0 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 4 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q16 – Openness

Mixed: My bishop can pause and lean into stillness. — WA=3.39

Risk/Constraint: My bishop is open to new ideas. — WA=2.96

Risk/Constraint: My bishop is comfortable with sitting in discomfort. — WA=2.91

¹⁹⁰ Content in Appendix C was produced using OpenAI's ChatGPT (GPT-5). The generated material has been copied nearly verbatim, with only minor stylistic and formatting edits for clarity.

Risk/Constraint: My bishop is curious about the ideas of others. — WA=2.82

Risk/Constraint: My bishop suspends habits of judgment to see with fresh eyes. — WA=2.78

Risk/Constraint: My bishop can let go of firmly held positions. — WA=2.78

Risk/Constraint: My bishop sees situations through the eyes of another person. — WA=2.65

Interpretation: 0 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 6 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q17 – Approachability

Mixed: My bishop “humbly” listens to others. — WA=3.18

Risk/Constraint: My bishop is approachable and open to honest dialogue with priests. — WA=3.00

Risk/Constraint: My bishop supports and encourages creativity in pastoral ministry. — WA=3.00

Risk/Constraint: My bishop openly admits when he makes a mistake. — WA=2.82

Risk/Constraint: My bishop fosters mutual accountability. — WA=2.74

Risk/Constraint: My bishop demonstrates empathy in his interactions with priests. — WA=2.55

Risk/Constraint: My bishop fosters mutual trust. — WA=2.55

Interpretation: 0 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 6 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q18 – Consultation

Mixed: My bishop is supportive during times of personal or pastoral crisis. — WA=3.17

Risk/Constraint: My bishop consults priests before making decisions that significantly affect parish life or presbyteral ministry. — WA=2.83

Risk/Constraint: My bishop encourages collaboration within the presbyterate. — WA=2.83

Risk/Constraint: My bishop communicates decisions in a transparent way. — WA=2.70

Risk/Constraint: My bishop fosters an environment in which priests feel psychologically safe. — WA=2.61

Risk/Constraint: My bishop encourages input from diverse voices within the presbyterate. — WA=2.59

Interpretation: 0 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 5 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Albany

Unity (Q14 Weighted Average): 2.00

Recommend as **Constrained**, Mission-Oriented (Q20 Weighted Average): -66.67

Q15 – Collaboration

Strength: My bishop focuses more on relationship than control. — WA=4.00

Mixed: My bishop prioritizes the mission over maintaining personal authority. — WA=3.83

Mixed: My bishop views priests as collaborators in ministry. — WA=3.67

Mixed: My bishop emphasizes mutual respect more than personal status. — WA=3.67

Mixed: My bishop demonstrates genuine respect for the dignity of each priest. — WA=3.50

Risk/Constraint: My bishop fosters a culture of shared mission with the presbyterate. — WA=2.83

Risk/Constraint: My bishop fosters a culture of partnership with the presbyterate. — WA=2.50

Interpretation: 1 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 2 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q16 – Openness

Mixed: My bishop is open to new ideas. — WA=3.83

Mixed: My bishop is comfortable with sitting in discomfort. — WA=3.83

Mixed: My bishop sees situations through the eyes of another person. — WA=3.50

Mixed: My bishop is curious about the ideas of others. — WA=3.50

Mixed: My bishop can let go of firmly held positions. — WA=3.33

Mixed: My bishop can pause and lean into stillness. — WA=3.33

Mixed: My bishop suspends habits of judgment to see with fresh eyes. — WA=3.17

Interpretation: 0 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 0 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q17 – Approachability

Mixed: My bishop is approachable and open to honest dialogue with priests. — WA=3.83

Mixed: My bishop demonstrates empathy in his interactions with priests. — WA=3.50

Mixed: My bishop "humbly" listens to others. — WA=3.33

Mixed: My bishop supports and encourages creativity in pastoral ministry. — WA=3.17

Risk/Constraint: My bishop openly admits when he makes a mistake. — WA=2.67

Risk/Constraint: My bishop fosters mutual trust. — WA=2.50

Risk/Constraint: My bishop fosters mutual accountability. — WA=2.33

Interpretation: 0 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 3 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q18 – Consultation

Strength: My bishop is supportive during times of personal or pastoral crisis. — WA=4.17

Mixed: My bishop encourages collaboration within the presbyterate. — WA=3.50

Mixed: My bishop encourages input from diverse voices within the presbyterate. — WA=3.33

Risk/Constraint: My bishop fosters an environment in which priests feel psychologically safe. — WA=2.67

Risk/Constraint: My bishop communicates decisions in a transparent way. — WA=2.50

Risk/Constraint: My bishop consults priests before making decisions that significantly affect parish life or presbyteral ministry. — WA=2.33

Interpretation: 1 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 3 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Fall River

Unity (Q14 Weighted Average): 2.50

Recommend as **Constrained**, Mission-Oriented (Q20 Weighted Average): -66.67

Q15 – Collaboration

Mixed: My bishop views priests as collaborators in ministry. — WA=3.67

Mixed: My bishop fosters a culture of shared mission with the presbyterate. — WA=3.50

Mixed: My bishop demonstrates genuine respect for the dignity of each priest. — WA=3.33

Risk/Constraint: My bishop emphasizes mutual respect more than personal status. — WA=3.00

Risk/Constraint: My bishop prioritizes the mission over maintaining personal authority. — WA=3.00

Risk/Constraint: My bishop fosters a culture of partnership with the presbyterate. — WA=3.00

Risk/Constraint: My bishop focuses more on relationship than control. — WA=2.83

Interpretation: 0 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 4 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q16 – Openness

Mixed: My bishop is open to new ideas. — WA=3.33

Risk/Constraint: My bishop is curious about the ideas of others. — WA=3.00

Risk/Constraint: My bishop suspends habits of judgment to see with fresh eyes. — WA=2.67

Risk/Constraint: My bishop sees situations through the eyes of another person. — WA=2.67

Risk/Constraint: My bishop can let go of firmly held positions. — WA=2.50

Risk/Constraint: My bishop is comfortable with sitting in discomfort. — WA=2.50

Risk/Constraint: My bishop can pause and lean into stillness. — WA=2.50

Interpretation: 0 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 6 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q17 – Approachability

Mixed: My bishop is approachable and open to honest dialogue with priests. — WA=3.17

Mixed: My bishop supports and encourages creativity in pastoral ministry. — WA=3.17

Risk/Constraint: My bishop demonstrates empathy in his interactions with priests. — WA=2.83

Risk/Constraint: My bishop fosters mutual trust. — WA=2.83

Risk/Constraint: My bishop fosters mutual accountability. — WA=2.83

Risk/Constraint: My bishop “humbly” listens to others. — WA=2.67

Risk/Constraint: My bishop openly admits when he makes a mistake. — WA=2.33

Interpretation: 0 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 5 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q18 – Consultation

Mixed: My bishop is supportive during times of personal or pastoral crisis. — WA=3.50

Mixed: My bishop consults priests before making decisions that significantly affect parish life or presbyteral ministry. — WA=3.33

Mixed: My bishop encourages collaboration within the presbyterate. — WA=3.33

Risk/Constraint: My bishop encourages input from diverse voices within the presbyterate. — WA=3.00

Risk/Constraint: My bishop communicates decisions in a transparent way. — WA=2.67

Risk/Constraint: My bishop fosters an environment in which priests feel psychologically safe. — WA=2.67

Interpretation: 0 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 3 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Cheyenne

Unity (Q14 Weighted Average): 3.21

Recommend as **Developing**, Mission-Oriented (Q20 Weighted Average): -28.57

Q15 – Collaboration

Mixed: My bishop emphasizes mutual respect more than personal status. — WA=3.79

Mixed: My bishop views priests as collaborators in ministry. — WA=3.57

Mixed: My bishop prioritizes the mission over maintaining personal authority. — WA=3.57

Mixed: My bishop demonstrates genuine respect for the dignity of each priest. — WA=3.50

Mixed: My bishop fosters a culture of shared mission with the presbyterate. — WA=3.50

Mixed: My bishop fosters a culture of partnership with the presbyterate. — WA=3.21

Risk/Constraint: My bishop focuses more on relationship than control. — WA=2.93

Interpretation: 0 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 1 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q16 – Openness

Mixed: My bishop can pause and lean into stillness. — WA=3.79

Mixed: My bishop is comfortable with sitting in discomfort. — WA=3.71

Mixed: My bishop is curious about the ideas of others. — WA=3.57

Mixed: My bishop suspends habits of judgment to see with fresh eyes. — WA=3.29

Mixed: My bishop is open to new ideas. — WA=3.29

Risk/Constraint: My bishop sees situations through the eyes of another person. — WA=2.93

Risk/Constraint: My bishop can let go of firmly held positions. — WA=2.64

Interpretation: 0 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 2 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q17 – Approachability

Mixed: My bishop openly admits when he makes a mistake. — WA=3.71

Mixed: My bishop fosters mutual accountability. — WA=3.64

Mixed: My bishop demonstrates empathy in his interactions with priests. — WA=3.50

Mixed: My bishop “humbly” listens to others. — WA=3.36

Mixed: My bishop supports and encourages creativity in pastoral ministry. — WA=3.29

Mixed: My bishop is approachable and open to honest dialogue with priests. — WA=3.21

Mixed: My bishop fosters mutual trust. — WA=3.07

Interpretation: 0 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 0 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese’s Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q18 – Consultation

Strength: My bishop is supportive during times of personal or pastoral crisis. — WA=4.43

Strength: My bishop consults priests before making decisions that significantly affect parish life or presbyteral ministry. — WA=4.00

Mixed: My bishop encourages collaboration within the presbyterate. — WA=3.93

Mixed: My bishop communicates decisions in a transparent way. — WA=3.79

Mixed: My bishop encourages input from diverse voices within the presbyterate. — WA=3.43

Mixed: My bishop fosters an environment in which priests feel psychologically safe. — WA=3.36

Interpretation: 2 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 0 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese’s Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

San Angelo

Unity (Q14 Weighted Average): 3.67

Recommend as **Developing**, Mission-Oriented (Q20 Weighted Average): 0.00

Q15 – Collaboration

Strength: My bishop views priests as collaborators in ministry. — WA=4.67

Strength: My bishop demonstrates genuine respect for the dignity of each priest. — WA=4.50

Strength: My bishop emphasizes mutual respect more than personal status. — WA=4.33

Strength: My bishop fosters a culture of shared mission with the presbyterate. — WA=4.33

Strength: My bishop prioritizes the mission over maintaining personal authority. — WA=4.17

Strength: My bishop fosters a culture of partnership with the presbyterate. — WA=4.00

Mixed: My bishop focuses more on relationship than control. — WA=3.83

Interpretation: 6 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 0 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q16 – Openness

Strength: My bishop is curious about the ideas of others. — WA=4.33

Mixed: My bishop is open to new ideas. — WA=3.83

Mixed: My bishop is comfortable with sitting in discomfort. — WA=3.83

Mixed: My bishop suspends habits of judgment to see with fresh eyes. — WA=3.67

Mixed: My bishop can pause and lean into stillness. — WA=3.67

Mixed: My bishop sees situations through the eyes of another person. — WA=3.50

Mixed: My bishop can let go of firmly held positions. — WA=3.33

Interpretation: 1 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 0 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q17 – Approachability

Strength: My bishop is approachable and open to honest dialogue with priests. — WA=4.17

Strength: My bishop “humbly” listens to others. — WA=4.17

Strength: My bishop fosters mutual trust. — WA=4.17

Strength: My bishop supports and encourages creativity in pastoral ministry. — WA=4.00

Strength: My bishop demonstrates empathy in his interactions with priests. — WA=4.00

Mixed: My bishop openly admits when he makes a mistake. — WA=3.50

Mixed: My bishop fosters mutual accountability. — WA=3.33

Interpretation: 5 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 0 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q18 – Consultation

Strength: My bishop consults priests before making decisions that significantly affect parish life or presbyteral ministry. — WA=4.50

Strength: My bishop communicates decisions in a transparent way. — WA=4.17

Strength: My bishop is supportive during times of personal or pastoral crisis. — WA=4.00

Strength: My bishop fosters an environment in which priests feel psychologically safe. — WA=4.00

Strength: My bishop encourages collaboration within the presbyterate. — WA=4.00

Mixed: My bishop encourages input from diverse voices within the presbyterate. — WA=3.83

Interpretation: 5 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 0 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

St. Paul and Minneapolis

Unity (Q14 Weighted Average): 4.17

Recommend as **High-Performing**, Mission-Oriented (Q20 Weighted Average): 25.00

Q15 – Collaboration

Mixed: My bishop views priests as collaborators in ministry. — WA=3.83

Mixed: My bishop prioritizes the mission over maintaining personal authority. — WA=3.67

Mixed: My bishop fosters a culture of partnership with the presbyterate. — WA=3.67

Mixed: My bishop fosters a culture of shared mission with the presbyterate. — WA=3.67

Mixed: My bishop demonstrates genuine respect for the dignity of each priest. — WA=3.50

Mixed: My bishop emphasizes mutual respect more than personal status. — WA=3.33

Mixed: My bishop focuses more on relationship than control. — WA=3.33

Interpretation: 0 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 0 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q16 – Openness

Strength: My bishop is open to new ideas. — WA=4.75

Strength: My bishop is curious about the ideas of others. — WA=4.75

Strength: My bishop sees situations through the eyes of another person. — WA=4.00

Mixed: My bishop can let go of firmly held positions. — WA=3.75

Mixed: My bishop suspends habits of judgment to see with fresh eyes. — WA=3.25

Mixed: My bishop is comfortable with sitting in discomfort. — WA=3.25

Mixed: My bishop can pause and lean into stillness. — WA=3.25

Interpretation: 3 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 0 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q17 – Approachability

Strength: My bishop “humbly” listens to others. — WA=4.75

Strength: My bishop supports and encourages creativity in pastoral ministry. — WA=4.75

Strength: My bishop demonstrates empathy in his interactions with priests. — WA=4.00

Strength: My bishop fosters mutual trust. — WA=4.00

Strength: My bishop fosters mutual accountability. — WA=4.00

Mixed: My bishop is approachable and open to honest dialogue with priests. — WA=3.75

Mixed: My bishop openly admits when he makes a mistake. — WA=3.50

Interpretation: 5 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 0 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q18 – Consultation

Strength: My bishop consults priests before making decisions that significantly affect parish life or presbyteral ministry. — WA=4.50

Strength: My bishop encourages collaboration within the presbyterate. — WA=4.50

Strength: My bishop is supportive during times of personal or pastoral crisis. — WA=4.25

Strength: My bishop communicates decisions in a transparent way. — WA=4.00

Strength: My bishop fosters an environment in which priests feel psychologically safe. — WA=4.00

Strength: My bishop encourages input from diverse voices within the presbyterate. — WA=4.00

Interpretation: 6 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 0 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

San Diego

Unity (Q14 Weighted Average): 4.62

Recommend as **High-Performing**, Mission-Oriented (Q20 Weighted Average): 76.92

Q15 – Collaboration

Strength: My bishop views priests as collaborators in ministry. — WA=4.54

Strength: My bishop demonstrates genuine respect for the dignity of each priest. — WA=4.54

Strength: My bishop emphasizes mutual respect more than personal status. — WA=4.54

Strength: My bishop fosters a culture of partnership with the presbyterate. — WA=4.54

Strength: My bishop fosters a culture of shared mission with the presbyterate. — WA=4.46

Strength: My bishop prioritizes the mission over maintaining personal authority. — WA=4.31

Strength: My bishop focuses more on relationship than control. — WA=4.23

Interpretation: 7 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 0 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q16 – Openness

Strength: My bishop is open to new ideas. — WA=4.69

Strength: My bishop is curious about the ideas of others. — WA=4.46

Strength: My bishop suspends habits of judgment to see with fresh eyes. — WA=4.23

Strength: My bishop can let go of firmly held positions. — WA=4.15

Strength: My bishop is comfortable with sitting in discomfort. — WA=4.15

Strength: My bishop sees situations through the eyes of another person. — WA=4.00

Strength: My bishop can pause and lean into stillness. — WA=4.00

Interpretation: 7 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 0 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q17 – Approachability

Strength: My bishop is approachable and open to honest dialogue with priests. — WA=4.77

Strength: My bishop supports and encourages creativity in pastoral ministry. — WA=4.77

Strength: My bishop demonstrates empathy in his interactions with priests. — WA=4.77

Strength: My bishop fosters mutual trust. — WA=4.69

Strength: My bishop “humbly” listens to others. — WA=4.58

Strength: My bishop fosters mutual accountability. — WA=4.38

Strength: My bishop openly admits when he makes a mistake. — WA=4.08

Interpretation: 7 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 0 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Q18 – Consultation

Strength: My bishop is supportive during times of personal or pastoral crisis. — WA=4.69

Strength: My bishop encourages collaboration within the presbyterate. — WA=4.69

Strength: My bishop fosters an environment in which priests feel psychologically safe. — WA=4.54

Strength: My bishop encourages input from diverse voices within the presbyterate. — WA=4.54

Strength: My bishop consults priests before making decisions that significantly affect parish life or presbyteral ministry. — WA=4.46

Strength: My bishop communicates decisions in a transparent way. — WA=4.38

Interpretation: 6 strengths ≥ 4.0 ; 0 constraints ≤ 3.0 . These item scores help explain the diocese's Unity (Q14) and Vibrancy (Q20) above.

Bibliography

Ackoff, Russell L. *The Democratic Corporation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994. Quoted in Peter S. DeLisi, *Strategic Leadership and Systems Thinking*. New York: Routledge, 2021.

Battilana, Julie, and Tiziana Casciaro. *Power, for All: How It Really Works and Why It's Everyone's Business*. S.L.: Piatkus Books, 2023.

Benedict XVI. "Apostolic Journey to Germany: Meeting with Catholics Engaged in the Life of the Church and Society Gathered in the Konzerthaus (Freiburg Im Breisgau, 25 September 2011) | BENEDICT XVI." www.vatican.va, September 25, 2011. https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2011/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110925_catholics-freiburg.html.

———. "Inauguration of the Ecclesial Convention of the Diocese of Rome at the Basilica of Saint John Lateran (May 26, 2009) | BENEDICT XVI." www.vatican.va, May 26, 2009. https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2009/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20090526_convegno-diocesi-rm.html.

Bevans, Stephen. *Community of Missionary Disciples: The Continuing Creation of the Church*. Kindle. American Society of Missiology, 2024.

Brenan, Megan. "U.S. Catholics' Faith in Clergy Is Shaken." Gallup.com, January 11, 2019. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/245858/catholics-faith-clergy-shaken.aspx>.

Bridges, William. *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*. 3rd ed. Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2009.

Capra, Fritjof. *The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture*. London: Fontana. 1982. Quoted in Peter S. DeLisi, *Strategic Leadership and Systems Thinking*. New York: Routledge, 2021.

Center for the Applied Research in the Apostolate. "Frequently Requested Church Statistics." Center for the Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2025. <https://cara.georgetown.edu/faqs>.

Christian, Gina. "Pew: US Christianity Downturn Leveling, but Catholics Suffer 'Greatest Net Losses.'" *Our Sunday Visitor*, February 27, 2025.

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/news-commentary/pew-us-christianity-downturn-leveling-but-catholics-suffer-greatest-net-losses/>.

Codd, Anne. "Priesthood Today within Evolving Church Structures." In *Priesthood Today: Ministry in a Changing Church*, edited by Eamon Conway, 120–30. Dublin, Ireland: Veritas Publications, 2013.

Colberg, Kristin M, and Jos Moons, SJ. *The Future of Synodality: How We Move Forward from Here*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2025.

Connolly, Noel. "Ad Gentes to Evangelii Gaudium: Mission's Move to the Centre." *The Australasian Catholic Record* 92, no. 4 (October 2015): 387–402.

Covey, Stephen M R, and Rebecca R Merrill. *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything*. New York: Free Press, 2006.

Duffy, Eugene, and Eddie Molloy. "Developing a Culture of Accountability in the Church: Learning from Other Organisations." Edited by John A. Renken. *Studia Canonica: A Canadian Canon Law Review* 56, no. 2 (2022): 547–67.

Feltman, Charles. *The Thin Book of Trust: An Essential Primer for Building Trust at Work*. 3rd ed. 2008. Reprint, Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2024.

Flannery, Austin, ed. *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents*. Northport, New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1996.

Flipper, Joseph S. "The Time of Encounter in the Political Theology of Pope Francis." In *Pope Francis and the Event of Encounter*, edited by John C. Cavadini and Donald Wallenfang, location 5655-6326, Kindle. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2018.

Francis. "Evangelii Gaudium." www.vatican.va, November 24, 2013.
https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

_____. "Holy Thursday Homily." Presented at the Chrism Mass, March 28, 2013.
https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130328_messa-crismale.html.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos. 50th Anniversary Edition. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018.

Gaillardetz, Richard R. “The Chimera of a ‘Deinstitutionalized Church’: Social Structure Analysis as a Path to Institutional Church Reform.” *Theological Studies* 83, no. 2 (June 1, 2022): 219–44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00405639221091289>.

Gaillardetz, Richard R. ““The Office of the Bishop within the Communio Ecclesiarum: Insights from the Ecclesiology of Jean-Marie Tillard.”” *Science et Esprit*, no. 61 (2009): 175–94. <https://richardgaillardetz.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/tillard-4.pdf>.

———. “The Pope and Bishops: Collegiality in Service of Catholicity.” *C21 Resources* Fall (2013): 8–10. <https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/top/church21/pdf/BC-Share/2013-Fall-Resource-BCShare.pdf>.

Gregory, Wilton D. “Father, Brother, Friend: Bishop-Priest Relationships.” *C21 Resources* Fall (2013): 12–13. <https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/top/church21/pdf/BC-Share/2013-Fall-Resource-BCShare.pdf>.

Harari, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*. Random House UK, 2014.

Heifitz, Ronald A, and Marty Linsky. *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Review Press, 2002.

International Theological Commission. “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church (2 March 2018).” www.vatican.va. Accessed September 7, 2025. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_en.html#.

Irvin, Dale T, and Scott W Sunquist. *History of the World Christian Movement: Earliest Christianity to 1453*. 8th ed. Vol. 1. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2001.

John Paul II. “Novo Millennio Ineunte (6 January 2001) | John Paul II.” www.vatican.va, January 6, 2001. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20010106_novo-millennio-ineunte.html.

———. “Pastores Gregis (October 16, 2003) | John Paul II.” [Vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va), October 15, 2003. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_20031016_pastores-gregis.html.

———. “Redemptoris Missio (7 December 1990) | John Paul II.” [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html), n.d. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html.

Joubert, S. “Not by Order, nor by Dialogue: The Metanoetic Presence of the Kingdom of God in a Fluid New World and Church.” *Acta Theologica* 33, no. 1 (August 21, 2013): 114–34. <https://doi.org/10.4314/actat.v33i1.6>.

Luciani, Rafael. *Synodality: A New Way of Proceeding in the Church*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2022.

Mallon, James. *Divine Renovation beyond the Parish*. Frederick, Maryland: The Word Among Us Press, 2020.

Mintzberg, Henry. *Understanding Organizations-Finally!: Structure in Sevens*. [S.l.]: Berrett-Koehler, 2023.

Noceti, Serena. *Reforming the Church: A Synodal Way of Proceeding*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2023.

Osborne, Kenan B. *Orders and Ministry*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2006.

———. *Priesthood: A History of Ordained Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church*. Eugene, Or.: Wipf And Stock, 2003.

Podsakoff, Philip M., Scott B. MacKenzie, Robert H. Moorman, and Richard Fetter. “Transformational Leader Behaviors and Their Effects on Followers’ Trust in Leader, Satisfaction, and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors.” *The Leadership Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (June 1990): 107–42. [https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843\(90\)90009-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(90)90009-7).

Pottmeyer, Hermann J. “The Episcopacy.” In *The Gift of the Church*, edited by Peter C. Phan, 337–53. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2000.

Ruth, Seán. “Realising Leadership Potential.” In *Priesthood Today: Ministry in a Changing Church*, edited by Eamon Conway, 245–54. Dublin, Ireland: Veritas Publications, 2013.

Scharmer, C Otto. *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*. 2nd ed. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2016.

Scharmer, C Otto and Katrin Kaufer. *Presencing: 7 Practices for Transforming Self, Society, and Business*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2025.

Scharmer, C. Otto. *The Essentials of Theory U: Core Principles and Applications*. Oakland, Ca: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2018.

Schein, Edgar H. *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. 5th ed. Hoboken, New Jersey Wiley, 2017.

Schickendantz, Carlos. “The Bishop Is Never Seen as Accountable before His Church.” In *Studia Canonica: A Canadian Canon Law Review*, edited by John A. Renken, 56:395–412. Ottawa, Canada: Faculty of Canon Law of Saint Paul University, 2022.

Schoorman, F. David, Roger C. Mayer, and James H. Davis. “An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust: Past, Present, and Future.” *The Academy of Management Review* 32, no. 2 (March 2007): 344–54. <https://doi.org/10.2307/258792>.

Second Vatican Council. “Ad Gentes.” www.vatican.va, December 7, 1965.
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html.

———. “Christus Dominus.” www.vatican.va, October 28, 1965.
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/ii_decree_19651028_christus-dominus_en.html.

———. “Gaudium et Spes.” www.vatican.va, December 7, 1965.
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

———. “Lumen Gentium.” Vatican, November 21, 1964.
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

———. “Presbyterorum Ordinis.” www.vatican.va, December 7, 1965.
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/ii_decree_19651207_presbyterorum-ordinis_en.html.

Senge, Peter M. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday, 1990.

Simons, Tony. “Behavioral Integrity: The Perceived Alignment between Managers’ Words and Deeds as a Research Focus.” *Organization Science* 13, no. 1 (February 2002): 18–35. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.13.1.18.543>.

Todd, Norman. "Metanoia and Transformation I: Godly Organization with Servant Leaders." *The Way* 53, no. 1 (January 2013): 23–38.

Uhl-Bien, Mary. *Complexity Leadership, Part 1: Conceptual Foundations*. Edited by R Marion. Charlotte, Nc: Iap/Information Age Publ., C, 2008.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. "The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults." Magnificat.net. Magnificat, 2024.
<https://bookstore.magnificat.net/pub/media/flipbook/OCIA-USCCB-Web/4/>.

Vaidyanathan, Brandon, Stephen Cranney, Stephen P. White, and Sara Perla. "Morale, Leadership, and Pastoral Priorities: Highlights from the 2025 National Study of Catholic Priests." Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, October 2025.

Vaidyanathan, Brandon, Christopher Jacobi, Chelsea Kelly, Stephen White, and Sara Perla. "Well-Being, Trust, and Policy in a Time of Crisis: Highlights from the National Study of Catholic Priests." *The Catholic Project*, October 2022.
<https://catholicproject.catholic.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Catholic-Project-Final.pdf>.

Walsh, Willie. "The Relationship between Bishop and Priest." In *Priesthood Today: Ministry in a Changing Church*, edited by Eamon Conway. Dublin, Ireland: Veritas Publications, 2013.

Wood, Susan K. "Presbyteral Identity within Parish Identity." In *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood*, edited by Susan K. Wood, 175–94. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2003.

XVI General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission Final Document," October 26, 2024.
https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale.pdf.

Peter A. Denio

Vita

Personal Information

Date of Birth: October 30, 1974

Education

Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry
Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA

Master of Public Administration, Non-Profit Management
Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ

Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies
Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ

Professional Experience

Senior Program Manager
Leadership Roundtable, Washington, D.C.

Pastoral Associate
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Ridgewood, NJ

Director of Special Projects
RENEW International, Plainfield, NJ

Director of Pastoral Services & Catholic Common Ground Initiative
National Pastoral Life Center, New York, NY

Pastoral Associate
Church of the Presentation, Upper Saddle River, NJ