
Transitioning to a Purpose-Driven Church

By Father William Cosgrove

In the course of the past century the Church has experienced many diverse movements of the Holy Spirit. These movements have been viewed as the foundation and source of the renewal we are experiencing in the Church today. In the early decades of the twentieth century we first experienced the “biblical movement” and then the “liturgical movement” The great pioneers of these movements chartered the road that eventually set the stage for the Second Vatican Council. After the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council “renewal movements” flourished in the church. Cursillo, Marriage Encounter Charismatic Renewal, Foculare, Opus Dei, Comunione e Liberazione etc—all represented the gentle moves of the Spirit; proving that the church was “semper reformanda”.

Upon reflection and historical hindsight one can see how each of these movements have brought the Church to a critical crossroads. There seems to be a new wave of the Spirit rising in the church, challenging all Christian churches to reevaluate their purpose and mission. This “movement” (for want of a better word) is more commonly known in America as

the “purpose driven church movement.” The Spirit seems to be challenging the church as a whole to “re-vision itself”, and in doing so, being renewed and reinvigorated. The central question seems to be this: How can we lead the transition from the church we are to the church we want to be?

One of the most popular books in the past two years, being read by Christians of all denominations is “The Purpose Driven Life” by Rick Warren, the pastor of Saddleback Church in Southern California. This book and its companion “The Purpose Driven Church” give the reader a clear outline of the five purposes for which God created you. .These five purposes are also the same purposes that should “drive” every church.

Rick Warren bases his PD model on solid biblical principles. He makes no secret about the fact that his model is not his unique invention.. These biblical principles are universal and eternal. They can work in all denominations, in small and large congregations alike.. Many pastors are now looking at the PD model and asking the question: how can we incorporate the principles while at the same time respecting the theology, history and doctrinal teaching of each church.

Of all the myths surrounding the purpose driven model of ministry, perhaps none are more prevalent than the myth that becoming purpose driven means becoming a clone of Rick Warren and Saddleback Church. Even though Rick has said he has no interest in producing clones of Saddleback, many still associate purpose driven with laid back, Southern California style seeker-sensitive rock music blaring worship services oozing with Baptist theology.

Churches fear adopting the PD model means surrendering their unique identity and becoming something they never wanted to be. Bethlehem Lutheran and thousands of churches around the world and across the denominational spectrum show this isn’t the case.

“ God has a custom ministry for every church. Your church has a unique thumbprint that God has given it”, Rick writes in his “Purpose Driven Church”. Churches do not have to choose between maintaining that thumbprint and incorporating God’s five purposes into their church life. The two can go hand in hand when the church’s leadership pays attention to several details.

First, Know Thyself

Every congregation has historical and theological distinctives that make them who they are. One should be careful to

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Dear Friends of the Priesthood

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Newsletter material from all Fraternity members is gratefully accepted!

In the last few weeks we have been having planning meetings in our parish as we try to see how we are to proceed for the next year. There are many good things that we can do but we need to keep in the mind that God has a plan for us. We are not simply alone but the Lord is with us to help us and to guide us.

Gathered with our Youth Group last night we talked about the excitement that can grasp us when we are trying to discern how the Lord is calling us to serve Him. Even at their young age God has a plan for them not only in the future but right here and now. Even as young teens the Lord is calling them.

The call of God does not begin at a certain age or end at a certain age. The Lord is always calling us to serve Him in different ways. Sometimes we can feel that we are too old, or too weak, or not bright enough or not holy enough to serve the Lord. We need to remember that it is not that we chosen the Lord but that the Lord has chosen us. It is God's choice to call us and to have us serve Him.

As priests we are blessed to serve the Lord in a very special way; not only by what we do, but by the very way that we live our lives. We are called to help others see the all-sufficiency of God. We voluntarily choose to leave other good things behind so that we can be possessed by God.

As wonderful as that sounds in theory, at times it can be very difficult. But as I found myself telling our youth last night, the Lord will never call us to do anything that He does not give us the grace to do. The Lord will not be outdone in his generosity to us or the grace that He offers to us.

That grace can come in many different ways. Often it will come through the people the Lord places in our lives and, often in the generosity of others, that we may know or may never even have met.

For many members of the Fraternity of Priests one of the great sources of grace are the other priests in the

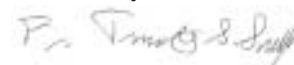
Fraternity. They are brothers who will stand with them and support in good times and bad. Pages would be full of witnesses to this truth.

You are a source of grace to these men. You who have promised to pray for and support priests through the Fraternity of Priests, may live half way across the world and not even know their name. Yet God has chosen you to be a source of grace for them every day.

God will never be outdone in his generosity to us.

Thank you for responding to the call to love and support priests throughout the world.

Fraternally,



Fr. Tim Graff



Fraternity Financial Report

One of the objectives for the Fraternity of Priests is to inform our donors about the ongoing financial health and details of the organization. We're providing this information to help communicate our specific need and to thank those many faithful benefactors who help make our service possible. Thank you!

Monthly Donation Budget: **\$6,300.00**

Actual Donations: **\$3,019.00**

Budget Surplus (shortage) **(\$3,281.00)**

Current as of May 31, 2005.

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preserve what's non-negotiable about being Roman Catholic. Recognizing our unique non-negotiables will allow church leaders to adopt and adapt purpose driven principles without losing their tradition and history.

Second, Build on principles, rather than copy methods

"The genius of PD is that theology/doctrine has so little to do with it. It is a way of thinking about church and a model of ministry that is biblically based, straightforward and focused in helping people grow in their faith and providing avenues for people to do that faith" said Chris Nelson, Pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Purpose means just that. Purpose driven churches are driven by a quest to fulfill and balance God's five purposes for the church. Worship, mission fellowship, discipleship and ministry should characterize every healthy church. In the PD model of church one should not be interested in growth as much as the health of the church

Third, interweave the five purposes with your distinctive expressions of faith

Combining historic expressions of faith and the purpose driven model is exactly what every church should do as they embark on this path. Rick has this in mind when he talks about filtering PD principles through your personality and context. Each church's theological traditions and heritage are a key component of their personality. By combining the Bible's emphasis on God's purpose for our lives with their historic means of training children to love

and serve the Lord, they are able to fulfill their mission without compromising their message.

Rick Warren indicates that the church needs to move from being program driven to purpose driven. This is a critical move in the life of any church community. It does not happen overnight. It takes many years of planting the vision, defining the vision and then slowly implementing the vision that one transitions to a new way of being church. Books and conferences are available to help historic and traditional churches transition to this new PD model.

Much of the twentieth century was spent exploring the question of what it means to be Christian in the post modern world. Now in the first years of the twenty first century we are just beginning to explore the question of what it means to be CHURCH. It is truly a time of a new Pentecost for all churches.

PADUA PLACE/ MUSSIO HOUSE: A SABBATICAL PLACE FOR PRIESTS

There is an influx of priests taking classes at Franciscan University every semester for sabbatical. Limited local housing is available. Padua Place/ Mussio House can be an option for these priests. Priests need to have a place to rest, pray, study and enjoy fraternal companionship in a hospitable and affirming environment.

The homes are very comfortable. Rent (\$550/mo. & \$50/mo. extra for garage) includes all furnishings, maintenance and services, general housekeeping, house laundry (linens provided) personal laundry, basic food/ grocery (enough for a light breakfast, snack or light supper). Various support services, pastoral ministry updates and other activities as articulated by guests are available.

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Prophecies from Fraternities

"How beautiful is unity among brother priests. I rejoice to have you priests come together and gather around my Eucharistic Presence in the monstrance. Listen to My Sacred Heart beating for you with love and concern for your welfare. I know you are tired from the burdens of your priestly ministry; a busy weekend's work. You have come to rest awhile in the right place.---with me in the Blessed Sacrament. Like John the Evangelist, lean on my bosom and listen as I pour out my love for you. Listen to my plans and hopes for you. I want to renew the Church and this society through faithful souls like you, my brother priests. If this is to happen, you need to be refreshed and renewed yourself. Let me refresh, comfort and assist you during your overnight stay together. Let me encourage you. Support and encourage one another. Your priestly work is challenging. But refreshed by grace and guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit, you will be able to build up my kingdom in this troubled age. Do not lose courage. Do not be depressed! I will see you through every difficulty and I will make your burdens light. The more you rest with me, the more you are open to see your heart beating with one accord with my Sacred Heart, the more you will find joy in your priestly service. The more you trust me and my plan for the advance of my kingdom, the more you will be blest. Fight the good fight and I will give you the crown of life. Rejoice Alleluia!"

St. Cloud Fraternity of Priests

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

O Jesus, Eternal High Priest, live in (name of priest), act in him, speak in and through him. Think your thoughts in his mind, love through his heart. Give him your own disposition and feelings. Teach, lead and guide him always. Correct, enlighten and expand his thoughts and behavior. Possess his soul, take over his entire personality and life. Replace him with yourself. Incline him to constant adoration and thanksgiving; pray in and through him. Let him live in you and keep him in this intimate union always.

O Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mother of Jesus and Mother of priests, pray and intercede for (.....). Amen.

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