SPIRITUALITY:
MINISTRY & COMMUNION

In the short time that Pope Francis has been serving the Church in the Petrine office, he has given us an example of priestly ministry that is closely connected to the People of God, especially those most in need, and has placed the relationship between priest and people at the visible center of our ministry. In his Chrism Mass homily for the Diocese of Rome, he asked the presbyters of the diocese to “be shepherds, with the ‘odor of the sheep’—make it real, as shepherds among your flock, fishers of [people].”

In the Rite of Ordination of a Priest, as the bishop hands the paten and chalice to the newly ordained, he says: “Receive the oblation of the holy people, to be offered to God. Understand what you do, imitate what you celebrate, and conform your life to the mystery of the Lord’s cross.” St. Francis de Sales wrote that the cross is the door to holiness: We are to live Jesus. “I am certain,” Francis de Sales wrote, “that your life, which comes from the heart just as the almond tree comes from its seed, will thereafter produce all its actions—which are its fruits—inscribed and engraved with this sacred word of salvation. As our beloved Jesus lives in your heart, so too he will live in all your conduct, and he will be revealed by your eyes, mouth, hands, yes even the hair on your head. With St. Paul you can say these holy words: ‘It is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me’ (Gal 2:20)” (Introduction to the Devout Life, III:23).

As the Congregation for the Clergy’s instruction The Priest, Pastor and Leader of the Parish Community (August 4, 2002) notes, “Priestly spirituality requires a climate of proximity to the Lord Jesus Christ, of friendship and personal encounter with him, of ‘shared’ ministerial mission, of love for and service to his Person in the ‘person’ of his Body and Spouse which is the Church” (13). It is the parish that “continues to be the primary presence of the Church in neighborhoods, the place and instrument of Christian life, which is able to offer opportunities for dialogue among [people], for listening to and announcing the Word of God, for organic catechesis, for training in charity, for prayer, adoration and joyous Eucharistic celebrations.”

How can we live Jesus in such a way that our parish communities are empowered to reveal Christ in our world and grow in their faith because our spirituality is so rooted in a relationship with Jesus Christ? Here are some excerpts from the Congregation for the Clergy’s 2002 instruction (12–16) that may help us to answer that question. They describe a priestly spirituality that is ministerial and ecclesially communal.
A MINISTERIAL PRIESTLY SPIRITUALITY

The ministerial priesthood, to the extent that it conforms to the life and priestly work of Christ, introduces a new dimension to the spiritual life of those who receive this most precious gift. It is a spiritual life based on participation in the gratia capitalis of Christ in his Church, which matures through ministerial service to the Church: it is a holiness in ministry and through ministry.

Deepening “awareness that one is a minister of Jesus Christ” is, therefore, of vital importance for the spiritual life of the priest and for the effectiveness of his very ministry. Ministerial relationship with Jesus Christ “gives rise to, and requires in the priest, the further bond which comes from his ‘intention,’ that is, from a conscious and free choice to do in his ministerial activities what the Church intends to do.” The phrase “to do in his ministerial activities what the Church intends to do” is enlightening for the spiritual life of all sacred ministers and invites them to a greater appreciation of personal instrumentality in the service of Christ and the Church, and to give that expression concrete expression through their ministerial activity. “Intention,” in this sense, necessarily implies a relationship with the actions of Christ in and through the Church. It also implies obedience to his will, fidelity to his commands, and docility to his actions: The sacred ministry is the instrument through which Christ and his Body, the Church, operate.

This is a permanent personal disposition: “This bond tends by its very nature to become as extensive and profound as possible, affecting one’s way of thinking, feeling, and life itself: in other words, creating a series of moral and spiritual ‘dispositions’ which correspond to the ministerial actions performed by the priest.”

Priestly spirituality requires a climate of proximity to the Lord Jesus Christ, of friendship and personal encounter with him, of ‘shared’ ministerial mission, of love for and service to his Person in the ‘person’ of his Body and Spouse which is the Church. To live the Church and give oneself to her ministerial service implies a profound love for the Lord Jesus Christ. “This pastoral charity flows especially from the Eucharistic sacrifice. This sacrifice is therefore the center and root of the whole life of the priest, so that the priestly soul strives to make its own what is enacted on the altar. But this cannot be achieved except through priests themselves penetrating more intimately through prayer into the mystery of Christ.”

In penetrating that mystery, the Blessed Virgin Mary, united with the Redeemer, comes to our assistance because “when we celebrate the Holy Mass, the Mother of the Son of God is in our midst and introduces us to the mystery of his redemptive sacrifice. Thus, she is the mediatrix of all the grace flowing from this sacrifice to the Church and to all the faithful.” Indeed, “Mary was associated with the priestly sacrifice of Christ in a singular way by sharing his will to save the world through the Cross. She was the first and perfect spiritual participant in his oblation as Sacerdos et Hostia. As such, she can obtain and give to those who share ministerially in the priesthood of her Son, the grace to respond all the more to the Church Update
the demands of the spiritual sacrifice which the priesthood demands: in particular she can obtain and give the grace of faith, hope, and perseverance in the face of trials which stimulate a more generous participation in the redemptive sacrifice.46

For the priest, the Eucharist must occupy “the truly central place both in his ministry and in his spiritual life”47 because all of the Church’s spiritual good derives from the Eucharist, which per se is the source and summit of all evangelization.48 Hence, the importance of proper preparation before offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, of its daily celebration49, of thanksgiving, and of the visit to the Blessed Sacrament during the course of the day.

In addition to daily celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the priest prays the Liturgy of the Hours, an obligation he freely undertook sub grave. The priest intensifies his love for the divine Shepherd and makes him present to the faithful from the immolation of Christ on the altar to the celebration of the Divine Office with the entire Church. The priest has received the privilege of “speaking to God in the name of all,” indeed of becoming almost “the mouth of the Church.”50 In the Divine Office he supplies what is lacking in the praise of Christ and, as an accredited ambassador, his intercession for the salvation of the world is numbered among the most effective.51

A COMMUNAL PRIESTLY SPIRITUALITY

In order to serve the Church, which is an organically structured community of the faithful invested with the same baptismal dignity and a diversity of charisms and functions, it is necessary to know and love her as she is willed by Jesus Christ, her founder, and not as passing philosophies or different ideologies would fashion her. The ministerial function of service to the community, which is based on configuration with Christ, demands a knowledge of, and respect for, the specific role of the lay faithful, and the encouragement of every possible means of having all assume their proper responsibilities. The priest is at the service of the community. He is also sustained by his community. He needs the specific contribution of the laity not only for the organization and administration of the community but also for faith and charity: a certain osmosis exists between the faith of the priest and that of the other faithful. Christian families and fervent communities have often assisted their priests in times of crisis. It is, likewise, highly important for the priest to know, esteem, and respect the nature of following Christ in the consecrated life, which is a precious treasure of the Church and a witness to the work of the Holy Spirit in her.

To the extent that priests are living signs and servants of ecclesial communion, they become part of the living unity of the Church in time, that is, of Sacred Tradition, of which the Magisterium is the custodian and guarantor. Reference to Tradition invests the ministry of priests with a solid basis and an objectivity of testimony to the Truth, which
came in Christ and was revealed in history. Such helps to avoid a pruri-
ence with regard to novelty which injures communion and evacuates
the depth and credibility of the priestly ministry.

The parish priest is called to be a patient builder of communion
between his own parish and the local Church and the universal Church.
He should be a model of adherence to the perennial Magisterium of the
Church and to its discipline.

Notes

1. Synodus Episcoporum Bulletin XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of

2. Official English translation from the Vatican website: Congregation for the Clergy.
The official English translation has been adapted to American usage in spelling and punc-
tuation where necessary. Please note, from this point on, that footnote numbers follow the
numbering in the original instruction.

41. Cf. John Paul II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Pastores dabo vobis (25
March 1992), n. 25, page 695.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.


45. John Paul II, Introduction to the Mass celebrated on the liturgical memorial of
Our Lady of Czestochowa, L’Osservatore Romano, 26 August 2001.

46. John Paul II, Catechesis at the General Audience of 30 June 1993, Mary Is the
Mother of the Eternal High Priest, L’Osservatore Romano, 30 June–1 July 1993.

47. John Paul II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Pastores dabo vobis (25 March


49. Ibid., n.13; CIC, canons 904 and 909.


51. Blessed Columba Marmion, Le Christ idéal du pretre, chapter 14 (Maredsous,
1951).

Anointing of the Sick,
Christ the King Parish,
Regina, Saskatchewan.
Clergy at the Convention

The 2013 NPM Annual Convention is scheduled for July 29 to August 2 in Washington, DC. Full information about the convention—including updates to the schedule—may be found at Convention.

NPM clergy members will gather for their Interest Section meeting on Monday afternoon at 4:00 PM. This meeting is an opportunity for clergy members to share their needs and expectations of the Association and ideas for future events—convention workshop sessions, webinars, publications, and other NPM services. Representatives from the Section Steering Committee will be present to lead the discussion and represent participants’ concerns to the NPM Council and staff.

Breakout sessions directed to and of special interest to clergy participants include:

- The 2013 Hovda Lectures on Sacrosanctum Concilium, presented by Rev. Paul Turner (A-03), Kathleen Harmon, SND DE N (B-03), Rev. J. Michael Joncas (C-03), Rev. Mr. Edward Schaefer (D-03), and a panel of all the presenters (E-03);
- Special sessions for clergy include a presentation by John Baldovin, sj, on the development of Eucharistic theology since Vatican II (A-17), by Paul Turner on presiding for various rites (D-18), and Msgr. Richard Hilgartner on upcoming changes in the rite of marriage (E-18);
- And there are workshops on The Roman Missal and Holy Week (B-04), the antiphons in the missal (C-04), and what comes next in our use of the missal (E-04).

Of course, there are all the other workshops on special topics, plus the plenum sessions, opportunities for prayer and communal worship, the exhibits, performances, Convention Eucharist with Cardinal DiNardo at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, and even time for rest!

Reconciliation and Concelebration

Sacramental Reconciliation. Participants at the convention will have opportunities during the week for sacramental reconciliation. If you are registered for or planning to register for the convention, please let us know if you’re willing to help celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation. The opportunity to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation during convention, with understanding clergy, has been an item that many of our members have affirmed in the past few years. The generous gift of your time makes this possible.

We will offer the Sacrament of Penance: Rite for Reconciliation of Individual Penitents in a room in the hotel on Tuesday, Wednesday, and
Thursday, July 30–31 and August 1, 12:15–1:15 PM.

If you choose to serve as a confessor, we ask you to bring your own stole. A volunteer will show you to one of the stations for the celebration of the sacrament, when you arrive at the assigned room. (Information will be sent to you about where the sacrament will be celebrated.) Our plan is that the sacrament will be available for one hour each day, which is all we ask from you as part of your commitment: one day, one hour. If you need to leave earlier, we understand. Please feel free to do so. If there are still penitents waiting to celebrate the sacrament at the end of the hour, and you are willing to stay, we appreciate your generosity.

Please provide the following information to Father Paul Colloton, osrs, by e-mail at NPMPaul@npm.org:
1. Are you willing and available to serve as a confessor?
2. On which day or days are you willing to serve?
3. If you are willing to serve on more than one day, which day(s) do you prefer to serve?
4. If you are willing to be available where we need you the most, please indicate that in your response.

Please respond to Father Colloton by Friday, July 19th. He will respond with a schedule for all the priests willing to serve by Tuesday, July 23, at the latest.

Concelebration at the Convention Eucharist. Priests at the convention will have an opportunity to concelebrate the Convention Eucharist on Wednesday, July 31, at 10:00 AM at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. If you plan to concelebrate, please send Father Paul Colloton an e-mail (NPMPaul@npm.org), so that the local Liturgy Committee knows the number of concelebrants. Please indicate in that e-mail whether or not you wish to serve as an Ordinary Minister of Communion. (For various reasons, some of our brothers prefer not to serve in this capacity).

If you forget to e-mail Father Paul, there will be a sign-up sheet on the convention note board near registration. We need this information by noon on Tuesday, July 30.

A rehearsal for Communion ministers—both ordinary and extraordinary—will be arranged at a time to be determined. We would prefer that you be present for this rehearsal, if at all possible. If you cannot be present, you will be given the necessary logistical information when we vest before Mass.

We will inform you when and where to meet before Mass on Wednesday. Please plan to bring your own alb. Information about whether or not you will need to bring a stole will be provided in a timely fashion.

CONVENTION DISCOUNTS

There are a number of money-saving discounts available to individuals, parish members, and NPM chapter members. As you consider how many parish members you can send to the convention and whether you can afford to come yourself, take a look at these discounts. Check the brochure or the NPM website for additional information. Please note
that these discounts cannot be combined or “stacked.” No opportunities for extreme couponing here!

**Advance Registration Discount.** The Advance Registration Discount applies to any convention registration received between March 16 and June 28; it offers a savings of $60.00 off the regular/on-site fee.

With a current **NPM Parish Membership** (of any size), the members’ rate is offered to anyone in the parish community. If a person’s name is not on the parish membership, include the parish group number on the registration form.

The members’ rate is also available to people with a current **NPM Individual Membership**; it is not transferable to another person.

**Clergy/Musician Duo Discount:** Clergy members and musicians who register for the convention together and in advance receive an even deeper discounted rate. The one clergy member and one musician must be from the same parish or institution. NPM Parish Membership must be current. **Registration and payment for both clergy and musician must be included together in the same envelope** and be postmarked on or before the Advance registration deadline. (Sorry, this discount is not available online.)

**Youth Discount:** Youth (twenty-one or younger or full-time undergraduate) attending the full convention receive a discounted rate. NPM membership is required. If a young person doesn’t have a current Youth or Individual Membership and the parish does not have a current NPM Parish Membership, the individual will have to add $39 for a new Youth Membership on the appropriate line of the registration form. A parent or chaperone must accompany youth attendees under eighteen. Chaperones must be at least twenty-one years old and registered either for the **Full Convention** or as a **Companion**.

A signed copy of the **Code of Conduct for Youth Participating in NPM Conventions**, **Code of Conduct for Chaperones and Parents Acting as Chaperones**, and the **Parental or Guardian Permission Form and Release** must be on file with NPM before anyone under the age of eighteen may be admitted to the Convention. For more information visit [Code of Conduct](#).

**Group Discounts:** NPM chapters and parishes with a current NPM parish membership who register in groups receive a discount. Registration forms must be mailed together with one check, postmarked by **June 15**. Contact the NPM National Office—(240) 247-3000 or (toll-free) 1 (855) 207-0293—for more information about these group discounts.