

Companions on the Journey

May 19, 2019

Dear Friends in Christ,

All throughout the world there are parishes. No matter what country you travel to. Parishes are small communities of people who gather to worship God, to live the Catholic faith, to serve those in need around them, to offer to be of help when need arises.

Each parish has its own structure. Usually there is a pastor, an ordained priest assigned by the bishop to lead the people of the parish in the practice of the faith. He leads the Eucharistic celebrations, he reconciles those who have sinned. He anoints those who are sick or close to death with the oil of healing. He presides at baptisms and weddings and funerals. Often he is assisted with another priest or a deacon or two. In addition there is a parish staff—a secretary, a maintenance person, often a housekeeper who cooks and cleans.

As parishes become larger it is not uncommon to add additional staff to take responsibility for various parish ministries especially in the area of education in the faith. This staff is often paid even if what they are paid is less than they would be paid for working in the private sector. Here at Saint Anthony's we are blessed to have a mixture of staff that is both seasoned and young. I rely upon all of my staff to take responsibility for their area or areas of responsibility. I try not to micro manage or be always looking over the shoulder of the various staff positions. Run you department. But make sure that the informing vision of the parish is what animates you in all the decisions you make and in the way you carry out your ministry.

Today, the way a pastor pastors his people has continuity with the past but also has morphed into a more managerial manner. He becomes something of an orchestra leader striving to elicit the best performances out of each person and blending them into something which is beautiful. But beyond the formal staff structure the life of the parish is really one of a vast volunteer organization. The pastor and his staff need to make sure that they establish avenues for hearing and processing the viewpoints of you the parishioners. The direction we set must also be embraced by you who are the parish of Saint Anthony's. All of this is in service to the gospel message of truth.

One of the avenues of information and wisdom that I rely upon as pastor is the Pastoral Council. It is composed of staff members, appointed and elected members of the parish. We meet a handful of times each year as the Pastoral Council. The members of the Council give their considerable advice to the pastor on issues that he thinks are important or they think are important.

Next week you will be asked to nominate parishioners for service on the Pastoral Council. We need two new

members and they will be picked from the names of those you nominate. Please give some thought to parishioners you know whom you believe would give me good advice about what the parish needs. And then nominate on the forms provided. My thanks.

In the Peace of Christ,

Msgr. McHenry