



"Synergy: Strengthening Collaboration Between the Priest, Parish Council, and Parish Ministries"

Webinar Series

This webinar explores practical strategies for aimed at fostering unity and cooperation among parish leaders, enhancing the overall health and effectiveness of a parish.

2025

Monday,
December 15
6:30-7:45 p.m.
PDT



Our discussion will be led by
Dimi Sakelarios - OPL Team
Member and Parish Council
President at
St. Anthony in Reno , NV





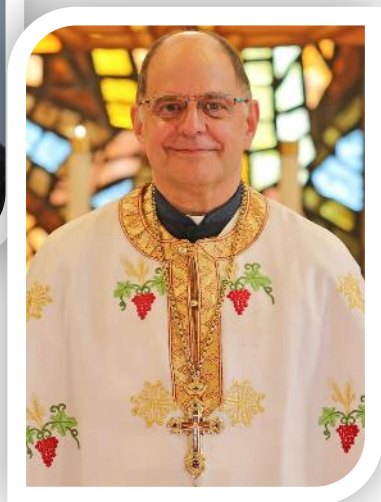
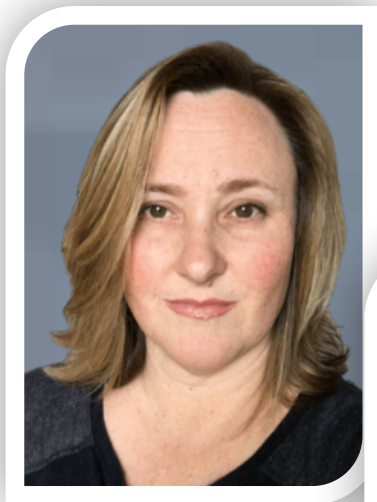
“Synergy: Strengthening Collaboration Between the Priest, Parish Council, and Parish Ministries”

Topics for Tonight

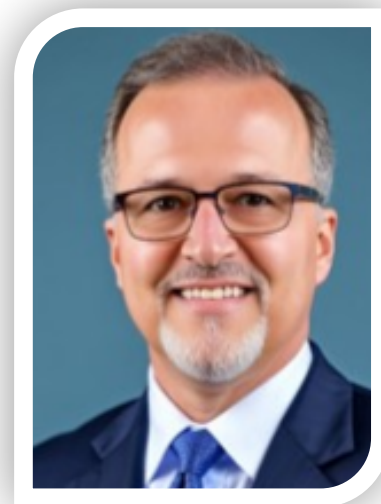
1. Opening Prayer & Remarks
2. Key Strategies for Building Synergy
 - Shared Mission
 - Roles & Responsibilities
 - Communication & Trust
 - Collaborative Decision-Making
3. Actionable Steps
4. Discussion & Closing Prayer



OUR GUEST SPEAKERS FOR THIS EVENING



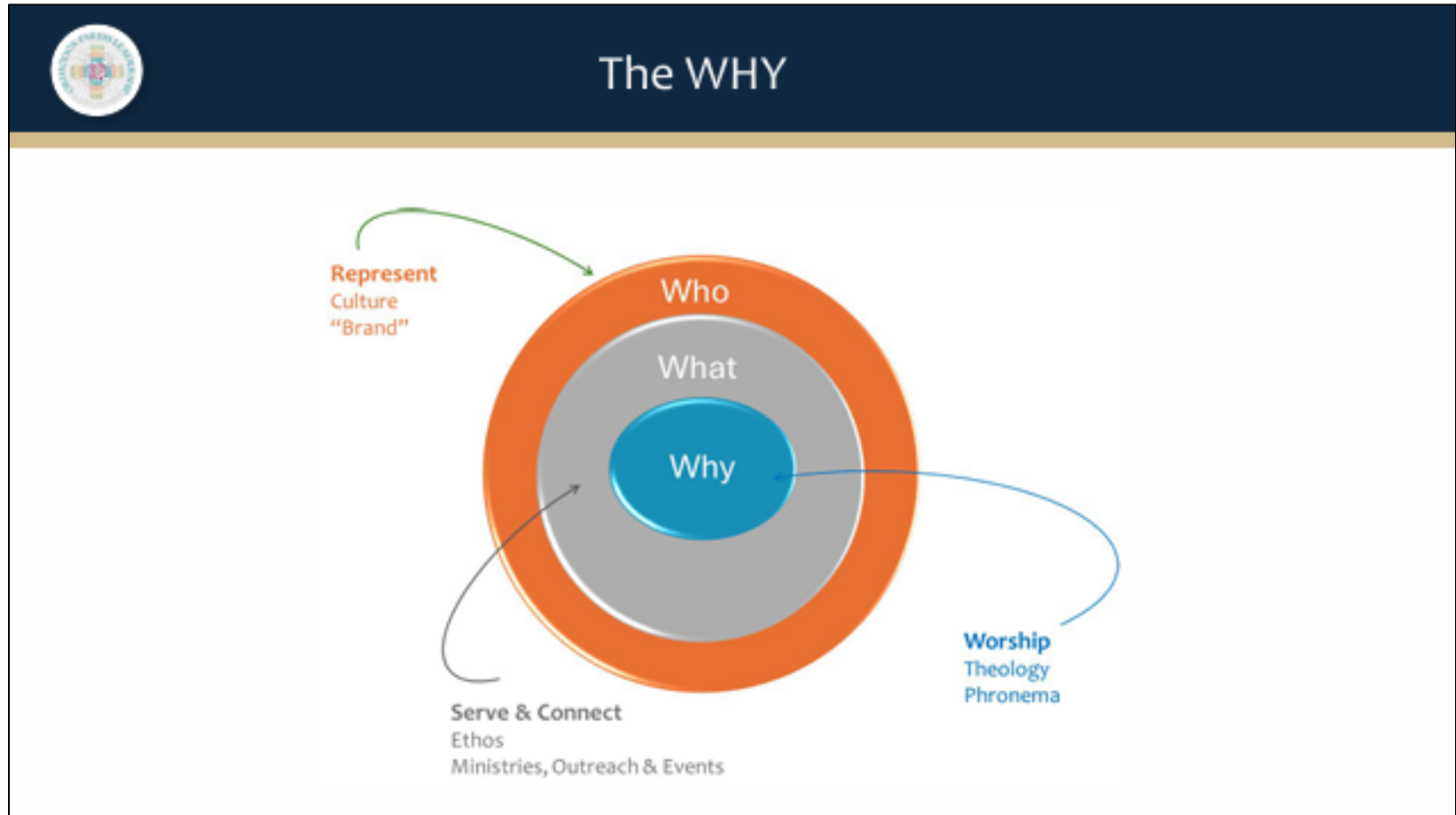
Kristina Mehas
Father Dean Kouldukis
Assumption, Seattle WA



Peter Panagis
St George, Prescott, AZ



SHARED MISSION - Why Do We Exist



From: *Theology of Leadership Rooted in Faithful Worship*, May 19 2025



SHARED MISSION - The Value Add

Unity Value of Vision



PARISH
PLANNED GIVING

01

Aligns parish
goals

02

Invites
collaboration

03

Centers focus

04

Enjoins
celebrations

From: *[Creating the Vision: A Practical Approach to Building an Effective Parish Plan](#)*, Oct 20 2025



SHARED MISSION - The Value Add



To Work Together in Common Mission

“Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,”

“If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.”

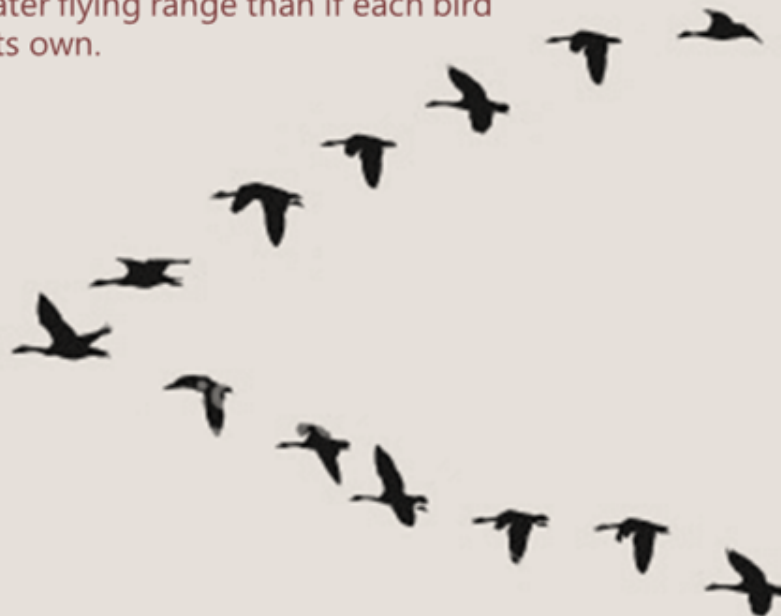
1 Corinthians 12:14; 26

From: *[Creating the Vision: A Practical Approach to Building an Effective Parish Plan](#)*, Oct 20 2025



SHARED MISSION - The Outcome

71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.



*“How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!”
Psalm 133:1*



ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

PARISH PRIEST: *Leader of the Parish. The Spiritual Shepherd and Guide in all aspects of parish life.*

- ❖ Administer the Sacraments
- ❖ Lead Worship Services
- ❖ Teach the Faith
- ❖ Pastoral Care
- ❖ Guide Parish Community in Christian Life
- ❖ Oversee Parish Unity and Order
- ❖ Accountable to Hierarchs





ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

PARISH COUNCIL: *Lay leadership working with the priest to manage the parish's practical, financial, and spiritual life.*

- ❖ Live the Life of the Church
- ❖ Work in collaboration with Parish Priest and Leaders
- ❖ Ensure parish life aligns with the mission and priorities
- ❖ Administration of Parish Affairs - finances, property, operations
- ❖ Support ministries and events that foster parish growth and unity
- ❖ Accountable to the Parish Assembly and Hierarchs

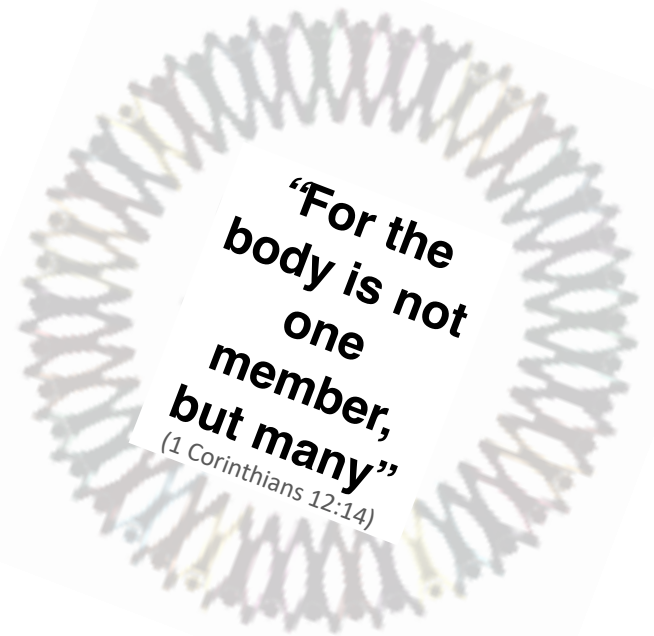




ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

MINISTRY LEADERS: *Active parishioners who, with the priest's blessing and in collaboration with parish leadership, organize and support parish life.*

- ❖ Live the Life of the Church
- ❖ Work in collaboration with Parish Priest and Leaders
- ❖ Ensure ministry purpose and activities align with parish mission
- ❖ Plan, coordinate, and evaluate the work of the ministry
- ❖ Foster an environment of fellowship, acceptance, and love
- ❖ Accountable to the Parish Priest & PC/Council of Ministries





HARMONIZED PARISH LEADERSHIP



A healthy parish council and well-aligned ministries provide structure and support that enable a priest to live his true calling of providing sacramental life, spiritual guidance, and pastoral



COMMUNICATION & TRUST

PRIEST & PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

- ❖ Meet regularly. Be consistent. Create the Habit!
- ❖ Practice “No Surprises” Leadership. Keep *each other* informed.
- ❖ Have honest conversations with care & mutual respect.
- ❖ Listen thoughtfully. “Seek first to understand, then be understood.”

~ Steven Covey “*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*”

- ❖ Handle disagreements privately.
- ❖ Maintain confidentiality.



COMMUNICATION & TRUST

PRIEST & PARISH COUNCIL & MINISTRY LEADERS

- ❖ “Onboard” New Ministry Leaders
 - *Mission, Roles/Responsibilities, Expectations, Support*
- ❖ Assign a PC Liaison for each Ministry
- ❖ Encourage direct Ministry Leader-Parish Priest communication
- ❖ Bring Ministry Leaders together for collaboration & planning
- ❖ Regularly invite Ministry Leaders to PC meetings to provide updates
- ❖ Hold each other *gently* accountable
- ❖ Establish a Council of Ministries



COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES

Definition and Details

- A Council of Ministries is a church leadership body, typically composed of:
 - Clergy
 - Ministry leaders / Co-leaders
 - Parish Council liaisons or the complete Parish Council
- The Council of Ministries is made up of members who coordinate, plan, and oversee many church programs and activities. It's both a strategic and tactical group that connects and supports a diverse ministry structure to create a unified approach to ministry
- Some key focus areas and goals of the Council of Ministries include:
 - **Comradery** – ensuring ministry leaders feel like they are a part of a team (rather than isolated)
 - **Support** – listening to individual ministerial needs and actively supporting ministry leaders in areas where they may need assistance
 - **Collaboration / Coordination** – understanding the current and planned activities of each ministry to address gaps, prevent overlap and find ways to work together for improved outcomes
 - **Growth / Change** - identifying ministerial needs which are not covered by the current structure; this may result in ministries changing/expanding their scope of work or could lead to the creation of a new ministry



COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

- Convening a regularly scheduled Council of Ministries meeting brings the following benefits:
 - Raises awareness among ministry leaders of what other ministries are doing and how they can support one another
 - Furnishes a place and provides a supportive environment where ministries can cross-pollinate and inspire one another
 - Gives us a forum to address common or shared challenges
 - Provides “air traffic control” regarding events and scheduling
 - Creates an opportunity for the Priest to review the mission of the Parish with all leaders, together
 - Allows Parish Council members to connect with and become more familiar with ministry leaders
- A product of the meetings is capturing and assigning action items (requires follow up)
- Schedule quarterly meetings of the Council of Ministries at the beginning of the year, giving everyone advance notice
- Parish Council members may need convincing regarding the value of another meeting



COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES

Suggestions for How to Get Started

- Organize a Council of Ministries comprised of all ministry leaders / co-leaders. Hold meetings at least annually – quarterly is recommended.
- Keep the agenda simple:
 - At the first meeting, allow everyone in the meeting to introduce themselves and the positions they hold in the church. Ask ministry leaders / co-leaders to also introduce their individual ministries (name of ministry, brief description of purpose / sample activities, and ministry team members)
 - At subsequent meetings you can have the ministry leaders / co-leaders discuss:
 - Their major accomplishments in the past 90 days;
 - The work they have planned for the next 90 days; and
 - Anything the Council of Ministries can do to support them in their work?
- As time goes on, you might also consider:
 - Implementing a “Co-leader” structure for your ministries
 - Assigning empowered Parish Council Liaisons to every ministry with the goal of actively supporting ministry leaders and serving as the voice of the ministry on the Parish Council



COLLABORATIVE DECISION MAKING

- ❖ Gather input from others before decision are made
- ❖ Intentionally consider parish mission & priorities
- ❖ Use discernment & consensus when possible
- ❖ Encourage active discussion and active listening
- ❖ Explain decisions in the Why

“Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance.” Proverbs 1:5



ACTIONABLE STEPS

- ❖ Know your Parish Mission
- ❖ Understand Roles & Responsibilities
- ❖ Build Communication & Trust
- ❖ Practice Collaborative Decision Making
- ❖ Above All...Lead with LOVE!



From: [*Theology of Leadership Rooted in Faithful Worship*](#), May 19 2025



ACTIONABLE STEPS

Know your Parish Mission

- ❖ Regularly Attend Liturgy
- ❖ Incorporate it in all Parish Assemblies, PC Agendas, Ministry Meetings
- ❖ Introduce it to new ministry leaders
- ❖ Refer to it often and consistently in decision making

Understand Roles & Responsibilities

- ❖ Review & discuss with PC at the beginning of each year
- ❖ Introduce to new ministry leaders
- ❖ Be consistent to incorporate into Parish Culture

Build Communication & Trust

- ❖ Regularly stay for fellowship
- ❖ Schedule regular PC Pres & Priest meetings (2/month to start)
- ❖ Review PC Agendas with Priest in advance of each meeting
- ❖ “Onboard” New Ministry Leaders
- ❖ Assign a PC Liaison for each Ministry
- ❖ Establish a Council of Ministries

Practice Collaborative Decision Making

- ❖ Use a consensus approach
- ❖ Explain decisions in the Why

Above All...Lead with LOVE!



From: [*Theology of Leadership Rooted in Faithful Worship*](#), May 19 2025