



Collaborative Parish Leadership: Contexts, Models, Theology

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Collaborative Parish Leadership draws on the experience, strengths, challenges, and insights of the long-term pastoral-academic partnerships out of which it has grown. These include “Project INSPIRE,” a pastoral team-formation project sponsored by Loyola University and the Archdiocese of Chicago and funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc., as part of its Sustaining Pastoral Excellence initiative. Another partner initiative is the international pastoral minister exchange “Crossing Over,” involving several Catholic dioceses in northwest Germany and based at Ruhr Universität, Bochum. Authors of these essays have also been involved in Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership, the Congregational Studies Team’s Engaged Scholars fellowship (both also Lilly Endowment funded projects), and other projects.

Collaborative Parish Leadership employs practical-theological methods, rooted in pastoral experience and integrated with scholarly reflection. Opening essays deal with the current situation of U.S. parishes, the parish consultancy model of Project INSPIRE, and a case study of several parishes that benefited from the project. The following chapters present comparative case studies of collaborative leadership in various settings: multicultural parishes in different parts of the U.S., parish clusters consolidating into single parishes using very different processes, and parishes in Chicago and Mexico City meeting similar urban challenges. Three authors associated with CrossingOver and its participating dioceses assess the general state of parish reorganization in Germany, and the potential of the unique approach to team leadership taken in the French archdiocese of Poitiers. The final chapters reflect on the theology of parish leadership from pastoral and systematic perspectives, and on the future needs and possibilities of collaborative approaches.

Collaborative Parish Leadership engages and challenges academic and pastoral leaders in diverse social and ecclesial situations, suggests multiple models for cultivating collaboration, builds connections between collaborative action and theological development.

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