A Sacred Calling to Shepherd the Sheep

Louisiana Priest Convention
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Lessons learned from sheep

- Not so smart
  - the grass is always greener
- The voice of the shepherd
  - even his footsteps
- Psalm 23
  - We must be good sheep before we can shepherd
- General/CEO vs. Shepherd
  - People over projects!
1. Know the Condition of Your Flock

- Follow the status of your people as well as the status of the work.
- Get to know your flock, one sheep at a time.
- Engage your people on a regular basis.
- Keep your eyes and ears open, question and follow through.
2. Discover the Shape of Your Sheep

- Your choice of sheep can make flock management easier or harder.
- Stay with healthy sheep, or you’ll inherit someone else’s problems.
- Know the SHAPE of your sheep to make sure they’re in the right fold (Strengths, Heart, Attitude, Personality, Experiences).
3. Help Your Sheep Identify with You

- Build trust with your followers by modeling authenticity, integrity, and compassion.
- Set high standards of performance.
- Relentlessly communicate your values and sense of mission.
- Define the cause for your people and tell them where they fit in.
- Remember that great leadership isn’t just professional; it’s personal.
4. Make Your Pasture a Safe Place

- Keep your people well informed – feel safe.
- Infuse every position with importance – conquer rivalry.
- Cull chronic instigators from the flock – pests harm the flock. Transform or remove!
- Regularly rotate the sheep to fresh pastures – to feed them well.
- Reassure the sheep by staying visible.
- Don’t give problems time for fester.
5. The Staff of Direction

- Know where you’re going, get out in front, and keep your flock on the move – give direction.
- When directing, use persuasion rather than coercion – show them the way.
- Give your people freedom of movement, but make sure they know where the fence line is. Don’t confuse boundaries with bridles!
- When your people get in trouble, go and get them out.
- Remind your people that failure isn’t fatal – be encouraging.
6. The Rod of Correction

- Protect: Stand in the gap and fight for your sheep.
- Correct: Approach discipline as teaching opportunity – all life-long learners.
- Inspect: Regularly inquire about your people’s progress.
7. The Heart of the Shepherd

- Great leadership is a lifestyle, not a technique.
- Every day you have to decide who’s going to pay for your leadership-you or your people.
- Most of all, have a heart for your sheep.
Scriptures

- Matthew 10:18-14 – Parable of the lost sheep
- John 10:
  - vs. 3: Sheep hear my voice – calls them by name
  - Vs. 11: the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep
  - vs. 14: I am the Good Shepherd – I know them, and they know me
- John 21:15-19 – Feed and tend my sheep – follow me!
- Is. 40:11 – Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, in His arm He will gather the lambs and carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.
- Lead from the front, in the midst, and from the back of the flock like the Good Shepherd
How do we shepherd such a diverse flock?

- **Know our sheep – where are our people coming from?**

- **Catholic Leadership Institute statistics:**
  - 4 groups of people in our parishes:
    1. Baptized Catholics (non practicing)
    2. Baptized Catholics (practicing)
    3. Intentional Disciples
    4. Disciple Makers
1) Baptized Catholics (non practicing)

- 50-60% (36 million)
- “Come and see” (Jesus’ Message)
- Love them as friends (what Church needs to do)
2) Baptized Catholics (practicing)

- 23% occasionally (15 million)
- 10% weekly (6 million)
- “Follow me”
- Win them for Christ
3) Intentional Disciples

- 5-7% (3-4 million) – The 7%ers
- “Go and make disciples”
- Build them up
4) Disciple Makers

- .04% (25,000)
- “I am with you always”
- Send them out!

Never underestimate our role as priest, pastor and shepherd...
Big 3 outcome questions
(500,000 surveyed)

1) “I would recommend my parish to a friend”
   - 9 x – Pastor
   - 2.3 x – Sunday Mass experience
   - 2.1 x – Welcoming
   - 1.7 x – Preaching
   - 1.5 x – Info easy to find
2) “My parish helps me grow spiritually as a Catholic”

- 4 x – Pastor
- 2 x – Forms me as a disciple
- 1.8 x – Welcoming
- 1.8 x – Sunday Mass
- 1.5 x – Preaching
3) “I shared my personal witness story with another person”

- 2 x – Parish equips me
- 1.6 x – I can answer questions on Church teaching
- 1.5 x – I participate in spiritual direction
- 1.3 x – I invite others to Mass
- 1.2 x – I believe scripture is the word of God
2 C’s and 4 P’s

- Care and concern

1. Purpose – What is this about? What are we about?
2. Plan – What will happen first, second, third
3. Picture – What might it look like? What do we hope it looks like?
4. Part – What can I do (my part/role)?
Millennial’s Desires:

- Authenticity (real relationships)
- Relevance (connected to a bigger picture)
- Impact (want to make a difference)

- Why is this important?
- Greatest decline in attendance is among those who are under the age of 35.
Shepherds after the Heart of Christ – the most important task in the world

Allow the Good Shepherd to lift us on His shoulders so that we may lift up His people

Thank you for your vocation!