

# Performance Development System for Ordained and Lay Ministers in the Catholic Church

## Reflecting God's Vision for Pastoral Ministry

Those who minister in the name of the Church are called to grow in the likeness of Jesus so that their ministry can more accurately reflect his life and communicate his message. St. Paul's pastoral letter to the Ephesians describes this calling as a process of ongoing growth and development:

“And he gave to some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God.....Living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ.” (Eph. 4:11-13,15)

St. Teresa of Avila states it more succinctly:

“Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”

The pastoral ministry of the Church is central to the way that God draws people to salvation. As such, the Church must assure that all components of its pastoral ministry – people, processes and practices – appropriately reflect the mind and heart of Jesus Christ.



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Catholic Leadership 360: Performance Development System for Ordained and Lay Ministers in the Catholic Church

This rationale document forms part of a performance development system for ordained and lay ministers in the Catholic Church developed by the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management in partnership with the National Federation of Priests Councils (NFPC) and the National Association of Church Personnel Administrators (NACPA). For further information or to implement the performance development system in your parish or diocese, please contact us at 202-635-5820 or [info@TheLeadershipRoundtable.org](mailto:info@TheLeadershipRoundtable.org).

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## Providing for the Ongoing Development of Ministers

The passage from the letter to the Ephesians explains the nature of human growth: It does not happen in an instant or specified period of time. It is a matter of ongoing, somewhat organic development. Development can happen accidentally over time, but it can also be nurtured.

For pastoral ministers, the process begins with formal training for their ministry in the Church; however, in an even more explicit way, growth comes about through the very experience of engaging in that ministry and reflecting upon it.

Both priests and lay ecclesial ministers grow to understand and appreciate the meaning and purpose of their ministry *as they exercise it*. The experience is richer when ministers are asked to reflect upon their words, actions and effectiveness. Reflection is most productive when pastoral ministers compare their perceptions with reflections from their supervisors/superiors, their peers and those to whom they minister. No part of this reflection is more important than discussing opportunities to nurture growth and development in the likeness of Jesus.

## Improving the Performance of Priests and Lay Ministers

Pope John Paul II, in his apostolic exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* in 1992, emphasized the importance of the human, spiritual and intellectual development of priests – for their own benefit and that of the Church. The Holy Father bases this call upon the text of St. Paul to Timothy, “I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you.” (2 Tim 1:6).

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has laid out a *Basic Plan for the Ongoing Formation of Priests* (2001). In *The Continuing Formation of Priests* (1984), this formation of priests is described as:

“... a lifelong dialogue-journey through which a priest comes to greater awareness of oneself, others and God [...] Personal growth, continuing formation, theological education and human development, all of which lead to greater service of the People of God, are woven throughout the priest’s entire life and ministry.”

The US Bishops made similar recommendations for developing both lay ecclesial ministers and their ministry in their 2005 document, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*:

“In a comprehensive personnel system, this [evaluation and feedback] area addresses regular performance appraisals, as a part of ministerial workplace practice, that provide a formal opportunity for every individual minister to reflect on his or her own performance and get feedback from a supervisor and that may include the views of colleagues and those served. Appraisal and feedback is most effective when conducted in the context of the mission of the parish or diocese. Documentation of honest and constructive feedback about deficiencies and subsequent steps for improvement is important, as is both formal and informal recognition of generous, Christ-centered, and effective service.”

## Formalizing a Process for Performance Management

The Catholic Church in the U.S. does not have a culture of performance review and management. Although examples of small-scale performance management systems are found in parishes, dioceses and Catholic nonprofits, there are rarely human resource professionals or practical resources to support such systems. Neither initial training nor ongoing formation opportunities for pastoral ministers offers a coordinated or comprehensive approach to performance review or development. There are few programs for developing supervisory or coaching skills.

The National Association of Church Personnel Administrators, National Federation of Priests Councils, and the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management support performance management to help individuals and systems grow and develop.

In light of these insights, the Catholic Leadership 360 was developed as a process of performance management and ministerial leadership development for all who minister in the Church. Such a process can help pastoral ministers grow and develop through:

- setting goals and establishing standards for effectiveness by role;
- allowing time for self-reflection and self-assessment;
- identifying and affirming their skills and competencies;
- promoting and encouraging creativity and problem-solving;
- recognizing excellence in service and commitment;

- developing skills for getting work done through others;
- providing leadership coaching;
- inspiring ongoing commitment to grow in the likeness of Jesus.

## Catholic Leadership 360

The Catholic Leadership 360 process is designed around proven best practices for performance improvement and interpersonal communication. It reflects goals for pastoral ministry in the Church and skills and competencies for leadership roles in the ministry. It involves self-reflection and self-assessment by the minister as well as gathering input and observations from supervisors, co-workers and those to whom he/she ministers. This approach, often termed multi-rater or 360° feedback, helps individuals see themselves as others see them. The protocols for implementation encourage use of feedback for appropriately reflecting the mind and heart of Jesus Christ.

## 360-Degree Feedback

People can learn, grow, and change. Successful leaders prepare for the future by developing the right competencies. Catholic Leadership 360 gives feedback on competencies of ministerial leadership effectiveness. The 360 Development Planning Guide assists the participant to analyze their results and create a plan for development. Individual development should be aligned with the diocesan or parish pastoral plan and strategy.

“Receiving feedback is an important motivational factor that can lead to increased satisfaction. Feedback is important because it can enhance self-awareness by highlighting strengths and facilitate growth by pointing out areas in need of development. We learn from the outcomes of our behavior, and feedback is an important factor in helping us improve our performance.” (Leveraging the Impact of 360-Degree Feedback, Fleenor, et al, Pfeiffer, 2008)

## Catholic Leadership 360 for Priests

This version of the 360-degree assessment tool is designed for use by bishops, vicars general, vicars for clergy, pastors, associate pastors and priests who are chaplains in schools, hospitals, prisons and other settings.

## Catholic Leadership 360 for Lay Leaders

This version of the 360-degree assessment tool is designed for use by parish life coordinators, lay pastoral associates, parish business managers, directors of parish ministries, pastoral or finance council leaders, diocesan lay leaders and agency directors, and can be used by Deacons and Religious filling any of these roles.

## Catholic Leadership 360 for Groups

In addition to individual use, this tool can be used to develop leadership teams or cohorts within the Church at parish or diocesan levels. The benefits to a team completing the Catholic Leadership 360 process together include the ability to:

- identify skill level of areas most important for success
- identify a group's strengths and areas for development
- facilitate discussion of past, present and future needs
- focus development and ongoing formation resources more effectively.

This tool could be used by a cohort of recently ordained priests, a group of school principals, directors of diocesan offices, parish pastoral teams or other groups.

## Further Information about Catholic Leadership 360

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