

**Creating a Covenant for a Healthy Ministerial Workplace**

**Field Notes From the Vineyard**

**November 12th, 2020**

**Facilitators**

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**Prayer Presider**

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**Liturgy and Technology**

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**LECTIO AND VISIO DIVINA**

© Saint John’s Bible, Ark of the Lord, 2 Samuel 6:17

They brought in the ark of the LORD and set it in its place within the tent which David had pitched for it. Then David sacrificed burnt offerings and communion offerings before the LORD. When David had finished sacrificing burnt offerings and communion offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts, and distributed among all the people, the entire multitude of Israel, to every man and every woman, one loaf of bread, one piece of meat, and one raisin cake. Then all the people returned to their homes. 2 Samuel 6:17

**INTRODUCTION**

This Crucial Conversation explores creating and sustaining a healthy ministerial workplace as both a theological and practical task. It is theological because without a serious alignment of core Gospel values and workplace practices, the results might simply be a new layer of regulations. At the same time, there are practical actions needed so that our aspirations to live in covenant relationships transform what we do each day. This reflective assessment developed through consultation with national organizations and consultants bridges the distance between aspiration and action and seeks to foster deep, honest reflection as a ministerial work group seeks to improve the health of its workplace. Each of the twelve principles reflects an important aspect of an embodied covenant. To use this self-assessment guide, individuals on a staff first assess the principle based on his or her perception and experience, citing examples to support their choice of ranking. Individual assessments are then pooled to provide a staff with an overview of the organization’s health. The questions at the end of the assessment guide the breakout room discussions and suggestions for strategies. Please review the covenant and do the self-assessment. You will provide your responses on a ZOOM POLL during this Crucial Conversation.

Richard M. Gula, SS, in his book Just Ministry: Professional Ethics for Pastor Ministers describes the difference between Contractual Model and Covenantal Model.

Covenantal Model

* Engages ministry as a profession
* Ultimately derives ministerial services from and responds to a calling
* Keeps God at the source and center of the call
* Accepts the unexpected
* Makes room for the gratuitous
* Encourages partners in covenant to go the extra mile to make things work out
* Makes a grateful response to what we have received

Contractual Model

* Defines necessary services and fees
* Acknowledges the limits of what person can do
* Clearly distinguishes rights and duties within those limits so there is no ambiguity about what is expected
* Spells out the least we have to do

**For Reflection**

In what ways do these models sustain a healthy ministerial workplace? Where do you find resistance in these models? How would they impact your ministerial workplace?

**Note:**

The work of forming a *Covenant for a Healthy Ministerial Workplace* is both personal and communal. *Forming a Covenant* does not deny the need for a *Contract*. This work of Covenant-making requires a personal investment in self-awareness that shapes humble and inspiring leaders who have expanded capacities for sparking change in others, building relationships, and designing solutions that will have last impact. This is integral and essential for whole, just and compassionate ministerial workplace. Covenant-making is not a “sticks and carrots” method of motivating incremental change. It is not a change to orient the ministerial workplace with an “us and them” paradigm that will only demonize the opposition. We are advocating for conscious social change that lead to deep transformation with inclusivity, compassion, and connection among all Co-workers and those we serve.  Barbara Sutton’s research with 288 ministerial leaders indicates that 60% are disengaged from their ministerial work.  The change we seek is an inner-driven paradigm—meaning that much of what guides our actions comes from self-understanding and an internal sense of vocational purpose.  And then we look to benefit the greater common good, recognizing our shared experience, and finding ways to heal and connect, actively listening, and facilitating solutions to the underlying essential nature of people as human beings.

Our panel provides gems of insight into the ministerial workplace. The panel we have assembled for this Crucial Conversation will be people across the life span, some whose shoulders of accomplishments, insights and courageous sacrifices many of us have stood on, and other people who now stand on the shoulders of this important work on the ministerial workplace---we call them all Co-workers in the Vineyard.

**Covenant for A Healthy Ministerial Workplace**

**A GUIDE FOR REFLECTIVE ASSESSMENT & PLANNING**

*How good and how pleasant it is, when brothers and sisters*

*dwell together as one!*

Psalm 133:1

**Statement of Workplace Covenant**

*A vocation to pastoral ministry is a call to advance the mission of the Gospel. The work we share finds expression in evangelization and catechesis, worship, pastoral care, outreach, formation, community building, stewardship, and leadership. We measure our success by growth in knowledge of God, co-responsibility for the Reign of God, and spirit of hope we cultivate in those to whom we minister and in ourselves. Ours is collaborative work, as ordained and lay ecclesial ministers. We form a community of ministerial leaders bound together by a commitment to Christ, his Gospel, and the care of God’s people. We will risk being transformed. We recognize that creating a healthy ministerial workplace is a responsibility each of us shares. In fulfilling that responsibility, we commit ourselves to the following principles:*

1. We share a conviction that the Sacraments of Initiation form the common basis for our shared participation in the threefold ministry of Christ who is priest, prophet and king. We also acknowledge the complementarity of our distinct vocations as ordained and lay ecclesial ministers.

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| 2  Yes, this describes us most of the time. | 1  This describes us a little. | 0  This does not describe us  and needs development. |
| *What are some promising practices for this?* | | |

2. We gather for prayer, community and learning, knowing that the inspiration of the Scriptures and theological reflection on our ministerial practice ground us in sustaining right relationships and a healthy ministerial workplace.

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| 2  Yes, this describes us most of the time. | 1  This describes us a little. | 0  This does not describe us  and needs development. |
| What are some of the promising practices for this? | | |

3. Our mission and vision provide the values we seek to embody in every aspect of our work and that those shared values are a primary source of mutual good as we evaluate our ministerial leadership.

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| 2  Yes, this describes us most of the time. | 1  This describes us a little. | 0  This does not describe us  and needs development. |
| What are some of the promising practices for this? | | |

4. We strive to deepen the human competencies needed for effective teamwork and ministerial leadership. These include skills for strong interpersonal communication, intercultural competence, decision-making, management of conflict, ways to process difficult issues, and sustained collaboration across our designated positions.

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| What are some of the promising practices for this? | | |

5. We mutually define a manageable workload that provides the opportunity to serve the needs of the community through one’s designated ministry as well as one’s charisms and deep passions, to pursue career objectives, and to develop professionally.

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| What are some of the promising practices for this? | | |

6. We have in place a regular system of evaluation that provides insight into our work performance, raising up our accomplishments and finding resources and ways to address areas of needed growth.

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| What are some of the promising practices for this? | | |

7. To be in right relationship with all employees and volunteers, we practice being open to receiving and giving skilled and compassionate feedback.

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| What are some of the promising practices for this? | | |

8. We interact out of a shared understanding that the quality and effectiveness of our professional relationships have significant impact on those to whom and with whom we minister.

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| What are some of the promising practices for this? | | |

9. We contribute to developing and sustaining a healthy workplace by individual and team on-going education, ministerial formation, and the cultivation of imagination and creativity in whatever forms they might take.

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| What are some of the promising practices for this? | | |

10. We work at creating inclusive communities in which we cultivate respect for diversity of cultural traditions, languages, theological visions, devotional and spiritual practices.

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| What are some of the promising practices for this? | | |

11. We provide for the just and financial well-being of all employees in a fair and transparent manner.

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| What are some of the promising practices for this? | | |

12. We abide in the covenant through the principle of subsidiarity, when those closest to a problem or pastoral concern will be consulted for deeper understanding.

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**PANEL REFLECTION ON THE COVENANT**

**FOR A HEALTHY MINISTERIAL WORKPLACE**

**Zeni Fox, Ph.D.** Professor Emeritus of Pastoral Theology School of Theology, author and speaker on lay ecclesial ministry.

**Dan Pierson** Served in ministry as a Catholic school teacher, parish director of religious education, and diocesan director of religious education. He has used his gifts as author, curator of information, and networker in areas of catechetical ministry, publishing, and spiritual formation

**Michelle Montez** Executive Director, Pastoral Ministries Division, Archdiocese of Santa Fe

**Nelsa Elias** Facilitator, Catechetical Program Outreach, Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis, Diocese of Brooklyn

**Maria Milazzo** Director of Music at Nativity of Mary Church and School, Independence, MO

**Janice Kristanti** Candidate for Th.M. at Saint John’s School of Theology and Seminary, Collegeville, MN

**For your reflection:**

What specific, concrete action strategies would advance covenant as the governing spirit of a healthy ministerial workplace?

Visit [www.sustainingthevineyard.orghttps://www.csbsju.edu/sot/lifelong-learning/lay-ecclesial-ministry/2020-collegeville-national-symposium-on-lay-ecclesial-ministry](http://www.sustainingthevineyard.org) to view past Crucial Conversations

Next *Crucial Conversation*: December 10, 2020 at 2 pm Central

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