



DIOCESAN MODELS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Overview:

This white paper is a summary from Catholic Leadership Institute's Virtual Symposium on Diocesan Models for the 21st Century. The symposium, hosted December 1-2, 2021, included 39 leaders from 34 arch/dioceses and apostolates across the United States and Canada. Their perspectives and experiences included that of clergy and laity. They brought experience and wisdom from parish, diocesan, academic, philanthropic, apostolate and movement contexts.

Catholic Leadership Institute intentionally invited the attendees based on their experience serving within and/or collaborating with diocesan central administrations. Since 2011, Catholic Leadership Institute has supported 17 bishops in reimagining what their diocesan central administration should look like structurally and, more importantly, trying to bridge the gaps in performance, perception, dynamics, or culture that were present. Based on more than a decade of field work and in consultation with leaders throughout the Church, Catholic Leadership Institute developed some thought prompts and background for attendees to review and provide comment on prior to the symposium. Attendees were invited with the following objectives outlined for the gathering:

- To articulate the purpose of the diocesan central administration
- To enumerate the key functions of the diocesan central administration
- To define what a healthier culture for a diocesan central administration looks like
- To consider how the ministry context might influence purpose, functions, and for the diocesan central administration

Symposium Format and Preparation:

The format of the symposium included an opening prayer and a general overview of the feedback received by participants prior to the symposium, followed by two rounds of breakout groups to maximize the dialogue and interaction. The participants gathered at the conclusion of the time to share individual comments via chat as well as high-level themes from each group. Each small group was provided a facilitator and a scribe to ensure participants could fully engage. The process repeated on the second day.

In the preparatory reflection that Catholic Leadership Institute invited each attendee to complete before participating in the symposium, participants were asked to read excerpts from Tradition specifically related to the diocesan central administration and reflect on what struck them. Attendees were asked to articulate in their own words the purpose of the diocesan central administration. Participants were also invited to consider their own experience with their specific diocese and estimate the human and financial resources allocated toward "direct evangelization" versus "mission support" functions. In a similar fashion, they were asked to project the ideal allocation. Lastly, attendees were asked to offer specific commentary on the role of the bishop within the diocesan central administration, namely what

functions he should directly steer or influence, and how much time he should invest in forming and overseeing the people serving within the organization.

This white paper seeks to summarize Catholic Leadership Institute's research on the topic, the most significant themes of feedback, and propose three different paths that a diocese could pursue as it considers the future of its central administration. This summary is the result of Catholic Leadership Institute's discernment of the dialogue and is not meant to imply universal agreement or approval by any particular attendee.

Context: Why This Topic?

Who likes “the diocese?”

We know “the diocese” is the local Church and all the ministries, leaders, and entities included within it. However, in the vernacular and for the purposes of this whitepaper, “the diocese” represents the diocesan central administration (aka the chancery, curia, pastoral center). For further clarity, we are not speaking about Catholic Charities, healthcare institutions, Catholic colleges/universities, and Catholic foundations because these entities typically have more of a “dotted line” reporting relationship to the bishop and have their own governing structures.

Call it human nature or a universal allergy to anything that resembles bureaucracy or established and large institutions, but it is rare to find high praise or even neutral reactions for the central administration of a diocese in the United States. For more than 10 years, Catholic Leadership Institute has been invited to survey diocesan operations and performance from the perspective of clergy and lay leaders in parishes and schools, as well as the perspectives of those serving within the structure. Almost universally, the feedback points to a structure that is out of date, out of touch, and increasingly out of human and financial resources. People may love Greg or Mary or Sister who works in the diocese, but priests lament the burdens, parishes try to game the annual tax or cathedraticum, and parishioners, if they know what it is or that it exists, think of it as the place where unnecessary paperwork hoops originate, where selfish legal and financial interests reign supreme, and where unpopular to damaging decisions about closures, mergers, and assignments are announced. It is often seen as the least pastoral and most ineffective body within the Church.

Even the building itself usually has a nickname that is accompanied by an ominous tone, whether it be its street address or “downtown;” the diocesan headquarters seems to be most known as the place where people are summoned or where people protest.

Over the past seven years, Catholic Leadership Institute has surveyed over 1,000 priests across six very different dioceses with regards to size, geographic setting, and complexity of central administration. While roughly two-thirds of priests surveyed would strongly agree or agree that “the diocesan offices support them in their role” and that they know about the resources available to them through the diocese, less than half (47%) would strongly agree or agree that the diocese understands “the needs of their parish or assignment.”

Drilling down further as to the various functions that the diocesan central administration may try to provide to clergy and lay leaders, the satisfaction is more of mixed result. The below table outlines various functions the diocesan central administration provides and the extent to which the priests surveyed by Catholic Leadership Institute believe these are provided effectively. Perhaps not surprisingly, those issues related to canonical and civil compliance as well as matters related to real

estate seem to be best supported by the diocesan central administration while those efforts related to alignment within the diocese, equipping leaders, and strengthening discipleship seem least effectively supported by the diocesan central administration.

	Strongly Agree and Agree	Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral
The diocesan offices supports me in my role	66%	34%
The diocesan offices understand the needs of my parish/assignment.	47%	53%
I am aware of the services available to me through the diocesan offices.	67%	33%
Providing relevant resources for my ongoing formation and growth	52%	48%
Initiating regular communication with me	49%	51%
Following up with me when I express concerns or needs	54%	46%
Making information easy for me to find (via mail, web, email)	50%	50%
Advising me on issues in an effective and supportive manner	50%	50%
Discerning ministry assignments in an effective and supportive manner	35%	65%
Providing me with clarity and information regarding my specific role and responsibilities	37%	63%
Fostering effective and collaborative relationships between the Archdiocesan offices and my ministry	34%	66%
Offering helpful resources to aid in formation and catechesis of my parishioners	43%	57%
Supporting my parish's compliance with civil and canonical requirements	60%	40%
Providing assistance in growing and stewarding the parish's weekly offertory and financial assets	46%	54%
Providing relevant resources for my staff's professional development	37%	63%
Offering guidance and expertise on issues of real estate, insurance and legal matters	55%	45%
Equipping volunteer leadership to be more effective in the parish (e.g. finance councils, pastoral councils)	17%	83%
Identifying opportunities for partnership between parishes	39%	61%
Providing guidance on sacramental preparation	43%	57%
Offering resources to support prayer worship	35%	65%
Offering resources to move parishioners from a habit of faith to discipleship	26%	74%
Supporting the process of parish mergers and unification	18%	82%
Having processes that ensure alignment between parish projects and the Archdiocesan priorities	25%	75%
Supporting the administration of my parish school or the parish school nearest to my parish	41%	59%

While the qualitative feedback can often be exaggerated and the result of historical experience versus current reality, the feedback is pervasive enough to prompt a closer examination of what systemic issues might be contributing to it and what possibilities exist for reform. More importantly, this structure is envisioned to support the ordinary who, barring significant change in the 1983 Code of Canon Law, still bears a tremendous burden and wields near unilateral executive, legislative, and judicial authority. The local bishop who, in Catholic Leadership Institute's experience, would be the first to suggest some edits to this overwhelming responsibility, has an increasingly wide portfolio with a rapidly decreasing pool of human and financial resources. The COVID-19 pandemic alone highlights this reality. While all organizations were thrust into public health decision-making without much of a safety net, a Catholic diocese has several distinguishing layers of complexity to parse through even beyond that of other faiths. In the blink of an eye, the diocesan central administration needed to be producing guidance, resources, and expectations without clarity around the authority structures or accountability. Ethical, moral, philosophical, and strategic tensions are only exacerbated in a system that on paper is extremely hierarchal but couldn't be more decentralized.

So what is a bishop to do? In a world that has rapidly shifting demands and expectations of any institution, with parishes and schools struggling to keep up with not only temporal demands but also, more importantly, basic fulfillment of mission, can't this entity of the diocesan central administration play a more fruitful role?

Catholic Leadership Institute and the participants of the symposium believe the answer is yes. However, it will require a bold narrowing of focus and a dramatic shift in culture and approach from leaders who serve “downtown” as well as those in the field.

Major Themes of Feedback from Preparation Reflection

The below section seeks to capture the themes that were present in the reflections offered leading up to the virtual gathering.

Three key tensions were highlighted:

1. Mission versus Maintenance:

- There is a significant tension between mission and maintenance in today’s diocesan administration – not only in its approach but also its fundamental purpose.
- Diocesan central administrations tend to be more heavily focused on maintenance vs. direct mission activities. Of note, most of the activities in Catholic Education, Communications, and Ethnic Ministries focus on maintenance activities versus direct mission service.
- Participants indicated that in their respective dioceses, vocation efforts accounted for the highest evangelization efforts from a diocesan central administration.
- When asked to estimate the amount of time in their individual diocesan central administration, participants indicated that while they hoped direct mission service would represented at least two-thirds of a diocese’s effort, in today’s reality, diocesan central administrations have no functions that represent the ideal focus on evangelization activities.
- Key “mission” functions such as Evangelization and Communication at the diocesan level are paramount, yet often either poorly defined, poorly executed, and/or poorly resourced.

2. Bishop-specific versus Bishop-proof:

- The bishop’s personality/personal focus has the potential to create instability and lack of clarity for diocesan administrations in moments of transition.
- The Vicar General/Moderator of the Curia/COO or some #2 is critical in the effective leadership of the administration and in maintaining continuity. It was further emphasized that leveraging the role of “Chancellor” or “COO,” a lay person could easily and more effectively provide this leadership.

3. Subsidiarity versus Centralization:

- Subsidiarity should rule the day, yet the playing field among parishes/schools/clergy is very uneven.
- This tension might be influenced by the relative size and dispersion of the diocese. A more rural, sparsely populated but massive mission diocese may need a higher level of centralization than a densely populated archdiocese.

Additionally, prudent discernment and decision making as well as creativity were among the top-rated values that should define the culture of a diocesan central administration, while a lack of vision, lack of investment in people, and lack of available resources came up as the top three barriers for the diocesan central administration in fulfilling its mission.

Major Themes of Feedback from the Virtual Symposium: Purpose and Function

Over the course of two stimulating days of dialogue, several clear themes emerged among attendees of the virtual symposium. The below section seeks to capture the themes that were present among many of the breakout groups.

With respect to the overall purpose of the diocesan central administration, participants believed:

- The diocesan central administration should see the salvation of souls as a primary purpose.
- The diocesan central administration should help parishes do the things they cannot do themselves.
- Dioceses have the duty to equip, nurture, encounter, and accompany parish leaders.
- Clergy and lay leaders need to be continually formed by the diocese.

With respect to some of the greatest challenges inhibiting this purpose, participants universally described a culture that is full of inertia and devoid of space for innovation. Risk, chaos, agility are not valued and continuing legacy activities and fear of evaluating the efficacy of current efforts has hampered the diocese's ability to look honestly at the changes needed to bear fruit. Exacerbating this dynamic, it was widely shared within the small discussion groups that the skills and abilities of diocesan central administration staff are not aligned to roles. Credentials and/or education is disproportionately valued over practical competencies such as strategic thinking, creativity, and effective project management. Participants shared that diocesan central administration staff needs to let go of some control. Not everything has to come from the diocesan central administration. There has to be some trust and empowerment of the parish leadership. The lack of a clear "separation of powers" between the diocesan central administration and the parish, easily leads to an oftentimes well-intentioned over-reaching by the diocese and subsequently becomes normative behavior. This ambiguity can lead the pastor to abdicate responsibility appropriate to his role or have an unhealthy reliance on the diocese.

Participants emphasized the importance of the bishop and the diocesan central administration for establishing a clear vision of the role of the diocesan central administration, especially with respect to evangelization. It varies based on the personality of the bishop and/or the functional owners at the diocesan central administration. The participants delineated that evangelization at the diocesan level should be more focused on vision casting, empowering, and equipping. At the parish level, it should be focused on execution, implementation, and direct service.

Starts, Stops, and Continues for the Diocesan Central Administration

The second day of the symposium invited participants to generate a list of "starts" (new things the diocesan central administration should do), "stops" (things that are broken about the diocesan central administration that should be fixed or discontinued), and "continues" (things that are good about the diocesan central administration that should be continued). Below is a summary of the most concrete recommendations from across all of the small groups of participants.

Starts: New things we should start doing in the diocesan central administration

1. Create spaces and opportunities for innovation
2. Create more cross-functional teams to foster collaboration
3. More consistently engage staff at all levels for ideas and feedback

4. Create a mutually shared vision for evangelization
5. Create, hire, and assess a client-focused mindset among diocesan employees
6. Implement standards for database management and integrity for parishes
7. Implement a consistent performance feedback loop between the diocesan central administration and the parishes
8. Initiate and track relevant standards and metrics for effective diocesan performance
9. Encourage the bishop to embrace the fullness of their authority and responsibility when it comes to the diocesan central administration. The bishop should be sure to set the tone and cast a vision for evangelization and the purpose of the central administration as well as appoint people to key leadership positions who align with that vision and culture.
10. Offer more training and formational opportunities for clergy and lay leaders
11. Adopt a clear meeting system that is based on role and function versus titles and groups of people
12. Expand the idea of ongoing formation beyond workshops and convocations - look at it as a process
13. Create a culture of spirituality, prayer, and discernment within the diocesan central administration (e.g. Insist on daily prayer within the diocesan central administration)
14. Imbue a sense of mission among all employees regardless of their temporal or pastoral function

Stops: Things that are broken and should be fixed or discontinued in the diocesan central administration

1. Stop using antiquated IT and accounting systems to improve customer relationship management and enterprise management
2. Stop separating adult and youth ministry, merge into family ministry
3. Stop accepting mediocrity and poor attitudes from diocesan staff and increase the expectations with appropriate support
4. Stop avoiding risk and thinking small - invite and encourage out-of-the-box thinking
5. Stop discussing priestly assignments as burdens - emphasize the privilege of the position of pastors
6. Stop underutilizing parochial vicars/assistants - insist that they support diocesan functions from early ordination
7. Stop making decisions based on efficiency versus the needs and implications of those affected
8. Stop communicating through the lens of the giver and instead communicate more from the lens of the receiver
9. Stop propping up parishes, ministries, schools etc. that do not demonstrate viability unless there is a long-term strategy
10. Stop assuming 100% buy-in for any new initiative
11. Stop generalized social media and marketing - it needs to be targeted
12. Stop unnecessary meetings and replace with effective communications

Continues: Things that are going well in the diocesan central administration and should be expanded and continued

1. Expand the use of third-party demographic data to understand community needs and opportunities
2. Expand the use of creative partnerships with universities, apostolates and movements rather than trying to build internally
3. Focus more energy on accompaniment of leaders versus creation of content at the diocesan central administration

4. Expand external and internal communication functions
5. Expand communication channels used to share messages
6. Continue to cast vision on evangelization and renewal and accompanying parishes to move forward

Three Paths forward for the Diocesan Central Administration

While there are a multitude of leadership challenges facing the Church, Catholic Leadership Institute would propose that one of the most pervasive and difficult is a lack of ownership over one's role as a disciple. Whether it is among parents who believe the Church has failed them in keeping their child Catholic, the priest who thinks the diocese bears the blame for the school's closure, the department director who laments a lack of participation in a parish program, or the bishop who doesn't know why parents aren't doing more, there seems to be a fundamental need to reset and possibly redefine roles, responsibilities, and perhaps some rights at all levels of leadership.

A diocesan central administration or any institution in the Church continuing to try to be all things to all people has led and will continue to lead to the diminishment of mission and its resources. Christ is in all things, organizations can't be. The Holy Spirit can animate in any situation, institutions have limits. The wisdom of St. Francis DeSales is what should guide the mission and resource allocation plan for a diocesan central administration: "Be who you are and be that well." Be clear and honest about your purpose, your outcomes, your competencies, and create space and understanding for others to fully embrace their role.

The following three models represent three paths that are narrower in scope but clearer in direction than the current reality. Catholic Leadership Institute believes that the current structure of most diocesan central administrations will not be able to survive the next decade of generational turnover and financial uncertainty, nor should it without significant examination and reevaluation. Continuing to promote such a diverse agenda while budgets are continually reduced will only yield increased frustration, burnout, unmet expectations, and further finger pointing. A gift of Vatican II was the expansion of the Church and the role of the laity, thus requiring more support at the parish level. Over the past 60 years, diocesan central administrations have expanded to help advance the needs of the Church and fill in gaps that were needed in the diocese. If the parish is able to take on its appropriate role, there will be much less for the central administration to do, so it will have to reinvent itself to be perceived as relevant.

The opportunity is for a bishop to choose a clearer path, not because it guarantees success, but because it can invite others to a deeper understanding of how he as bishop and his closest diocesan collaborators can care for those who serve as his extension and his partners in mission – his priests, deacons, parishes and schools, apostolates, and orders.

Model 1: The Temporal Expert

Perhaps on the surface the least inspiring of three paths, the Temporal Expert is powerful in its simplicity and clarity. This model of the diocesan central administration seeks to double-down on the principle of subsidiarity and acknowledges that ministry and pastoral care is best envisioned and initiated at the local level. During this period of rapid development in content, technology, and information sharing, this model presumes that any parish or ministry that is seeking best practices or new ideas can find them quickly and easily. This model stresses the importance of evangelization as a

deeply personal, one-on-one activity that springs forth from the missionary impulse of a community rather than a directive, initiative, or prodding of an institution. This model deprioritizes diocesan regulations with regards to ministry but increases control and supervision over administrative matters. Most importantly, this model recognizes that the most draining, daunting, and distracting requirements on pastors and parish staff come not from building relationships but buildings themselves, as well as consistently changing trends and requirements in civil, legal, financial, human resource, and operational requirements.

In the Temporal Expert model, the diocesan central administration seeks to be the hero in any non-ministry-related function. It provides direct service and centralized processes related to reporting, IT infrastructure, records management, and payroll/benefits administration. In its ideal, a small parish may not even require a full-time or part-time business manager and a large parish becomes more accessible for a pastor who struggles with administration. This model is best suited for a bishop who wants high visibility into temporal metrics and also wants to promote a more evangelical spirit by removing administrative burden at the local level.

In order to successfully implement this model, the diocesan central administration must ensure that their centralized systems are up to date, process-mapped to align closely with the inputs and dynamics of parishes and other entities connected, and constantly upgraded and refined to provide state-of-the-art, rapid-response service that allows pastoral leaders the freedom and confidence to attend to ministry matters. Despite the clarity and role delineation this approach provides, the greatest risk of this model is that some pastoral leaders will refuse to embrace their responsibility to engage in evangelization and effective pastoral care and the experience of Church will remain uneven. Another potential risk is a disconnect between ministry and administrative support. Whether at the diocesan or local level, temporal employees need to be well-grounded in the mission and ministry alignment of their role. Unfortunately, this is the current experience throughout the Church. The opportunity is to remove excuses from local pastoral leaders by both increasing the quality and breadth of temporal support and clarifying that the diocesan central administration has little to no role in evangelization.

Model 2: The Encounter Facilitator

Discipleship is a lifelong journey. However, there are moments along that journey that can dramatically jumpstart or catalyze one's relationship with the Lord. The diocesan central administration is not the only entity that can create large-scale, powerful experiences, but it has some unique advantages that can help facilitate them more easily than the average parish, school, or ministry. The Encounter Facilitator model sees the power of the diocesan central administration to gather constituencies throughout the local Church and emphasizes providing high-quality, high-impact discipleship moments to help light a spark that can be carried on by parishes and ministries. In this model, the diocesan central administration acts as an expert event manager, designing experiences, advertising them ubiquitously, and executing them flawlessly, all in service to attracting those who are distant from the Church and fortifying those who are close.

This model is best served by an “out-front bishop” who relishes the opportunity to gather people. It doesn't seek to replace parish life, but rather to provide turn-key experiences to which parishes can bring their people with the expectation of excellence. The Encounter Facilitator requires significant financial resources to execute this level of quality experience consistently and to offer it to various constituencies. The publicity and recruitment for the experiences itself necessitates a well-resourced and expert communications function. With the necessary financial resources or strategic partnerships in place, a mission diocese can benefit from this approach in leveraging scale for smaller parishes.

The greatest risk of this approach is that the experiences run the risk of being “one and done’s” with little to no follow-up keeping the spark alive for participants. If employing the Encounter Facilitator model, it is important that planning for the next experience for that community is well underway and can be advertised during the current experience. Likewise, strong relationships are needed with local parishes, schools, and ministries to ensure strong feeder systems and back-home accompaniment support. This model does assume that Model 1 is in place to some extent.

Model 3: The Empowerment Hub

The Empowerment Hub best reflects the communal wisdom of those gathered during the virtual symposium. This model seeks to address the age-old challenge in organizational dynamics: “good people are hard to find.” In this model, the diocesan central administration prioritizes the identification, recruitment, onboarding, and ongoing training, development, and formation of the leaders who will serve at the local level – clergy and lay. Partnering with the local pastors or leaders, the diocese can provide a pathway for leaders who are identified locally. The Empowerment Hub seeks as its primary objective to ensure effective succession planning among professional staff and ordained leadership. This model recognizes that evangelization and ministry is primarily a relational activity and that, without the right people, the policies, programs, and procedures are worthless. In the ideal, this model has the diocesan central administration overseeing a continuous journey of formation for anyone called to ministry within the local Church. Whether utilizing internal staff or through the creation of strategic partnerships with universities, apostolates, and movements, the diocesan central administration employs a segmentation approach, recognizing the journey of discipleship and offering various points of entry for people at the beginning of their seeking, to those ready to be sent out.

In the Empowerment Hub, the diocesan central administration creates and maintains an integrated database of leaders and leverages this powerful tool in connecting leaders with each other, with opportunities and needs throughout the diocese as well as deepening each leader’s faith and talent along the way. In this model, the diocesan central administration should avoid content development but rather serve as a curator of resources and a certifier of competency. It should also avoid onerous and complicated paths to ministry but rather seek to be highly responsive to new leader inquiries and candidates and be sure to catalyze growth, not stifle it.

In order to implement this model, the diocesan central administration needs a culture that centers around the dignity of each individual and prizes people’s growth. Specific areas of focus should be deemphasized, and a spirit of accompaniment should define every activity undertaken by members of the diocesan central administration. This model is for the bishop who sees himself and his local Church as disciple-makers. This model promises abundant fruit but requires much patience in a world that feels increasingly urgent and scarce. It will take a lot of time (and great confidence) to surface candidates, to invest in them consistently, and to match them with the right opportunity. This requires a major mindset away from “you’ve got the bench you’ve got,” to “God doesn’t call the equipped, He equips the called.” It also requires highly talented staff who are excellent leaders, not simply functional managers or subject matter experts. The opportunity is to take the long view with this model and focus on building a local church full of local leaders for the next generation.

	Model 1: The Temporal Expert	Model 2: The Encounter Facilitator	Model 3: The Empowerment Hub
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diocesan central administration focuses on temporal expertise and processes • Legal, HR, finance, IT are prioritized, centralized, and well staffed • There are no functional ministry departments (e.g. youth or religious education) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional ministry offices are more specific in scope and organize as many large events, programs, retreats and opportunities for direct service to different groups (e.g. youth, married couples, disaffected) • Diocesan central administration provides temporal expertise for legal, HR, finance, IT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional ministry offices are more general in scope and focus on curating resources, providing training/formation and support for leaders at the local level • Diocesan central administration provides temporal expertise for legal, HR, finance, IT
Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong customer service orientation of temporal staff • Well-developed and supported technology systems for centralized operating • Clear expectations of local responsibility for ministry and pastoral care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong marketing and communications and event management skillset • Larger programmatic budget for diocesan offices • Prioritization of key constituencies receiving direct service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong relationship management skillset • Clear standards and well-developed training for ministry • Fewer, ministry generalists with expertise in formation and training rather than more specialists in particular ministry areas
Advantages and Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advantages: focused, clearer expectations on services provided by diocese; encourages greater ownership at local level for ministry • Challenges: potential loss of visibility for marginalized groups; lack of best-practice sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advantages: fills voids in care locally; allows for large -scale events difficult for a parish to create • Challenges: resource intensive; enables lack of ownership for local ministry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advantages: builds local capacity; less resource intensive; lots of potential external partners • Challenges: requires more specific and highly trained skillset; requires collaboration of pastors and local leaders; longer lead time to build

Recommendations and Next Steps:

As a result of the symposium, Catholic Leadership Institute is committed to partnering with willing attendees and other future partners to implement the following recommendations:

1. **Refine the three proposed models for diocesan central administrations (2022-2023):**
Catholic Leadership Institute will continue to incorporate the feedback shared during the symposium and refine the models, attempting to align relevant metrics and proposed staffing and financial considerations for each.

2. **Incorporate for diocesan use (2023-2024):** In support of the frameworks that emerge, Catholic Leadership Institute plans to incorporate these models into its existing consulting practice with dioceses. As with any model creation, this will involve continued research and development, dialogue with end-users and refinement over time. Catholic Leadership Institute believes collaboration with key diocesan partners will also be important to ensure alignment and integration with the larger local church.
3. **Engage a broader audience of parish/diocesan leadership in continuing the conversation (2022-2024):** As was evident from the symposium, creating a space for dialogue among parish and diocesan leadership from a diverse set of contexts can only help to deepen individual leaders' awareness, comfort, and innovation with the concept of dramatic changes to the diocesan central administration. Catholic Leadership Institute will look to partner with other ministries and dioceses to host localized conversations that will serve to 1) gather more feedback and insight into the potential models, and 2) provide an opportunity for formation of Church leaders to consider the future of this important structure.

Conclusion:

Catholic Leadership Institute is extremely grateful to the Porticus Foundation and the incredible women and men who contributed to this conversation. Their passion for the Church, their individual expertise and commitment to the importance of diocesan ministry provided great inspiration to the facilitators, scribes, and organizers of the symposium. There is so much opportunity when it comes to the service that can be provided by the diocesan central administration. We appreciated that the attendees of the symposium understood the significance of the conversation, were able to look at existing practices and structures with a discerning eye, and despite many of their own professions being examined, were able to speak constructively and with great hope for the future. With so many dioceses experiencing great challenge, prioritizing the most important functions we must do in diocesan ministry will help to provide clarity and confidence in what is projected to be a very daunting decade ahead. Catholic Leadership Institute sees a path for life, a path for the fullest realization of the potential that God instills in His people when they gather in His name.