

via magazine

Catholic Leadership Institute

Accompaniment:
Entering into Sacred Ground

"Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?"

—Luke 24:32



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On the cover: Fr. Matthew Guckin, pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Doylestown, PA, visits with parishioners after Mass this summer. The parish is enrolled in Next Generation Parish in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

FROM THE DESK OF DAN CELLUCCI, CEO



Dear Friends,

My family and I attended the National Eucharistic Congress, along with 28 members of our team at Catholic Leadership Institute, and over 60,000 of you—bishops, priests, deacons, religious, and lay leaders. Some are calling it a family reunion. For me, it was as if I was breaking bread with the disciples after a long walk on the Road to Emmaus.

In my address to priests at the conclusion of the "Abide" priest track of the congress, I shared my heart as a father and that there are moments in my life when I find myself unprepared or feeling helpless in the vocation to which the Lord has called me. Like them, sometimes I don't know what to say, where to go, or who to turn to for guidance.

While I related this poverty to the fatherhood of the priests in the room, I could also relate this to what we all bring in our humanity to the life of the Church. It's a similar poverty that the disciples experienced on the Road to Emmaus, as they were lost in sorrow and confusion.

Just as Christ, the "stranger," joins them on their journey, listening to their struggles and sharing words that made their hearts burn within them, so does He work in our lives.

What I witnessed at the Congress is something I get to witness every day in our work at Catholic Leadership Institute. Our hearts "burn" with this fire when we walk alongside leaders who, in spite of human poverty, turn to Christ with apostolic zeal and transform the life of the Church.

This issue of *Via Magazine* is packed with stories, reflections, and insights that highlight this spark—from Leadership Coaching with Fr. Michael Knotek on page 11 to priority planning with parishes in the Diocese of Covington on page 8. I hope you will take note of the burning hearts throughout this issue and know that it is also for you.

Be assured of my prayers for you and your families!

In Christ,

Dan Cellucci, CEO



Why do you Stay?

Every week, Dan Cellucci publishes a brief reflection with insights on leadership. In his February 5th issue entitled “Stay” Dan challenged readers: “If we don’t know or can’t share why we stay, might it be part of the reason why they leave?” This challenge became the foundation of a day-long workshop for the DREs and CREs in the Diocese of Camden, thanks to the inspiration of Dr. Rosalie (Lee) Mirenda DelleMonache, Director of Religious Education.

The “Stay” workshop was held on June 6, 2024, and explored the theme, **Stay: Discover and unleash the unique influence of your faith stories.**

“WHY DO YOU STAY?” WORKSHOP INSPIRES EDUCATORS

By Rosalie (Lee) Mirenda DelleMonache, PhD, Director of Religious Education

“The goal of the day, ‘Stay: Discover and unleash the unique influence of your faith stories’ was for participants to leave with a new appreciation for their own faith stories and feel equipped and empowered to share those stories so that others might come closer/reengage with the Catholic faith. The day was designed to celebrate everyone’s unique faith journey through reflecting on the value of storytelling in evangelizing and faith sharing.

I was blessed to be joined by two incredible leaders in our diocese who assisted me in facilitating this day: Donna Ottaviano-Britt,

Director of Discipleship and Leadership, and Jen Mauro, Managing Editor of the Catholic Star Herald. The day began with me leading a reflection on the value of faith stories.

Donna led the group through a process of self-discovery to help uncover those stories of our unrepeatable faith journeys, and Jen equipped participants with the tools needed to share those unique faith stories.

Throughout the day, attendees were afforded quiet time to pray, reflect, share in small groups, and write. They were gifted with prompts, worksheets, and a journal, all for the purpose of rediscovering their life experiences that brought them close to God, and equipping them with the tools to share those experiences. In addition to us, our colleagues in the Secretariat for Catholic Education and our Vicar General, Father Robert Hughes, also shared their “why we stay” stories. At the end of the day, many who attended came forth to

share their stories as well. Feedback for the day, particularly the faith story sharing, was tremendous!

We will continue to offer this experience to other ministry leaders in our diocese. This workshop and challenge helped religious education leaders in the Diocese of Camden fully awaken to the realization that while the transformational experiences along our individual, never-ending journeys of formation come in all shapes and sizes, they all possess relatability and the gifts of inspiration and invitation—they must be shared!” †



Rosalie (Lee) Mirenda DelleMonache (far right) presents the “Stay” event to diocesan educators.

Scan the QR code to receive
Dan’s weekly DIAL (Discerning
Insights About Leadership)
reflections by email.



Fr. Logan processes out of St. John the Evangelist parish in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Fr. Logan is utilizing what he learned at St. John's in his new pastor assignment at St. Thomas the Apostle.

Navigating Pastor Transitions with *Next Generation Parish*

When pastor Fr. Stephen Blaxton was moved to a different parish in the Diocese of Saginaw, Michigan, this past summer, it could have disrupted the strategic plans he and his parishioners had developed over the past few years.



But when he left Holy Family Parish in Sandusky, it was in the midst of implementing a new pastoral plan developed as a part of Catholic Leadership Institute's *Next Generation Parish* (NGP) initiative—so he had no worries. It also helped that his replacement at Holy Family, Fr. Amal Raj Madanu, had been working on *Next Generation Parish* at his previous parish.

"It made the transition a lot easier," Fr. Stephen said. "So there's a lot of continuity and a feeling of security in knowing that not everything is just going to fall through the floor. And the [Catholic Leadership Institute] leadership consultant

was really helpful in meeting with the two of us before I transitioned out to kind of facilitate the transition."

Next Generation Parish has helped several parishes across the United States experiencing a pastor transition to continue their progress, maintain momentum in building up their community, and meet the spiritual and social needs of parishioners.

IMPACT IN INDIANA

In the Indiana Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Fr. Julius Okojie succeeded Fr. Terry Conan as pastor at St. Therese Parish. Although Fr. Terry was saddened

to leave, he was confident of a smooth transition because of *Next Generation Parish*.

"Having a plan provides peace of mind during this transition," he said. "I know the work I started won't fall apart when I leave."

The plan also provided a roadmap for Fr. Julius as he began his new assignment.

"It was helpful to know what preceded me and in what direction the parish was already heading, per my predecessor's vision," he said. "It was also helpful not to have to create one from scratch, but to build upon what was already in place."

At St. John the Evangelist in Goshen, Indiana, *Next Generation Parish* has had far-reaching implications, beyond the parish and its pastor.

Early in the process, pastor Fr. Royce Gregerson recognized the need to grow his leadership skills, so he reached out to Catholic Leadership Institute to ask for personal leadership coaching. This ultimately equipped him with the tools to lead more effectively and to foster a culture of unity and growth within the multicultural parish.

Fr. Logan Parrish was an associate at St. John the Evangelist and worked closely with Fr. Royce on the *Next Generation Parish* initiative.

"Logan came in with very strong people skills and a heart for those disconnected from the Church," Fr. Royce said. "Through [Catholic Leadership Institute's] *Good*

>> continued on page 6



Learn more about how pastoral plans are easing pastor transitions in our case study by scanning the QR code.



ABOUT NEXT GENERATION PARISH

In the early stages of the multi-year *Next Generation Parish* experience, a team of parish leaders comes together and dedicates prayerful time, skill, and discernment in mapping out a plan for the future. Over the course of several months, this Envisioning Team assembles a Pastoral Priority Plan that articulates the parish's purpose, values, priorities, and goals. This plan becomes the framework for a two-year period of implementation and unites the community under one set of shared beliefs and goals.

> What goes into a Pastoral Priority Plan? Learn more on page 9 of this issue.

"I think every parish should be doing something like Next Generation Parish. I think it's a really effective way to do priority planning."

—Fr. Stephen

Leaders, Good Shepherds program, and our Next Generation Parish efforts, he developed into a leader who could manage personnel and inspire our staff to work together more effectively. Next Generation Parish gave him the ability to see how his passions could be incarnated in the parish so that more people could do this kind of evangelizing work."

Fr. Logan is now pastor at another Next Generation Parish, St. Thomas the Apostle in Elkhart, Indiana, where he and his parishioners benefit from what he learned while at St. John the Evangelist.

At that time, Fr. Brian Florin was installed as the next associate at St. John.

"Brian came in with a lot of zeal and strong interpersonal skills," Fr. Royce said. "His time here, especially as we closed out the implementation of our first priority plan, showed him the importance of planning and executing a vision. It motivated him to be a stronger institutional leader."

In May 2024, it was announced that Fr. Royce would be transferred to another parish, and Fr. Brian was named the new pastor for St. John.

A PATH FORWARD

Meanwhile, as Next Generation Parish is continuing to guide parishes in Indiana, in Michigan Fr. Stephen said he's looking forward to beginning a comprehensive parish planning process at his new parish, St. Bridget of Kildare in Midland.

"I definitely learned a lot with Catholic Leadership Institute," he said. "Basically, I think every parish should be doing something like Next Generation Parish. I think it's a really effective way to do priority planning." †

Photo credit: Diocese of Saginaw



QUINTESENTIALS: 5 PRINCIPLES FOR STREAMLINING PASTOR TRANSITIONS

This resource gathers insights from our experts and experiences and compiles them into 5 steps to help a parish ease their pastor transitions:

- 1 Pave the Way—Outgoing Pastor and Staff
- 2 Lay the Groundwork—Outgoing and Incoming Pastors
- 3 Installation and Welcome—Diocesan Leadership and Parish Community
- 4 Embrace the Parish—New Pastor
- 5 Support Our Priests



Scan the QR code to download a copy of a thought leadership resource that aids the outgoing and incoming pastors and parishes involved in a major leadership transition.



Parishioners gather outside St. James Cathedral in the Diocese of Orlando. St. James participated in Next Generation Parish.

Exploring Vibrancy in a Multicultural Church

By Matt Furrer, Senior Mission Insight Analyst

In our partnership with the Conference for Pastoral Planning and Council Development (CPPCD), the 2022-23 study “Exploring Vibrancy in a Multicultural Church” highlighted the rich opportunities and challenges faced by the increasingly multicultural makeup of the US Catholic Church.

This study began by interviewing pastors and focus groups consisting of parish staff and parishioners from 40 multicultural parishes. The research team gathered insights from over 500 participants, representing various African American, Hispanic, Vietnamese, and Anglo communities.

The study outlines that, while there are several clear, universal desires among all parish communities, including meaningful Sunday experiences, effective and loving pastors, ongoing formation, and opportunities to serve those in need, *how* these desires are met varies across cultures. One part of the study asked participants, “What makes your community unique?” and the responses illustrated that each community has its own unique history and ethos. We also saw that, while commonalities may exist across one particular ethnic community, meaningful nuance demands avoiding generalizations

about their needs and preferences. As an example, one predominantly Hispanic community that participated in the study had over 23 nationalities represented in their parish!

We asked the question: Do our findings reflect vitality in all parishes, or does vitality change depending on the predominant culture/s in a parish?

The shift from a predominantly Euro-American church to a truly multicultural one demands reimagining the existing structures and pastoral approaches within the Church. Pastoral leaders who participated in the study emphasized the importance of understanding the cultural backgrounds of parishioners to better serve their needs.

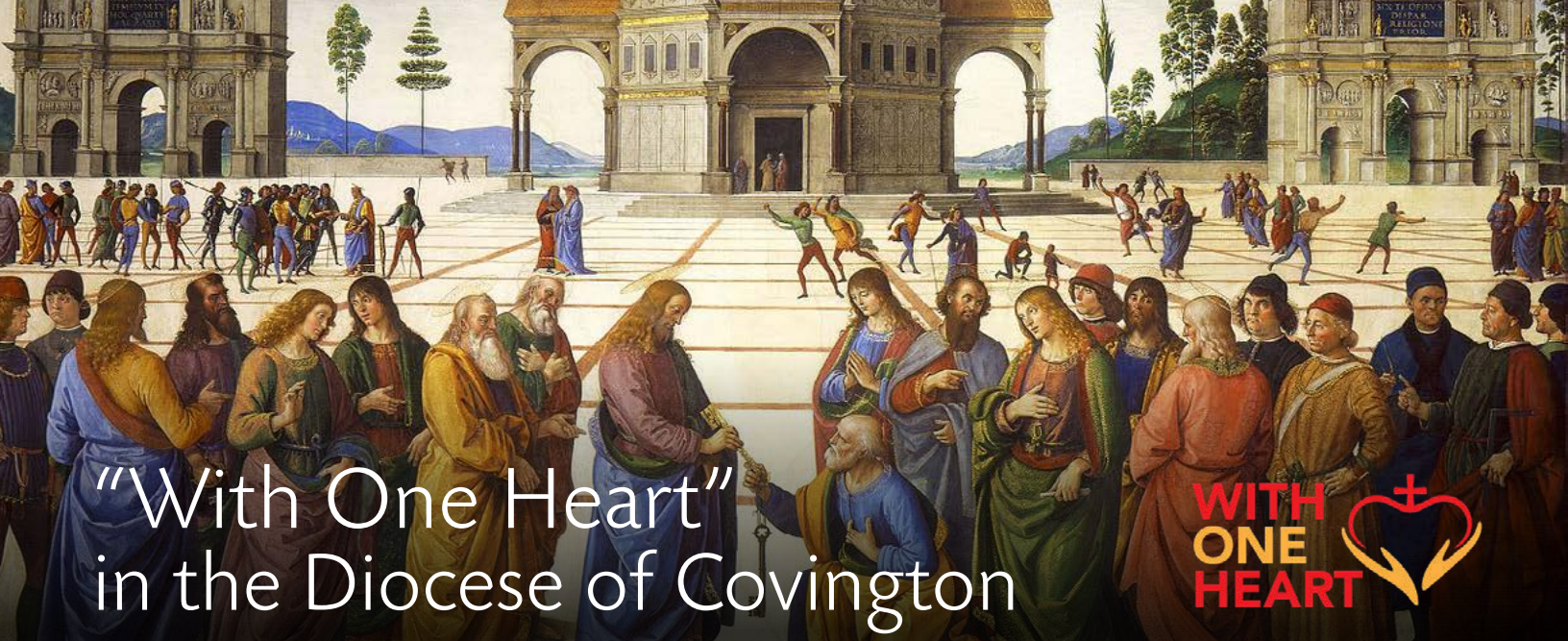
There is such complexity and richness within today’s US parishes! While our findings cannot be generalized to all

parishes, they offer valuable insights and suggest ways to enhance parish vitality through greater intercultural competence. The results call for a shift in mindset to fully recognize and embrace multiculturalism within the Church, ensuring that all communities can participate fully and enrich parish life. †

As Senior Mission Insight Analyst, Matt Furrer leads the organization’s data reporting, analysis, and innovation in service of the Church.

Scan the QR code to download a copy of our case study on multicultural communities.





By Brendan Menuey, Leadership Consultant

In 2022, Bishop John Iffert and the Diocese of Covington embarked on a transformative journey called “With One Heart,” partnering with Catholic Leadership Institute to equip them in planning for the future. Our work together began with a comprehensive assessment of the diocese’s strengths, challenges, and aspirations, conducted through focus groups and deanery strategy sessions, where hundreds of priests, deacons, women religious, and lay people shared their experiences and ideas for the diocese. From there, CLI developed a tailored plan to address particular areas, including growing in the faith, spreading the faith, and developing leadership skills.

One of the most significant challenges encountered was the vastness of the diocese and the diversity of its parishes. To overcome this, CLI implemented a differentiated approach, focusing on specific services and parishes, then gradually expanding the support around the diocese. This strategy has allowed us to build strong relationships with local leaders and tailor

our support to their unique needs. One diocesan leader in Covington explained that *With One Heart* “is not a ‘program’ that we layer on top of all the other offerings in your parishes. It is primarily formational, helping us to come to know our parish and hone our leadership skills so that the priest’s and parish’s own priorities can be pursued as effectively and collaboratively as possible.”

Already, we have seen a surge in leadership development initiatives, parishes are becoming more vibrant and engaged, and there’s a renewed sense of purpose and collaboration among diocesan staff. The seeds already sown are taking root, and we are excited to witness the continued flourishing of this vibrant community of faith. †

Brendan Menuey has been a Leadership Consultant with CLI since 2022.



53 Parishes administered the Disciple Maker Index survey



21 Priests participated in Good Leaders, Good Shepherds



7 Parishes enrolled in Next Generation Parish



100+ Lay leaders participated in Parish Missionary Disciples and Tending the Talents

Scan the QR code to read about the priests who participated in Good Leaders, Good Shepherds in the diocesan newspaper, *The Messenger*.





IGNITE THE
PARISH

The Diocese of Covington just completed the second phase of *Next Generation Parish*. This means that every participating parish has a completed Pastoral Priority Plan.

WHAT IS A PASTORAL PRIORITY PLAN?

By Jim Luisi, Leadership Consultant

Given the ever-changing world we live in, parishes must continually examine their effectiveness in meeting the needs of their faith community and then respond appropriately.

Pastoral Priority Planning is a parish leadership activity that is used to set Christ-centered priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, and ensure that the clergy, ministry leaders, and staff are working toward common goals. It establishes agreement around intended outcomes and assesses and adjusts the organization's direction in response to parishioners' needs. It is a disciplined effort

that produces fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what a parish is, who it serves, what it does, and why it does it. An effective Pastoral Priority Plan articulates where the parish is going, key areas of opportunity, and how it will know if it is successful.

Once the Pastoral Priority Plan is in place the parish leadership team turns their attention to communicating the plan and implementing initiatives to achieve each goal. †

Jim Luisi is a Leadership Consultant who helps diocesan and parish leaders to identify, develop, and implement plans that will enhance organizational effectiveness and foster personal growth.

THE FIVE ELEMENTS OF A PASTORAL PRIORITY PLAN ARE:

1

Purpose Statement:

Why does the parish exist?

2

Vision Statement:

Where is the parish called to be in 3–5 years?

3

Core Values:

What behaviors and beliefs must be embraced to achieve the vision?

4

Priorities:

What will be the parish's key areas of focus?

5

SMART Goals:

What will be the desired outcomes and how will success be measured?



Scan the QR code to view the Pastoral Priority Plan for Annunciation Parish in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.





Leadership Coaching for Priests: *Entering into Sacred Ground*

By Carla Molina, Leadership Consultant

I am a faithful Catholic and Executive Coach. I love seeing transformation in clients, particularly when that transformation goes deep and becomes engrained in their lives.



Entering into the inner life of a priest is truly Sacred Ground.

One of my former clients, an executive at a top company, was having trouble communicating effectively with his team. After just a few coaching sessions, he confessed to me that not only was communication better with his team, “My kids are also now talking to me!” Having an impact that goes beyond the intended purpose and involves the whole person is one of the reasons why I so strongly believe in coaching.

Coaching is about accompaniment in the same way that evangelizing and spreading the Good News is about accompaniment. It is also the same type of accompaniment that Jesus devoted to the 12 apostles—and maybe even to the three apostles in his innermost circle, Peter, James and John.

In 2018, Catholic Leadership Institute engaged skilled professionals at the diocesan level across the country to help accompany priests to leverage insights through the Called for More service to benefit their own personal growth. Over time, we enhanced this service to become a year-long commitment we now call Leadership Coaching. And, just as with my former clients, we have been able to see a positive impact in the whole person.

A prayerful priest encounters the Lord in his interior life. As a coach, entering into the inner life of a priest is entering into sacred ground. Our leadership coaches are men and women chosen to do that lovingly and respectfully. Some of these partnerships have deepened over time. I know one case where a leadership coach and a priest decided to meet weekly instead of monthly because the benefits to the priest were so important. I know others who continue coaching beyond the year-long commitment, again because of the benefits realized by the priest. In all cases, the coaches themselves have also gained profound knowledge about the faith and insights about themselves through these interactions.

Proven and effective human tools can also be used at the service of the church. As much as I have seen the benefits of coaching up close throughout a variety of organizations, I’m edified by how much this service can also bring multiple benefits to the Church that I love. †

Carla Molina is a Leadership Consultant and serves several dioceses, parishes, and priests around the country with expert support and Leadership Coaching.



LEADERSHIP COACHING

Fr. Michael Knotek, Archdiocese of Chicago

Q *Why did you engage with Leadership Coaching?*

I was looking for an objective person who is experienced and well-versed in the various aspects of working within the Catholic Church but was not in the Archdiocese of Chicago to help me reflect, strategize, and implement innovations into my ministry.

Q *What do you value most about this experience?*

There are many things I have valued about the coaching experience, but probably most of all is that a tremendous amount of stress has been alleviated for me by having a wisdom figure like Matt [Leadership Consultant] to bounce things off of, such as:

- **Conflict management**—it has been great to have a third party objectively help me look at tense situations in my ministry and help me develop responses that alleviate the tension and create harmony where before there was misunderstanding, hurt, and roadblocks.
- **Having an eye toward the future**—not just looking at the present moment but looking at the question, “Where are we going from here?”

Q *How have you grown in your priestly ministry since you started Leadership Coaching?*

I see growth in terms of further developing my professional standards and effectively applying them to situations within my ministry in these stressful and often conflictual times in the life of society and the Church. I feel more grounded in the present and more hopeful for the future.

What is Leadership Coaching for priests?

1:1 regular accompaniment from professionally trained coaches to help priests appreciate their natural leadership style, identify leadership skills needed to better serve the people of God in their ministry, and provide accountability for their own individual growth.

Q *Can you share an example of a situation or instance when you saw positive effects of Leadership Coaching in your interactions with others?*

Like most priests, I have a very heavy workload. I am accountable to many people, some of whom can get frustrated and angry and have unreasonable expectations of me. Some days I am at my wits end with discouragement. I’ve learned to better control my emotions with such people and further develop professional and pastoral responses to them that help me to adequately address their concerns but don’t involve compromising my own integrity, self-worth, and dignity.

FATHERS: ARE YOU READY FOR THIS APOSTOLIC AGE?

PRIESTS FOR AN
APOSTOLIC AGE
CONFERENCE

JANUARY 21-24, 2025
SAN ANTONIO, TX

Scan to register. Enter EMBOLDEN
code in the form to receive a free gift.





The Lilly Endowment's Philanthropy Sparks a Bright Future

By: Rebecca Reilley, Assistant Vice President for Philanthropy

These gifts have called our apostolate and those we serve to use our God-given talents with intention, innovation, gratitude, and deep faith so that we may work for the future our Church deserves.

Catholic Leadership Institute's (CLI) mission and dedication to forge the future for our Church must begin with an important element: a spark.

Since 2018, the Lilly Endowment has been a spark for our ministry.

Generous funding from the Lilly Endowment has catalyzed work across our ministry and around our country. These gifts have called the Catholic Leadership

Institute team and those we serve to use our God-given talents with intention, innovation, gratitude, and deep faith so that we may work for the future our Church deserves. We are grateful for the trust of the Lilly Endowment, and we strive to be good stewards of that trust in all that we do.





FORGE THE
FUTURE

CARING FOR AND LOVING OUR PRIESTS

The first grant made in 2018 was the gift that launched Called for More—Catholic Leadership Institute’s priestly placement, support, and pastoral transition effort. This funding took Catholic Leadership Institute’s big idea and transformed it into a national ministry that has supported 4,128 priests via innovative technology, personal growth plans, and a better understanding of their leadership gifts and how to use them in their pastoral role. Funding through Lilly Endowment’s Thriving in Ministry Initiative has also been the foundation for creating an online portal for engaging priest and parishes and sharing data from the Disciple Maker Index. One great learning from this endeavor was how powerful coaching could be for our priests. In 2022, the Lilly Endowment invested an additional \$500,000 into this endeavor to take our leadership coaching of priests to a more impactful level.

FOSTERING VIBRANT, FAITH-FILLED PARISHES

In 2020, the Lilly Endowment was once again a spark for a transformative national ministry, *Next Generation Parish (NGP)*. Lilly Endowment made this grant through its Thriving Congregation Initiative and it empowered Catholic Leadership Institute to reach more dioceses around the country—including mission dioceses—with our multi-year journey to ignite parish life. Further, this support has been instrumental in allowing Catholic Leadership Institute to share the immense learnings, parish applications, and thought leadership that we have gleaned through journeying with over 253 parishes.

THINKING FORWARD FOR OUR FUTURE

In early 2024, additional funding through the Thriving Congregations Initiative enabled Catholic Leadership Institute to dream big for our Church. This time, support is covering two critical areas of planning for our future.



First, the grant made possible a time of reflection for Catholic Leadership Institute staff, Leadership Team, and stakeholders to look back at our parish work and look forward to the future. This critical time of reflection is informing our strategic planning for the next five years.

Second, an additional grant has spurred Catholic Leadership Institute to creatively and lovingly take our support of priests to a new level of impact. As we seek to foster happier, healthier, and holier shepherds, this new support will instill a spirit of thinking differently about how to care more fully for our shepherds. Specifically, we will be responding to priests’ requests for better physical health and vitality so that they may better live their vocations with energy and intention.

A SPARK THAT CONTINUES TO IGNITE

With great joy and gratitude, Catholic Leadership Institute thanks Lilly Endowment for both their confidence in our ministry and those we serve and

their encouragement to continue to push ourselves to do the gritty and grace-filled work that God calls us to.

Just as Lilly Endowment has been a powerful spark that gives Catholic Leadership Institute the resources needed to serve our Church and ignite transformation, so too are all the donors to our mission. Thank you for being the spark that allows us to shine a light on the moving ministry moments, courageous leaders, and hopeful witness that we encounter in our work daily. It is Catholic Leadership Institute’s great joy to keep that spark burning brightly! †

Becky Reilley is Assistant Vice President for Philanthropy and has the joy of inviting philanthropists and foundations to share their gifts of time, talent, treasure, and prayer to take the apostolate’s mission to the next level and forge a path forward for our Church for generations to come.

National Eucharistic Congress: What is it all about?

By Jenn Fiduccia, Senior Director of Leadership Consultants

"Can I ask you something?" A hand gently rested on my left shoulder as I turned to face the female security guard addressing me. I was annoyed and already running late for Bishop Cozzens' session on Eucharistic Revival and Synodality due to a misunderstanding that there are TWO Marriott hotels attached to the Indianapolis Convention Center.

Taking a deep breath, I rearranged my face into what I hoped was a warm expression. "Sure. What's your question?"

The woman nervously shuffled her feet for a moment and looked down at the ground.

She then looked deep in my eyes and earnestly asked, "What is all this about?"

For the next thirty minutes, I sat with Martha as she asked question after question about the Eucharist, the Catholic Church,

and what would drive so many people to participate in an event such as this. Charged with the words of so many wonderful speakers and preachers I had already heard at the Eucharistic Congress, I shared from my heart with her that Christ gives Himself to us in the gift of the Eucharist to sanctify and sustain us—that we can take Christ, physically, into our bodies to not only transform our hearts and minds but also our very bodies so we can bring Christ to the world. At the end of the conversation, I prayed with Martha and, while I do not know if our encounter changed her life, it certainly impacted mine.

Catholic Leadership Institute sent our own delegation of 28 pilgrims to Indianapolis where, for three days, we joined 60,000 other Catholics from around the country to give witness to (as Martha asked) what,



Dan Cellucci joined the panel discussion at the National Eucharistic Congress's "Abide" priest track session. Photo credit: National Eucharistic Congress

exactly, it is all about. In what one colleague described as a “giant family reunion,” we prayed and learned, rejoiced and worshiped, adored, and atoned under the banner of Christ’s true presence in the gift of the Eucharist.

There are no words to adequately describe the experience. There were big moments, like processing through the streets behind the Eucharist, singing praise as we adored Our Lord, and celebrating Mass together.

There were also smaller moments—running into a priest who helped run my parish’s high school youth ministry program, catching up with a deacon who participated in one of Catholic Leadership Institute’s seminary trainings who will be ordained next year, and a lengthy conversation with Bishop John “Joy” Alappatt, a bishop of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church in the United States, in which he shared how excited he is to attend our next Episcopal Ongoing Formation Session in February.

One month following the National Eucharistic Congress, I still think almost daily about Martha and our conversation. Does my life demonstrate that the Eucharist is the source and summit of my faith? Do I allow Christ’s Eucharistic presence that I receive at liturgy to transform me into the presence of Christ in our world? Do I share this Good News with others? Because that is what it’s all about. †

1 The Cellucci family at the National Eucharistic Congress.

2 Matt Reichert, Leadership Consultant, with Bishop Robert Marshall from the Diocese of Alexandria.

3 A priest blesses a man on the street.

4 Mike School, Executive Vice President, sat on the sidewalk during the procession with a young friend, taking in the scene through the eyes of a child.





Internship for Next Generation Leaders

Fostering the next generation of leaders in the Church has been part of Catholic Leadership Institute's mission since its founding over 30 years ago. In 2023, we launched an internship program to meet the needs of our growing apostolate and to help students develop their leadership skills. Let's get to know our recent interns!



Sam Aitchison— Communications Intern

Sam is majoring in Finance, Leadership, and Human Resources at Saint Louis University. "I felt that my internship with CLI was more valuable than any marketing class I have ever taken," he said.

What stood out most about his experience, however, was the Catholic identity he discovered. "This internship has deepened my faith and hope for our Church," Sam explained. His internship experience inspired him "to live CLI's mission in my daily life—creating vibrant faith communities rooted in Jesus Christ."



Bryce Pattison— Philanthropy Intern

Bryce is studying Social Work at Saint Louis University. He is passionate about evangelization and also serves as a youth minister with Life Teen. Bryce says his internship has involved "helping gather materials and

talk to donors." His biggest takeaway? "I have learned...how to interact with donors and share my faith," he explains. Bryce looks forward to using these skills in a future career as a youth minister or therapist.

Photo, above: Sam Aitchison presented to team members at the Team Days session on "Communications." In this presentation, Sam is setting the stage for the new CLI brand refresh rollout.



Kelli (Wegerer) Seiwert— Ministry Development Intern

Kelli is a Wichita native currently studying Christian Formation and Ministry with a minor in Psychology at Friends University. Her job involves managing data for CLI's client base and helping to write proposals for bishops, illustrating how CLI's

offerings can help them serve their dioceses. Kelli's favorite part of her job so far has been meeting bishops. "Being able to see Christ just dwell through their heart and see the love that they have for their people that they are in charge of, all the souls that they are in charge of, I think that's just so cool," she shared.



Trinity Chester— Communications Intern

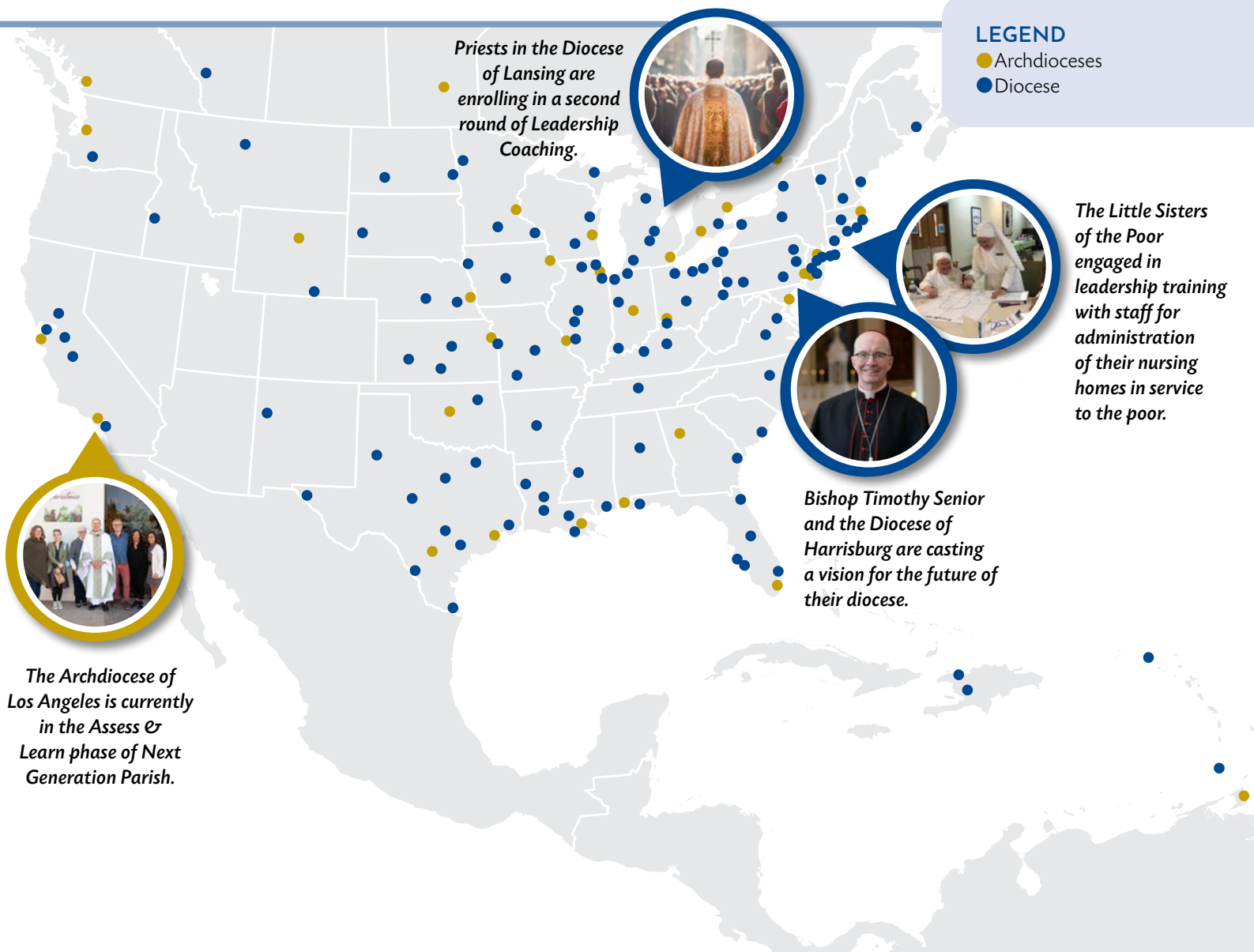
Trinity is a senior from California where she studies Liberal Arts at Thomas Aquinas College. The experience has taught her about creating a strong brand and targeting audiences through social media. "My work has involved both

detail-oriented tasks such as data analysis and more creative projects like writing and graphic design," she says. Her favorite part of the job was creating beautiful posts to share the truth of the Catholic Faith and the good work that CLI is doing in dioceses across the nation.

"I would recommend this internship to anyone who is looking to use their skills to build up the Church while growing into their own role as a leader along the way," she says. "These are people whose goal truly is to get to Heaven and bring you along!"

CLI Across North America

Catholic Leadership Institute has been blessed to partner with a wide spectrum of Church leaders, including bishops, priests, lay leaders, clergy, deacons, and seminarians from the following dioceses:



*"[Catholic Leadership Institute] brings the expertise that the Church by default lacks in Her hierarchy, but not in her body. It's an opportunity for the gifts and the talents that God has given to the body of Christ to speak to the hierarchy, so we can work together at the service of the building of the Kingdom... and because of that, apply a particular science, to benefit from the wisdom of years of experience that crosses over diocese all over the country, makes for a much more meaningful conversation with ourselves, and **makes me feel confident that I am part of the solution of our age.**"*

—Fr. Seán Loomis, Pastor and Priest in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia



From Our Founder

When I think about what makes Catholic Leadership Institute special, one word that comes to mind is “accompany.”

Lovingly, we accompany pastors as they face obstacles, confront a changing society, and live the joy of their vocation to bring people to Jesus Christ.

Joyfully, we accompany the laity as they seek the tools and courage to go out into the world and make disciples.

With great reverence, we accompany the bishops as they think about how to lead their diocese with more intention and inspiration.

But here’s what strikes me most: we can only walk alongside these Church leaders because of those who generously share their time, talents, treasure, and prayers with Catholic Leadership Institute.

Through my 33 years of dedication to CLI’s mission and ministry, so many wonderful people have walked besides me:

- Fr. Chuck Pfeffer, who was my co-founder and guide
- spiritual advisors who kept our mission rooted in deep faith
- our Board of Directors and volunteer leaders
- beloved clergy who trust in us
- dedicated laity who believe in our mission and drive it forward in their parishes
- philanthropic donors who give with such generosity

You have accompanied Catholic Leadership Institute. You have been the catalyst for our work. *Thank you.*

Of course, I certainly think about Jesus and how He accompanies us and leads us. I love Him, and I trust in Him as we look towards the future of Catholic Leadership Institute, a future about accompanying others to know His great love.

With great gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim".

Tim Flanagan, Co-Founder



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WELCOME, PAM GIGANTI-BUNGE AND KITTY MARTINEZ!

By Emily Scarola, Executive Assistant

Pam Giganti-Bunge and Kitty Martinez join one of the most highly engaged Boards of Catholic Leadership Institute's history. Over the past five years, our Board of Directors has weathered a global pandemic that dramatically impacted the Church. In addition to navigating the most rapid period of growth in the organization's history—nearly tripling the size of our team—they relentlessly challenge us to be unapologetically bold as we look to the future of the Church and discern how best to minister to our shepherds with authenticity, credibility, innovation, and care during this unprecedented time.



Pam Giganti-Bunge is a veteran newswoman and an Emmy Award winning journalist who has worked in the radio and television industry for the last 32 years. She is currently the host of the public affairs program *Your South Florida* on South Florida PBS and is the host for the University of Miami Health System's, *Focusing on You* segments.



Kitty Martinez is a dedicated educator and community leader with a deep commitment to faith-based outreach and youth empowerment. With a rich background in education and volunteerism, she has made significant contributions to programs that support adolescents, troubled teens, and young mothers, while also engaging in diplomatic and international community work in Washington, D.C.

The Catholic Leadership Institute Board of Directors inspires us with their deep love for the Lord and commitment to a vibrant Church for future generations. They drive bold vision, strategic excellence, and generous philanthropy, ensuring top-tier operations and unwavering dedication to outstanding Catholic leadership. We are privileged to serve alongside these amazing women and men!



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PRAYER FOR LEADERS

Dear Lord, We pray that you will create among us Catholic leaders; individuals made in your image who will apply your teachings in their lives and positively impact our families, our workplaces, our communities, and our Church. Help us to inspire those with whom we come in contact to share their God-given talents, to do your will and to find a place in your kingdom where their deepest joys and the world's deepest hungers meet and cry for their special qualities and abilities. Make us leaders, Lord, leaders with strength and courage to follow you. Leaders who make your love visible to the world in all of our words and actions. Amen.