

You want your parish to **come alive**
and your **priesthood to matter.**



We can help.

There are three keys to parish renewal. Although your parish is unique, we have seen these three keys **unleash radical change in hundreds of parishes** around the world.
Are you ready to unlock your parish?



KEY 1: **The Power of the Holy Spirit**

“And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” Luke 24:49

This is God’s work. You are not enough... but He is. It is not by your own power that your parish will transform. There are two truths happening at once: Your parish will not transform with you. Your parish can not transform without Him.

Like the first disciples, you can not set off on your own as the hero of the story. First, you pray. Then, you wait until you are clothed with power from on high. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that makes your work fruitful. Call on the Holy Spirit and expect Him to show up, because the Father has promised Him to us. Surrender your work, surrender your leadership, surrender your parish, and surrender your whole self to Him.

Prayer is the engine of our mission. All the work you do to transform your parish must be drenched in prayer.

SOME WAYS TO UNLOCK THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOUR PARISH:

Start every meeting, gathering, and conversation in prayer. Make it a habit! Not simply rote prayers, either – call upon the Holy Spirit, pray for those present, and intentionally invite God to be a part of your specific work. At Divine Renovation we start every meeting with prayer, and most prayers with 3 simple words: “Come Holy Spirit...”

Align your existing prayer ministries. Your parish may have rosary groups, or regular adoration, or some other form of prayer gatherings. What a gift! Meet with the leaders of these groups. Ask them to align their prayer efforts with the renewal of the parish. Prayer is the engine of a parish, and your people are your engineers: invite them into this holy work!

Call on the Holy Spirit and expect Him to show up, because the Father has promised Him to us.

Ensure your team members (both volunteers and paid staff) are comfortable leading prayer spontaneously. Encourage them to practice and offer training if comfort level or knowledge is lacking. We ALL need to pray – not just priests!

Pray WITH each other, not just for each other. If someone asks for prayer or shares a struggle, offer to pray with them right then and there. Model prayer with your community and team at every instance. Do not tell parishioners or team that you’ll pray for them. Instead, pray immediately – if someone is asking for prayer, the best time is RIGHT NOW. Whether it’s after mass, in a meeting, or on a call, now is the time to pray. Call upon the Holy Spirit.

If our work is transforming lives and bringing people to Jesus, it will be subject to spiritual warfare. Pray frequently for peace, understanding, and alignment. When conflict and disagreement arise, bring it to prayer and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance.





KEY 2: The Primacy of Evangelization

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.” Matthew 28:19-20

The Church exists to evangelize. Your parish exists to evangelize. It’s right there in the Great Commission. But is your parish doing things in the right order? That is, the order the Great Commission places them in! Read it again. Jesus commands us to: first, go and make disciples; second, baptize; and third, teach.

Most Catholic parishes get this all mixed up. We are so much more inclined to teach to people who don’t believe, or sacramentalize those who have no real faith.

What would your parish look like if we put these things in the right order? Imagine if the people in your pews, if the people in your parish, really knew deep in their hearts that Jesus was Lord. Now imagine they love him. They love him with every ounce of their being. Your community would be starved! Starved for the grace found in the sacraments. They would be starved to learn more about Jesus. That’s the way it should be. That’s the kind of community Jesus imagined us creating. It starts with us making disciples: Inviting people to encounter Jesus, rather than simply teaching about Jesus. These are different things. One is of the heart, the other is of the head.



To do this, you must put evangelization first at your parish. Through evangelization you will reach the unchurched and the de-churched. But to evangelize well, you have to prioritize it. That may mean putting other things on hold or stopping them all together. Possibly many things. The Great Commission comes with a cost, but it’s a cost worth paying as you will literally save souls.

SOME WAYS WE ENCOURAGE PARISHES TO HONOUR THE PRIMACY OF EVANGELIZATION:

Have at least one dedicated evangelization ministry. Divine Renovation continues to see the most powerful fruit grow from Alpha. Alpha is an evangelization program that is run in Catholic and non-Catholic churches around the world. In our experience with thousands of Catholic parishes, there is no more effective tool for evangelization. It’s like catching fish with nets, rather than with rods. Can other evangelization programs can work too? Yes, as long as you ensure that your evangelization program is accessible to the unchurched and de-churched.

Ensure your evangelization ministry is friendly and welcoming to the unchurched. THEY are your target audience! You must track your reach. Count the number of unchurched people showing up.

Get the basics down, and then feel free to innovate. When Divine Renovation works with parishes, we encourage them to adapt to their context. One parish held Alpha at a local sushi restaurant to great success! Another gathered at a local pub. Throughout the pandemic, online Alpha has seen an absolute explosion as people join via Zoom. Even parishes who had been running Alpha for years experienced a massive influx of new guests as people felt safe joining from their own homes.

Preach about evangelization. Help your community understand it. Catholics often confuse “evangelization” with “catechetics.” Set the tone in your homilies.

Invite your parishioners to Alpha (or whatever your evangelization program might be). Then invite them again. And then again. Then invite them to invite their friends and family. And invite them to do so again. And again. Foster a culture of invitation at your parish by modeling invitation and challenging parishioners to invite. Repetition is key! At parishes around the world, we often ask people to give their testimony of how God transformed their life through their experience at Alpha in their parish. One of the best questions we ask is, “what made you decide to take Alpha?” Because the answer is often, “I kept hearing about it over and over, and Father wouldn’t shut up about, so I figured I should go find out what it was all about.” That answer is often followed by: “and it totally transformed me, and I’ve now invited my uncle, brother, friend...”

Imagine if the people in your pews, if the people in your parish, really knew deep in their hearts that Jesus was Lord.

Expect new visitors at Mass every single week. Even if you recognize every person in your pews, stop and say: “A special welcome to any visitors who may be with us today...” Why? First, you want create the expectation in your parishioners that we are a parish that reaches new people. Second, you want to make sure new people know they aren’t crashing a secret club meeting, but are being welcomed into the home of a friend who is happy to have them there.

Ensure you have a hospitality ministry to welcome new people at the front doors. Pick those people carefully! Nobody wants to be greeted with a frown. You want highly happy and energetic people as your greeters. Just because people volunteer for the role, doesn’t mean they’re going to be gifted at it. Be selective! Encourage parishioners to leave the best parking spots for newcomers to make it easy for them to drop in.



KEY 3: The Best of Leadership

“And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task.” Acts 6:2-3

You can't do this alone. Even with the power of the Holy Spirit, no one person has all the gifts and strengths needed to single-handedly lead, let alone transform, a parish. You need to partner with holy men and women, lay and ordained, to accomplish God's Kingdom here on earth.

The secular world has discovered that leadership is a science. It is a multi-billion-dollar industry, with books and tests and coaches and training programs all designed to help leaders like you do your best work. If it's important for a company that sells widgets or sneakers to have the best of leadership, how much more important is it for priests, who shepherd people to God and deal with questions of the eternal? God made you a leader. Now you must embrace your leadership.

HOW YOU CAN INCORPORATE THE BEST OF LEADERSHIP INTO YOUR WORK:

To be a truly great leader, you first need to understand yourself – so take it to prayer. Ask God what strengths and weaknesses he made you with. Write them down. Are you more of a shepherd-teacher? Or maybe more of an apostle-evangelist? Pray with Ephesians 4. How has God made you? Then build a leadership team that complements your strengths and weaknesses. Don't build one that mirrors you, build one that balances you.

You can't do everything. Take the time to choose your priorities as a pastor and let others take the lead on important ministries that might bless your parish but don't move your priorities forward.

Study leadership. Divine Renovation highly recommends exploring your strengths (and the strengths of your leadership team!) through the CliftonStrengths model. Others prefer Myers-Briggs, and we've seen leaders really come alive when exploring APEST. Pick one or two and commit to using it with your community and your leaders.

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next to lead. Then fire them! Once they're formed as a leader of Alpha (or equivalent), they're ready to get involved with other parish ministries. All ministries should operate similarly – welcoming new people, then encouraging them to lead, then blessing them as they grow into their next role or ministry. Parishes that embrace the 3 Keys you never stop running Alpha! If you do, your other ministries will all end up suffering. Keep reaching people for Jesus and keep raising up leaders. Alpha will fill every other ministry as new people newly on fire for Jesus become part of parish life.

Understand your leadership pipeline. By embracing the 3 Keys, you will raise up leaders. As your evangelization program transforms lives, some will truly stand out. Invite them to come back for the next session and assist, and the



These are the three keys to unlocking your parish.
By relying on the power of the Holy Spirit, focusing on the primacy of evangelization,
and incorporating the best of leadership, **your parish can become explosively alive.**



Divine Renovation isn't "yet another program" – we're a ministry. You're the expert on your parish, and we can help you unlock it in a way that meets the needs of your community and population. We have hundreds of pastors and bishops in coaching right now. Our books have been published in 12 different languages, we lead conferences and events around the world, and there are parishes in more than 50 countries embracing the 3 Keys. Is yours ready to be one of them?

Our work is fully funded by our amazing donors. God has called Divine Renovation to help leaders just like you, no matter where your parish is on the journey from maintenance to mission. Whether your parish is a hot mess and hasn't even begun to wrestle with these concepts, or you've started to implement change and are discovering how hard it can be, we would love the opportunity to come alongside you in your journey. All you need to do is ask.

divinerenovation.org/connect

Head to our website to meet with a member of our team and find out how you can get started on transforming your parish today.



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