

# Opening Wide the Doors: Lay Ecclesial Ministry and Thriving Parishes

Marti R. Jewell, D.Min.



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## Agenda

- ▶ FADICA Study of Parish Vitality
- ▶ LEMs in a Covid World
- ▶ Signs of Hope



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The Spirit is  
inviting us  
into an  
unanticipated  
future...



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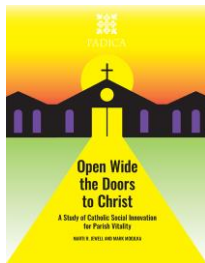
Then It Was 2020



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## Parish Vitality Study conducted by Marti R. Jewell and Mark Mogilka

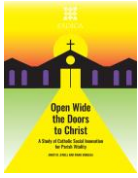
- Annotated Bibliography
  - 100 Books & Articles
  - 150 Websites
  - 35 Metric Tools
- 65 Nationwide Interviews
  - National Leaders (35)
  - Bishops (10)
  - Pastors & Pastoral Leaders (20)



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### Open Wide the Doors



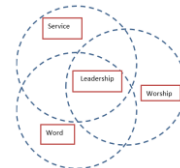
Enthusiastic, welcoming, engaged pastoral leaders willing to "Open the Doors to Christ," welcoming all in and then sending people out to follow their baptismal call to serve Christ.



### I. Innovative Response to Culture and Context

### Innovation

- ▶ Relational ministry
- ▶ Welcoming and hospitality
- ▶ Inter-cultural ministry
- ▶ Outreach and Invitation
- ▶ Internet and Online Communications



### II. Compelling, Holistic Vision

### Vision

- Word
- Worship
- Service



### III. Co-Responsibility of Pastor, Staff, and Parishioners

### Co-responsible

Leaders who empower, delegate, and collaborate with community

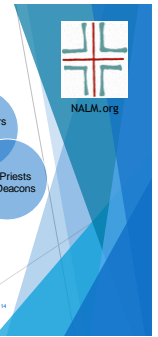
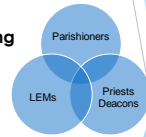
Parishioners who have a sense of ownership and pride in their community



### A New Story - Total Ministering Communities

#### Engaged, Relational and Animating Leadership

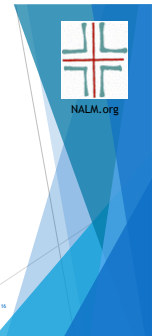
- ▶ Organic, dynamic relationships
- ▶ Co-responsible for the mission
- ▶ Focused on conversion
- ▶ Coming from anywhere in the system



Questions? Insights? Wondering?



And Then Came 2020!



### Crisis of Imagination

The inability or unwillingness to imagine a world different from the one we already know and assumed would continue indefinitely.



### Lay Ecclesial Ministers



Questions? Insights? Wondering?



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The Case for Hope



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LEMs Bring...

**The gift of presence**

Accompanying their community  
as it experiences these traumas.

**The gifts of mercy and compassion**

In solidarity with the suffering

**The gift of being a living sign of hope**

The gracious gift of the Spirit



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Karl Rahner on Hope

Hope "reorients the believer's engagement in  
social and political life.

In committing themselves to the incomprehensible  
God, believers must 'decide anew between whether  
they are

- ▶ to defend the present which they already  
possess, or
- ▶ to embark upon the exodus into the  
unforeseeable future."



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Karl Rahner on Hope

Hope "is ... the courage to commit oneself:

- ▶ in thought and deed
- ▶ to the incomprehensible and the uncontrollable  
which permeates our existence, and,
- ▶ as the future to which it is open, sustains it."



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What do we do now?

▶ LEMs are asking, with Rahner:

"... not how far is [the church] obliged to go  
in responding to new situations, but

how far *could* it go 'in exploiting all  
theological and pastoral possibilities?'"



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### Living Signs of Hope



LEMs are, themselves, **living signs of hope** that God provides us, in every era, with all that we need.



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*See, I am doing something new!  
Now it springs forth.  
Do you not perceive it?*

Is 43:19



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