

## Wrapping Your Head Around a New Normal:

### A Pandemic that Changes Everything

"I have no idea how to wrap my head around thinking about not being able to just open the doors for Mass again." I don't think the pastor who said those things is at all unusual. This pandemic, Covid19, has upended thinking about a lot of things...maybe even most things. What I propose is not to offer what to think as much as how to go about thinking when the former ground rules no longer apply, and may not again for a very long time, if ever. How to wrap your head around what's happening so that it's possible to lead meaningful conversations, arrive at heartfelt communications and eventually, come to some additional steps...that's the purpose of this work.

Ecclesial leaders are the target audience for this: clergy, lay ecclesial ministers and members of boards, councils and committees. Because I come from the Catholic world, you will see that lean to the approach. However, much of what is here pertains to ecclesial leaders in any Christian denomination. That said, to lead in these uncertain times will take the wisdom, knowledge, understanding and right judgment of many people. This is neither the responsibility of just one small segment of the Body of Christ, nor the duty of just the Pope or Bishops/Pastors. This work falls to all those who have been called by God to lead within the Christian community. And therein is the first adaptation in these times: team leadership. The hierarchy has to flatten in order for the Holy Spirit to be heard in these uncertain times. It's not hard. Just name those who are on the leadership team. Make sure they are representative of the people you are trying to lead, and together bow before the Lord in humility. Not a single one of us has ever done this before. Ordination, graduation, election, experience or willingness has not prepared anyone for times such as these.

Every age needs a metanarrative: an overarching story that helps its people make sense of what is happening. For those of you reading this, that's very good news. Christianity is a metanarrative: it's a worldview, grounded in Jesus Christ, that provides touchstones and perspectives, teaching and experience. Jesus' resurrection was an upending experience. What was understood as immutable (the way things are and always should be) changed. Death was not final. God is more powerful than that. That hope-filled story has the power to guide thinking and acting in these times *if ecclesial leaders open themselves up to the fullness of the story, beginning with the Truth that God in Jesus intends to make all things new*. The Christian story is a story of new life, new creations, new birth, a higher mind and a different way for life to be organized, lived, celebrated and remembered. New wine requires new wineskins. That is the narrative that I will use to guide the content here: that God is continuing to create something new through Jesus Christ. We are experiencing God's mighty hand at work, disrupting the entire world in a matter of months, and thus requiring the coming of some Kingdom elements for the world to thrive again: unity, solidarity, charity, justice, care for creation and a level of interdependence heretofore under-valued if not ignored. Ecclesial leaders have this perpetual story of a new creation in Jesus Christ to guide and guard their thoughts and actions *if they are brave enough to embrace the startling reality of a pandemic and its effects*. This is akin to the startling story of the

resurrection, with social media, and fake news, and a level of global knowledge and propaganda that Jesus' times could not have imagined. But we have a story! We have a way!

Ecclesial leaders must use the Christian story as their framework. It's His story that will guide and guard our ways. For many ecclesial leaders, it's been the Church's story that has guided their ways. But that story has been interrupted. The Good News? It makes room for a consideration of Jesus' story as the organizing principle around which everything orbits.

Ecclesial leaders must also accept that for many within their flock, this will be a new experience. They've not been using Jesus' life, passion, death, resurrection and ascension as an organizing principle. Thus, they will need you to be witnesses, as those first apostles were, to its truth, its power and its grace. They will need to see you living inside this story, authentically, right now. And they will need you to use the many gifts and graces of the Church to support their discovery of the real power and presence of Jesus Christ, in all circumstances.

### **Thinking Using the Christian Metanarrative**

There are countless questions that arise from Jesus' life, passion, death, resurrection and ascension. Do not let these be all the questions you consider as you begin to use the Jesus metanarrative to help you wrap your head around what is happening. Share these widely.

1. What parts of the Jesus story have influenced my faith and leadership up to now? What parts of the story might I need to explore in order to lead in these times? (Hints: pneumatology, discontinuity, conversion, and...?)
2. How comfortable am I as an individual with the idea that the old has passed away and that something new is to come? What parts of the old wineskins am I most attached to? What will help me let them go? And what of my flock?
3. How change nimble are the people entrusted to our leadership?
4. God has placed me in leadership at this time. What is God asking of me? How willing am I to do as God asks? How do I discover what God wants?
5. How many people affiliated with our parish/diocese will go away when they discover that what was will not return? Who is waiting to join us? What will be the impacts of their absence or presence?

Since no one has done this before, and by this I mean lead in a global pandemic that has stopped the essential characteristic of a local church: its gathering. This means there are no experts, no gurus, and there is no road, let alone a road map. The Spanish poet Antonio Machado said, "We make the road by walking" (in Spanish of course!). This captures the kind of leadership for this day...the kind that sets out walking without a road, let alone a map. How to do that? With Jesus leading the way, and by using what we've seen others use when charting a course. What follows is one schema for how to think about all of this.

## How to Wrap your Head Around This?

1. **Name the signs of the times**
2. **Identify the kind of leadership those signs of the times need**
3. **Assess current leadership and if needed, call forth new leaders and embrace new concepts and skills to lead in these times**
4. **Reach people right now in their short term needs: pastor now even while you think about later**
5. **Begin contingency thinking**
6. **Embrace the humility of learning right along with those you are asked to lead: seek their insights, experience, knowledge and spiritual depth**

There's a set of "how-to's" in a list. Feel free to stop reading now if you feel comfortable taking these steps to your leadership team and moving forward. In the pages that follow, I will break each of these steps down a little, and share some of what I see from where I am for those of you who'd like a little more.

### The Signs of the Times

Let's begin this section with the reason why this is important. *The Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* succinctly states why this is important.

Inspired by no earthly ambition, the Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit. ...To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men (*sic*) ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its explanations, its longings and its often dramatic characteristics.<sup>i</sup>

With that as the reason to begin here, might I suggest a further breakdown of this conversation to the signs of the times that are affecting humanity enduring a pandemic, then the signs of the times in the Church and in the local parish/congregation. And if you are not familiar with this notion of the "signs of the times" the *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* has, beginning with paragraph 4 what is called "Introductory Statement The Situation of Men in the Modern World." It is a look at the signs of the times from the time this document was prepared. The *National Directory for Catechesis* also has a list of the signs of the times that informed the creators of that document. Both will give you a sense of what kinds of elements constitute the "signs of the times".

How to determine the signs of the times with the general population? Take a look at what social scientists are saying about the effect of a situation with so many unknowns, so much potential threat, and systems and structures inside each country responding with varying degrees. Here's some of what is surfacing from this knowledge stream:

- The high degree of uncertainty around this pandemic and the responses to halting it has put human beings in a **constant state of fight or flight**. While the fight or flight response was designed to help human beings through catastrophic circumstances, it can also be triggered by stressors that are not immediately life-threatening. That is what is happening now.<sup>ii</sup> From exhaustion to anxiety, from anxiety to insomnia, from insomnia to depression: all of these are potential results of living in this heightened sense of fight or flight.
- So many major life events have been touched by the pandemic and for almost all of them, the result is loss. Loss of loved ones to the disease without being able to be with them or to hold funerals in the usual ways, of jobs, of graduations, of trips, of weddings, of promotions, of friendships and romances, of marriages and the list goes on and on and on. The result? **Collective grief, collective emotional pain** robbed of its usual reliefs.<sup>iii</sup>
- As systems and structures upon which we've been relying are altered as a result of the pandemic, many **people no longer know where to look for help or where to give help**. Everything's upside down, askew, sideways. The people we'd consult, the places we'd gather, the rituals we'd use are all unavailable to us in the forms in which we knew them. Add to that the magnifying presence of social media, with its memes, bots, fake news, and feel good cat images and there's a **heightened sense of disconnection, and the related sense of powerlessness**.
- This is a once- in- several- generations event, **so everyone is learning at the same time**. There are no experts, no roads, and for sure no road maps. There are people with various categories of expertise, but never before has it been so necessary to gather a team of people to bring all sorts of knowledge to bear. And never before has it been necessary to be quick to change as we learn more, to be adaptive ... rapidly. Leadership teams, rapid adaptation, high degrees of learning, and far too much of not knowing what we don't know have changed the way we are living and working. The Church is experiencing this just as other elements of the culture are...all at the same time.

Each of you serves a particular population as well: those registered as your congregants, and in the Catholic sphere, all those who live within your parish boundaries. That means that there may be some additional signs of the times particular to your constituencies. Here are some questions to ask:

1. Do we live with and serve populations that live in food deserts or who are otherwise food insecure?
2. Do we live with and serve populations who have been disproportionately affected by the closing of bars, restaurants, stadiums, schools and universities?
3. Do we have those on the front lines who belong to us?
4. Are we in service to people of color, immigrants and others who are disproportionately being affected both by the virus, the shut down of the economy and governmental policy?
5. How many of our families are made up of two different faith traditions? How do we offer pastoral care to them?

In addition to identifying the signs of the times for the general population and for your specific constituencies, it is important to look at the signs of the times in the Church. I am going to use the Catholic Church as a reference point here, but other Christian denominations should ask questions pertinent to their overarching Tradition as well as their individual church. Here are some of the signs of the times in the Church right now, along with some related questions to help you think about this.

- The church has become the domestic church now...gathered in homes if it is gathered at all. What do your families, solo households and small communities need to be the church without the institutional support traditionally given?
- Sacraments are missing the community. What does that mean for the efficacy of the sacrament when the people who are to be transformed are separated from the action? What are the known and perhaps unknown impacts of a church without sacraments celebrated with the community? The Pope is giving some insight<sup>iv</sup>
- Many parishes have registered households that could be described as loosely affiliated. You can hypothesize that many of them are not watching Mass online or engaging in other online activities. They may have an underdeveloped prayer life. What other assumptions might you make about your loosely affiliated registered parishioners? How might you find out more?
- A Church focused on knowledge of the faith and practice of the sacraments now must serve a people who need faith to support them emotionally and psychologically without interpersonal contact or communal worship. What are the implications of this?
- Are we experiencing a paradigm shift in how we are church/Church? Why or why not? Resurrection was a paradigm shift. How might we learn from the resurrection narratives about the way a new creation is born?
- Now is the time to access the Church's wisdom regarding the Holy Spirit, a wisdom that may not be as readily accessed as other dimensions of the Tradition. To refresh or begin this contemplation, you might begin with then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's article "The Holy Spirit as Communion: Concerning the Relationship of Pneumatology and Spirituality in Augustine."<sup>v</sup> What are the implications of a deeper trust in the Holy Spirit for your reflection, teaching and preaching in the current moment? How will you lead a people into a new creation, especially if what they long for is the way it was, the way we've always done it? What are the graces and gifts of this moment?

These are some of the signs of the times I see. This is a fruitful conversation for all leadership teams as you consider what is at present and how you minister to the people, witness to Christ's presence and power, and unleash the gifts of the people of God to care for one another. My contemplations are not meant to be prescriptive or definitive, but rather are to serve as the jumping off point for your considerations. The way you read the signs of the times will guide how you follow the Spirit's lead and pastor your people, so it's important not to overlook this step in how you think about what's happening now.

## Identify the kinds of leadership the signs of the times need

I am going to list some characteristics of leaders and some leadership approaches that match the signs of the times in general first. Please allow each of these characteristics and approaches to stimulate a conversation.

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### Characteristics of leaders in these times

- Humble. You are being affected just as others are. You do not have any more knowledge or experience than anyone else. You need comfort and accompaniment, just as others do.
- Ongoing learner. You have embraced this journey as requiring that you re-learn some of what you once knew, re-consider things you'd put aside, and access new knowledge streams as you navigate these uncertain times.
- Self-aware. Again, you are not immune to the stressors of these times. Taking the time to understand what happens to you in high stress situations, and to know how to access the energy appropriately as well as how to offload the responses that will not make the situation better are critical in these times.
- Empathetic listener. It is likely that you will be doing a lot more pastoring in one-on-one situations than perhaps you have been in the recent past. This will require polished empathetic listening skills.<sup>vi</sup>
- Communicative. In uncertain times, folks just feel better when their leaders communicate. What might you be communicating? That depends on how you assess the signs of the times.
- Connected. This is not the time to distance yourself. This is the time to be reaching out, sharing memories and stories, writing notes, and perhaps, just perhaps, helping people engage in anamnesis: the remembering of what has been and bringing that to the present so that it sustains and nourishes in the gap.
- Openly faithful. This is the time to reveal how you are praying, how you are discerning God's presence, how you are walking by faith when there's so little sight, how you are accessing the Scriptures for a new look at the mind of Christ, how you are dancing around fear and faith, and how you are dealing with grief.<sup>vii</sup>
- Truthful. We live in a time where truth is a relative term. (You might have other things to say about this, but suffice it to say that truth is in trouble.) Now more than ever, people are looking for those they can trust, and telling the truth is integral to trust. Tell the truth about finances, about staff, about feelings, about uncertainty, about sleeplessness and yearning for what was. Tell the truth when you don't know, and tell the truth when you've made a mistake: overlooked something, said or done something you wish you could take back, hurt someone, faked faith, cried or yelled. Just tell the truth. Trust comes from there.

### Kinds of leadership these times call for

- Servant leaders. By this I mean a leadership that is focused on what those you are leading need most in these times. How can you support them? Alleviate some fear? Remove barriers to faith? Enable connections?

- Team leaders. As I stated earlier, this is not the time to go it alone. There's too much uncertainty, too many areas to attend to and way too much to be learned for one or two people, or even a staff, to try and pastor alone. This is the time to gather a team and learn how to unleash their gifts on behalf of the people of God.
- Catholic leaders. I know, some of you reading this just went, "Duh!" But bear with me for a minute. By this I mean having a Catholic worldview through which you push today's events. Catholic Social Teaching, Pope Francis' call for a humanity imbued with justice, charity and solidarity<sup>viii</sup>, and of course the idea that Jesus came to inaugurate God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven are primary. So is the perspective that this is the time for the Church to be engaged in the world. This is the time for the Church to not shy away from the "not-Kingdom" things this pandemic is revealing about the disparities between the rich and the poor, how institutional racism is affecting responses, what will happen as this virus strikes the most underdeveloped peoples around the world, and what the notion of the common good looks like in daily living as well as in international affairs. It's also a time for discernment. What was will not be what is. What will be is yet to be seen, but we've some inklings. Catholic leaders will search the Scripture and Tradition for the stories that will help us imagine what God is doing and will do.

After you've spent some time with these ideas, and named other leader's characteristics and leadership approaches you believe these times call for, the next thing to think about is the current leadership team. Do we have the right people? Are they equipped to do the work the signs of the times indicate we must do? What do we need to do to equip those we have and to call forth new leaders?

**Assess current leadership and if needed, call forth new leaders. Embrace new concepts and skills to lead in these times.**

To overuse an overused phrase, these are unprecedented times. That means leaders have to be assembled, assessed, equipped and sent forth in more intentional ways than might have happened up until now. How to think about what's happening? Think about who God has called, gifted and is trying to assemble to pastor His people in these times. Here are some questions to help you think about this:

1. Who is part of our leadership team? What are they currently supposed to be doing? Should their duties shift right now? If so, how?
2. Who ought to be part of the leadership team? Why? How can we invite them to bring their gifts to bear?
3. What's missing among our leadership team in order to meet the needs surfacing in these times? Can someone on the existing team be equipped to meet these needs? What do we do if we discover a huge gap and we cannot figure out how to fill it?
4. Assess your leadership team in terms of the following (add other characteristics you think you'll need to endure the uncertainty of the times for a while):
  - a. Change friendliness or aversion
  - b. Experience in leading paradigm shifts
  - c. Courage to speak the Gospel's challenge
  - d. Ability to apply theological understandings to contemporary situations

- e. Risk taking
  - f. Empathy and compassion
  - g. Accompanying grief, anger and frustration
5. Who can we partner with, collaborate with to extend our leadership capacity? Neighboring parishes, diocesan offices, other service agencies, schools and universities and...?

Keeping in mind what we are doing here, which is mapping out a way to wrap your head around what's happening, another element in this process is to make sure you are reaching your people right now, where they are, letting them feel your presence even as you figure out what that presence ought to be.

**Reach people right now in their short term needs: pastor now even while you think about later.**

In this step, you go back to the signs of the times as they are affecting the general population, and the signs of the times for your people and you start to name the kinds of things those situations call for. What do people want or need right now? Here are some things folks are craving right now, no matter where they are in the world:

- Some certainty to balance the uncertainty. The Christian narrative has a lot of very certain beliefs in it and this is the place to offer them, repeatedly, creatively and consistently:
  - God is always present.
  - God is about a new creation in Jesus Christ and through the Spirit.
  - We do not fear letting go of what we knew and loved so that God might raise up something new.
  - Suffering is a part of Jesus' great promise to be with us: Emmanuel. We do not have a great high priest who does not know suffering!
  - In God's kingdom the good of the other is always paramount so we do what we are doing for the good of the other: friend, enemy, aged, young, frail or hardy. It does not matter.
  - The simple elements of faith sustain: small home-based gatherings around a table, breaking bread and giving thanks, remembering our lives intertwined with Jesus' life, and caring for others are constants in uncertainty.
- Some ways to stave off fear. Jesus said 365 times to not be afraid.<sup>ix</sup> What tools do we have available to counteract fear?
  - Remembering how we have endured in the past (the Exodus story is an example of this)
  - Assurances of what we have at our disposal to deal with the present threats. (Acts of the Apostles shows us the power of combining assets and resources. The parish's works of charity and the larger community's safety net help here.)
  - Focusing on facts and remaining in today. (Today's problems are sufficient unto themselves.)
  - Practice gratitude. We can be eucharist and give eucharist every day through our acts of kindness, compassion, justice and gratitude.

- Some connection to balance the disconnection. Jesus made it clear that we belong to a people. We have the communion of saints. We have our families of origin and our families of creation and of heart. We belong to parishes (although for some that is not a real belonging in terms of connections to other parishioners). This is where you can be creative about fostering connections. Look around at other churches across the denominations. See how they are fostering connections in a time of quarantine that is destined to be followed by a time of social distancing and no touching.
- Some hope to balance the sorrow and grief of all that is lost. (The Catholic treasury of prayers for the sick and dying, her wake and funeral prayers all provide effective templates for prayers of hope in the face of loss. The Scriptures are full of stories of hope. Focus on some of them. And of course, music has the power to bring hope.)
- Some vision for tomorrow: glimmers of light shooting out into the darkness of unknown. You are starting to see glimpses of this on social media. Sonya Renee Taylor's quote (currently attributed to Dr. Brené Brown on various social media platforms) is one that is being widely shared: "We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature."<sup>x</sup> That's a glimmer of light. Leaders are those with a vision. Right now, people need vision to shine light in the darkness. Share some! Invite others to share their hopes and dreams for tomorrow. We're in this together and we can shine light in each other's darkness.

While you are pastoring the present situation, it is also time to begin contingency thinking, not planning. Thinking. This is where you and your leadership team begin to ponder the medium range and longer range scenarios. It's not a waste of time. It helps reduce anxiety, it breeds creativity, it binds the leadership team as "in this together" and it has the potential to give you a leg up when it's time to actually begin to plan for these contingencies.

### **Begin Contingency Thinking**

Now that you have a pastoral plan of action in place for the immediate situation, it's time to begin to think about medium and long range scenarios. Yes, there's a lot that is uncertain. Yes, the President, the Governor and the Bishop all have powers that you do not. That does not excuse you and your team from beginning to think about the different scenarios.

One caveat: this is not time to do very much planning. This is the thinking stage, the imagining of various scenarios and the time to look at what kinds of consequences varying scenarios might have (positive and negative.)

Contingency thinking follows the pattern of "If this: \_\_\_\_\_; then this \_\_\_\_\_; with these consequences \_\_\_\_\_." Believe me, you may already be doing this at 3:00AM when you can't sleep. It's far better to engage in this with your team, to bring your best thinking to bear

so that you reduce surprises, have the certainty of anticipation and so that you are intellectually prepared to think through what actually does happen. Do not make the mistake of saying you will not make the decisions so you should not think about the contingencies. That will place you far behind in response when the larger decisions regarding gathering, testing and other protocols are made.

**For medium range** contingency thinking, you will want to consider some of the following:

If we cannot gather at all until July 1, then: list the impacts on worship, sacraments, initiation, programs, processes, finances, relationships, spirituality, attachment, and administration. After that, list the consequences: both positive and potentially negative that flow from the impacts.

If we can only gather with 6 feet between us...

If we can only gather with 6 feet between us, and not more than 1 person per so many square feet, or not more than 50 or 100...

If we can only gather maintaining the physical distance and we must wear masks and limit numbers...

If it is recommended that everyone over 60 continue to be hypervigilant until there's a vaccine...

If the President, the Governor and the Bishop do not agree on next steps, then...

This is certainly not a complete list, but should be sufficient to start the contingency thinking. Each staff person will have contingencies they will want to put into the mix based on their areas of service and expertise. Parishioners will benefit from being invited to help with contingency thinking. It will give them surety that you are working on this problem now, that you care about what happens and will help them see the parameters within which you are working. All of this builds a relationship of care, concern and trust, which will keep engagement high and hope alive.

Vanderbloemen is one organization that is already engaged in contingency thinking (and perhaps some planning because they come from a Protestant perspective and so have a bit more freedom). Perhaps some of your leadership team might be accessing their conversations to bring what's applicable to your discussions.<sup>xi</sup>

Contingency thinking will characterize your leadership gatherings for the foreseeable future, because once you've some scenarios thought out, you will be waiting to see what happens that changes the scenarios, waiting to see when some parts of a scenario are about to become reality and so you enter into planning, and you will continue to use this to look into the far-future. Far-future contingency thinking plays some scenarios out in the extreme. Here are some examples:

If the virus resurges in the winter and another lockdown happens, then...

If the 70-80% of restaurants/bars predicted to not re-open materializes, then...

If our giving does not recover to 80% of what it was at its best, then...

If people over 60 are advised to stay away from groups, then what does that mean for the ministry of visiting “shut-ins” who are now defined this way?

This is a lot, and it’s a way of leading that is far different from the leading around the former notions of the community gathered, worship, sacraments, initiation, and mission/outreach. Church when the expectation was that the people came to the building to be together is different from church where the community is scattered in small groups, prevented from gathering in significant numbers. Church that was characterized by human interaction, by the touch and sight and smell and sound of the sacraments deprived of the interpersonal interaction is not the same as it was. Church that sought to build relationships and out of those relationships to reach out to the world is a church now tasked with building relationships in different ways and may have a far needier world in which to serve. It’s different and does not portend to return to “what was” anytime soon...if ever. And there is a new medium through which church will be mediated: technology.

To be called to leadership in this time is then a call to humility.

**Embrace the humility of learning right along with those you are asked to lead: seek their insights, experience, knowledge and spiritual depth.**

Ecclesial leaders must acknowledge that nothing they’ve done in their education or experience has prepared them for this. It’s time to embrace the humility of being a “first-timer.” That means coming to terms with your own feelings regarding being a novice or newbie, with your own preferred behaviors when you are new at something and then place them next to the call to leadership. That means inviting all the other first-timers to share in the experience and being cognizant that people behave differently when they’ve never done something before. Some rush right in, rarin’ to go, sure it will all be fine, great, and fun. Others tread far more cautiously, remaining still and quiet until they see what happens, standing along the wall watching and not engaging at all. Others don’t engage again until the dust-up is settled and plenty of people can tell them what to do and how to do it. And some of each type of person may be on your existing leadership team.

This will pose its own challenges for effectiveness and collaboration. And it will take a heavy dose of humility, for in these times, God will call leaders to do what they’ve not done before, and God will call new leaders and prophets. Embracing all that newness, letting go of the comfort of what was, and being humble enough to bow down together in prayer and trust before the God who is creating something new...this is the work of ecclesial leaders today.

## **Conclusion**

The change has happened. You are a leader. You have others sharing leadership with you. Now is the time to lead, for a people without a leader fall into despair and idolatry. Leadership gaps also mean others will run in and try to lead, perhaps not to everyone’s benefit. Too many voices, like too many cooks in the kitchen, tend not to create lovely banquets. I hope these steps to provide a way to begin to think about this enables all of you tasked with ecclesial leadership to have a way to begin...a small pathway...as you all wrap your heads around this, making a new road by walking it...with the Lord.

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<sup>i</sup> *The Church in the Modern World*. #3 and #4

<sup>ii</sup> Cleveland Clinic. “What Happens to Your Body During the Fight or Flight Response?” Health Essentials. December 19, 2019. <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/what-happens-to-your-body-during-the-fight-or-flight-response/> Accessed 4/21/2020

<sup>iii</sup> Here’s a succinct list of the symptoms of grief to assist you in being attentive to the emotional states within your congregations: “Why Experts Talk about Symptoms, Not Stages, of Grief.” 8/30/2017. <https://www.crossroadshospice.com/hospice-palliative-care-blog/2017/august/30/why-experts-talk-about-symptoms-not-stages-of-grief/> Accessed 4/21/2020

<sup>iv</sup> Carol Glatz. “Pope says living faith without sacraments, community is dangerous.” Crux. April 17, 2020. <https://cruxnow.com/cns/2020/04/pope-says-living-faith-without-sacraments-community-is-dangerous/> Accessed 4/22/2020

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.communio-icr.com/files/ratzinger25-2.pdf> Accessed 4/22/2020

<sup>vi</sup> For a look at tips for empathic listening, see <https://www.crisisprevention.com/Blog/7-Tips-for-Empathic-Listening> Accessed 4/22/2020

<sup>vii</sup> For a look at how short stories and examples of how people are handling grief, see the 4/22/2020 column in NCR. “NCR readers share how they are processing grief.” <https://www.ncronline.org/news/people/ncr-today/ncr-readers-share-how-they-are-processing-grief> Accessed 4/22/2020

<sup>viii</sup> Ines San Martin. “Pope Francis hopes after pandemic, humanity has antibodies of justice, charity.” Crux. April 17, 2020. <https://cruxnow.com/covid-19/2020/04/pope-francis-hopes-after-pandemic-humanity-has-antibodies-of-justice-charity/> Accessed 4/22/2020

<sup>ix</sup> <https://www.soulshpherd.org/fear-not-365-days-a-year/> Accessed 4/22/2020

<sup>x</sup> From Sonya Renee Taylor <https://twitter.com/BreneBrown/status/1250818370825596930/photo/1> Accessed 5/6/2020  
For more about her, see [sonyareneetaylor.com](http://sonyareneetaylor.com)

<sup>xi</sup> <https://www.vanderbloemen.com/reopening-church> Accessed 4/22/2020