

COMMUNICATION IN PASTORAL MINISTRY

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Communication is of utmost importance from family life to the corporate world; imagine how important it is in pastoral ministry "Communication is the transmission of understanding."¹ Therefore the objective of communication in pastoral ministry is to clearly hand on the faith in a manner that will be well received and understood. To pastorally communicate understanding; not only handing on information, rather communicating the love of the Father for each of His children especially those struggling with difficult situations. Those in difficult situations may need more of the pastoral approach to understanding the Father's love and that is why communication is considered a skillful art and effective tool.²



The purpose of communication in pastoral ministry has many elements including: to assure the understanding of the parishioners, establish proper office procedures, including written communication, connecting ministries, handling disagreements and most importantly communicate the truth of love.³ Handling conflicts or disagreements in a community setting requires great pastoral care and should be carried out with delicacy and sensitivity to find a healthy solution leaving both parties at peace. Within pastoral communication there are many forms and means used to communicate; writing being the most common and convenient means. Written communication also leaves a trace of what has been communicated for future reference.

Furthermore communication in a community as a Parish Church is so important that without the members of the community can begin to scatter, due to lack of unity or infer in their minds ideas that may not be true. When one is not given the truth one's mind tends to make-up or infer information; which is a gift we have but it must be properly used and informed not to create or invent false statements. The skill of communication can always use improvement and can constantly be refined on a personal and interpersonal level. Communication has its challenges, especially when giving criticism or feedback to encourage improvement. These can be difficult things to communicate but are necessary for human and community growth. If one remains the same in the spiritual life or professional life they are actually falling behind. Some prefer not to hear criticism but the beauty of community, is that those in communion with a person desire their improvement out of love for them, and can lovingly bring them to be the best version of themselves. It is likewise heard to receive criticism and feedback if one does not have a humble disposition or does not receive it with charity. Love for the betterment of the person needs to be at the foundation of the criticism; loving them enough to not allow them to remain where they are but to seek their improvement or greatest potential.

After these brief reflections on the importance of communication in pastoral ministry, I find an interesting paradox of communication in our society. This day and age is obsessed with communication, especially through technological means, but actually there is less communication now than there has ever been and more lonely people than ever. I don't have the full answer to why this is but I think it may have to do with the lack of understanding of actual communication and what the human heart really desires. This brings me to the grave importance of the role of communication in pastoral ministry. In a world where there is so much communication many are not being heard and simply desire a listening hear. Pastoral Ministry is often called to practice the ministry of presence. May we learn to communicate and listen well as we serve our brothers and sisters, following the example of Christ, the chief communicator.

1 Fr. Anaeto, Class notes, Week 13: Lesson 13 Pastoral Communication, PS 805, Holy Apostles.

2 Cf Fr. Anaeto, Class notes, Week 12: Lesson 12 Spirituality of Stewardship, PS 805, Holy Apostles.

3 Fr. Anaeto, Class notes, Week 12: Lesson 12 Spirituality of Stewardship, PS 805, Holy Apostles.

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