

## NEW PASTORAL METHODOLOGY

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Spring 2014

The New Pastoral Methodology is most commonly known as “Pastoral circle” and includes several steps which include Insertion, Social analysis, theological reflection, and planning of the praxis for the future.”<sup>1</sup> This pastoral circle is based on the work of Joe Holland and Peter Henriot in the book “Social Analysis—Linking Faith and Justice” it was published in 1980 and remains as a top resource and method for the practice of pastoral theology.<sup>2</sup> It is formatted to encourage society to prudently and morally deal with issues and concerns that are going to affect the entire society. Let us briefly consider each step in the “Pastoral circle”



The initial step is insertion or sometimes called experience. This is when one experiences a social issue that needs attention, or other times it can be recognized and those that recognize the issue can try to understand the needs of those involved by inserting themselves into the issue. By this insertion they will learn the needs and concerns of the issues. It goes without saying that those willing to learn about the social concern obviously have feelings for the issue and are willing to invest themselves for the betterment of society, a pastoral approach is a one of involvement. This step requires asking many questions to more fully understand the experience and consider all of the aspects of it. The more research at this step allows for the potential of a better outcome.

The next step is a deeper analysis of the experience, it is called Social analysis. This is done to uncover the root cause of the social issue to try to learn the structural, relationships, and causes of the issue. “Analysis is a means of widening our reflection on our experience to search out the relationships between values, events, structures, systems, ideologies. It goes beyond our immediate experience to probe the historical roots and future implications of events and issues and systems.”<sup>3</sup>

Considering the logical implications of the issue they are brought to the Lord through theological reflection and prayer. Considering what or how the Scriptures, Church Social Teaching and the guidance of the Holy Spirit teach us to handle this social issue. We pray for the Lord to enlighten our mind to keep and encourage Christian values in society while improving the current situation. This step is crucial, but to strengthen the process the Lord should be invited into each step.

Gathering what has been observed it is then put into action while considering the just and prudent judgments that have been considered. A plan should be put into place with clear vision and goals to ensure that it will be implemented. If we are able to inform others of our research and plan we can bring about change for thinking naturally leads to action.

1 Anaeto, Dominic, Fr, PS 805, Fundamentals of Pastoral Theology, class notes, Week 3- Lesson 3: Pastoral Methodology,

2 Gonzale, John. The Pastoral Circle, <http://www.passionistjpic.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/The-Pastoral-Circle>.

3The Pastoral Circle Process, Mobilizing People for Justice: From Concern to Action [http://www.faithformationlearningexchange.net/uploads/5/2/4/6/5246709/pastoral\\_circle\\_process](http://www.faithformationlearningexchange.net/uploads/5/2/4/6/5246709/pastoral_circle_process).

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