

Visitation Ministries

Goals:

- Understand the importance of visitation ministries, and mentoring.
- Gain in knowledge and praxis of visitation ministries from parish through institutional settings.
- Appreciate various levels and dimensions of visitation ministries, including CPE training, endorsement, and certification.

Presenters:

Fr. Daniel Degyansky, certified National Association of Veterans Affairs Chaplains (NAVAC)
Elaine Mayol, in process for certification through Association of Professional Chaplains (APC)
Fr. Steven Voytovich, certified Clinical Pastoral Education Supervisor through Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy, (CPSP)

Matt 25: Imperative for ministry in reaching out to one's neighbor
Eph. 4:11-12: Equipping the saints, the whole body with Christ who is the head
John 10, image of the Shepherd tending the sheep
Matt. 10: being sent out in pairs to preach and heal
Stern warning to "shepherds:" Jer. 23, Ez. 34:1-31

Introduction

Eucharist as central to all aspects of parish life, the gathered ecclesia

Ministry as sacrament: We are called to take up our Baptismal gift of ministry upon "departing in peace." Zizioulas: "in returning to the synaxis of the gathered ecclesia, each will bring with him/her the elements of life or the gifts of creation that have been entrusted to him/her, and any fruits of this mission. All this will then become Eucharist at the same time as the People of God gathered and structured in the Eucharistic assembly." Ministry is not an elective for us; it is a significant required aspect of our lives as Christians that ultimately connects us back once again in the Eucharist. Visitation ministry is a way for us to know our neighbor and our self more fully while being good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us. Verna Harrison states in same article that Christ's self-offering in the Eucharist enables our continued life of self-offering in the world.

Components of ministry outreach from Jesus' example:

Kenotic: self-emptying, ecstatic: going beyond self

Healing in NT: meaning as a menial attendant or cherishing servant, remember here the washing of the feet John 13.

Importance of relational dimension in pastoral care: listening, attending, praying, even the sacraments attain their fullness within this relational connection between the sick person and his/her parish community.

Each presenter will present, offering some insights, and reflections on visitation including parish and institutional ministry.

Focus on training, mentoring, and pathway to institutional ministry

Just as spiritual direction is important in our spiritual life, so also is reflection on one's ministry important for developing good pastoral care skills

On the Road to Emmaus, quintessential supervisory encounter

Jesus joins Luke and Cleopas as they are reflecting upon the events occurring in Jerusalem, noticing that they are sad. Then he opens to them the Scripture as their hearts are burning within them. Later, at table, they know it is Jesus. The story doesn't end with this Eucharistic connection, rather they are inspired and return, at that hour, to Jerusalem.

Clinical Pastoral Education model of action, reflection, renewed action.

Our ministry encounters need to be reflected upon in order that we can more fully explore what was occurring for the one being visited, and how well the pastoral visitor responded.

Pastoral supervision is a method of doing and reflecting on ministry in which a supervisor (teacher) and one or more supervisees (learners) covenant together to reflect critically on their ministry as a way of growing in self-awareness, ministering competence, theological understanding, and Christian commitment. *Transforming the Rough Places: The Ministry of Supervision*, by Kenneth Pohly, Providence House Publishers, Franklin, 2001, p. 107

It would be good in parish practice to follow Jesus' example of sending out disciples two by two, to preach the Good News and to heal. Then all can come together to share their learning, which occurs both actively and vicariously. A trained mentor can facilitate such discussions and learning, enhancing the caregivers life of faith.

Other areas of focus

Institutional settings: hospitals, hospices, extended care, psychiatric, substance abuse, correctional, others. Clinical Pastoral Education as training for ministry. Endorsement by Orthodox Church in America, and certification within various credentialing bodies. This represents our witnessing to the Orthodox Faith both to non-Orthodox and within the greater caregiving community. More information is available in these areas.

Some Examples

Discussion/Questions

The Rev. Steven Voytovich, D.Min.
St. Vladimir's Seminary Faith in Action Parish Ministries Conference
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