

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Leadership Roundtable convened its 2020 Catholic Partnership Summit on the topic “From Crisis to Co-Responsibility: Creating a New Culture of Leadership.” Former Pope Benedict XVI called for greater co-responsibility, saying that laity must no longer be viewed as “collaborators” but recognized as “co-responsible” for the Church. More recently, Pope Francis has called for greater lay involvement and synodality, saying, “A synodal church is a listening church.... It is a reciprocal listening in which each one has something to learn.” To this end, Leadership Roundtable sought to bring together clergy and lay leaders to address how co-responsibility can help the Church respond to its multiple crises.

Approximately 260 Catholic leaders gathered in Washington, DC from across the United States and the Vatican. This executive summary contains the major themes and high-level proposals that emerged from the panelists and table conversations. The full report contains articles on the four major topics that were discussed, along with the top recommendations from the participants for creating a new culture of leadership in the Church.

Envisioning a New Culture of Leadership

1. Transform the leadership culture to create a thriving Church

The Church’s culture of leadership not only needs to change, but to be transformed in order to advance a thriving Church. This begins with transforming our relationships, with Christ and with one another. This new culture of leadership prioritizes co-responsibility, listening, discerning, and welcoming the diversity and talents of all the Body of Christ.

2. Restore trust through servant leadership

Trust is the outcome of integrity. In order to restore trust, leaders must not only do the right thing, but also show their integrity through the way they lead. The Church needs servant leaders who are willing to walk with the rest of God’s people on pilgrimage; to serve with vulnerability and humility; to choose love over fear, inclusion over exclusion.

A Culture of Co-Responsible Governance and Leadership

3. Develop and implement new models of co-responsible governance

Catholic leaders must create new models of

co-responsible governance and shared decision-making. Healthy governance requires transparency and accountability which includes national standards, external audits, and public reports. Dioceses could look to Catholic healthcare, higher education, and charities for models of governance.

4. Enhance personnel management and assessment of all leaders

Best practices in personnel management are required in order to promote a culture of co-responsible governance and leadership. This includes effective selection, clarity of roles, 360-degree feedback, transparent promotion processes, family-friendly policies, and just compensation. The Church needs a management culture in which candor is encouraged, conciliation bodies are in place, whistleblower policies are publicly known, and restorative justice models are practiced.

5. Implement a synodal approach

Catholic leaders can build relationships, trust, and accountability through regularly scheduled listening processes at the national, diocesan, and parish level. All synods need a diversity of voices in delegate selection.

6. Invest in the formation of lay and ordained leaders

More leadership formation and common standards are needed for Catholic leaders. Dioceses could seek expertise and resources from Catholic universities. Additionally, Catholic leaders will benefit from mentoring, coaching, and intercultural competency training. It is important for seminary formation to take place within a diverse student body and be taught by diverse faculty, with lay faculty involved in initial screening and subsequent evaluations.

A Culture of Ethical Financial Management and Stewardship

7. Advance ethical financial leadership and management

As the Church faces a financial crisis, it is necessary for the Vatican and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to create structures and laws for ethical financial leadership, such as financial versions of the universal law *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* and the U.S. Dallas Charter & Essential Norms. Healthy financial management requires the establishment of common financial and accounting protocols, compliance standards, audits, reporting, and training that could be enacted through a lay association of chairpersons of diocesan financial councils.

8. Empower finance councils

All diocesan and parish finance councils should have clarity about their roles and responsibilities, and be supported in implementing best practices as they select members, orient new members, and conduct business.

9. Promote ethical and faithful stewardship

Financial resources belong to the people of God. Greater formation is needed in the biblical roots of stewardship and how it is lived today, especially related to best

practices in ethical fundraising, parishioner engagement, disposition of gifts, and investment of funds.

A Culture with Young Adult Catholics at the Leadership Table

10. Create structures and support for emerging Catholic leaders

Catholic leaders must create a seat at the leadership table and a voice in decision-making for young adults in the Church today. In order to support these emerging leaders, there is a significant need for investment in ministerial education and leadership development, as well as more just personnel policies and practices for those working in the Church.

11. Ensure gateway moments and attention to diversity

Catholic leaders at the diocesan and parish level must provide pastoral care for young adults at different stages of life and moments of transition. These encounters should be welcoming in tone, sensitive to diverse cultures, and reach a broad range of young adults. Moreover, Catholic leaders need to deepen their understanding of the issues that young adults face and create a safe space for dialogue about these issues.

12. Develop ministry with, for, and by young adults

The Church must invest in innovative approaches that engage young adults and involve them in the creation and implementation of ministries. It is important to accompany young adults in their faith journey; to help them encounter Christ in new ways and to experience community. Additionally, Church leaders should share best practices in leadership development to equip each successive generation of young adult leaders.