

HUNTLEY LEADERSHIP

Ready for Coaching? Getting help before you hit the wall

Parish Leadership Coaching can mark the beginning of a new journey where more effective leadership emerges and is nurtured, bringing with it transformation and profound joy.

If you are passionate about parish renewal and you have tried everything you can, and you are feeling stuck - perhaps now might be the time to get help to determine your next steps? Perhaps coaching is worth a try?

How do you recognize the right moment for you to seek guidance? Coaching can mark the beginning of a new journey where more effective leadership emerges and is nurtured, bringing with it transformation and profound joy.

Priests and bishops face numerous challenges in leading renewal

Our priests work incredibly hard, often taking on far more than they should. There is a nobility of spirit and a current of strength in them. They frequently live an incredible devotion to Jesus and His church. It's pretty cool.

Similarly with Bishops. They are chosen from among their peers for their exemplary character. They are role models of faith and faithfulness.

Priests and Bishops share a similar passion around what they want for the church and what they want for their people. Bishops want their priests to be healthy, to enjoy their vocation and to be fruitful. Priests want their people to enjoy a close relationship with Jesus nurtured through a vibrant and healthy parish.

The question is HOW?

***We know we should share our faith,
we know we should evangelise
- but how?***

***As a Catholic Church we are not as strong on the 'how' as
we are on the 'what'!***

Being the Bishop of a diocese is much harder than many people realise. There are a lot of expectations, a lot of moving parts, a lot of demands on your time, a lot of decisions and a lot of external pressures. It can be easy to get lost in the whirlwind of ministry. Even though they may have a heart for renewal, their schedule gets choked with things that aren't necessarily aligned with the things that would be necessary to bring that heart to life. Resources and finances are huge problems - not enough priests, not enough money, competing priorities.

There's a lot of pressure on priests, too. Pressure from their parishioners and frequently pressure from the diocese. There is talk about making new disciples and leading parish renewal - and they want to do it. They want to have that missionary impact, but they feel overwhelmed. They feel that they don't have enough resources and that they don't have anyone that has their back. The diocese can encourage a missionary vision for its parishes, but it is the clergy who actually have to lead it and do it.

When is the best time to access Parish Leadership Coaching?

Coaching can provide valuable support and guidance to clergy and their teams in navigating the challenges of working towards renewing the Church.

Have you tried everything you know how to do? Have you used everything in your tank and feel as though you are about to hit a wall? Yet you may have an awareness you still have a long way to go to lead effective renewal. If this is you, you may be ready to consider coaching. You might believe there's more that can be done, and you're not burnt out yet, but you have no further solutions to bring to table for the problems that you're facing.

This is the place where coaching might make sense.

If you get to a place of unfruitfulness or decline and you stay there too long, you can get burnt out and jaded. Then it could become too late to receive coaching. Because you just have no energy left. You've lost hope. Your heart is broken. You no longer want to learn.

Lay people can feel disheartened too. You might be on a leadership team or parish pastoral council, or you've raised your kids in the church and now none of them go to church anymore. It can feel as though nobody notices or cares how bad things are! You long to collaborate in a way that gets momentum and pushes back the tide of decline. You can be frustrated at the lack of vision and energy in your 'lifeless' parish. Lay people can often see that their pastor and their team need help to move forward.

Coaching starts with a one-year commitment, but often extends over a number of years. We find that as people evolve as leaders, that as they became more fruitful in their ministry, as they learn how to lead out of teams, mobilize people for ministry, and really start a movement of transformation in Jesus - that the nature of their problems shift. As leaders, as you solve one problem, you create two more - your problems don't go away, they evolve into new and different problems. Therefore, through each of the parish renewal phases, the nature of the support the coach provides changes.

When you find a coach you can trust, when there's a good fit, you know it! You are much more likely to go further faster with someone you connect with. There are a lot of options and opportunities out there - look for a coaching relationship where there is 'fit' and resonance.

Pastors can understandably feel hesitant to begin coaching. They can feel as though they need to get their leadership in order before asking for support - much like the homeowner who cleans their house prior to the arrival of the house-cleaner, not wanting them to see their mess!

Priests have found, as they have commenced coaching with us, that it isn't as scary as they thought. Because at Huntley Leadership we meet people where they actually are.

It starts with YOU, with who YOU are. It's not a method that we foist upon you. It's the complete opposite. It is about firstly understanding you, the person we are working with - celebrating how you're uniquely and wonderfully made, understanding your leadership style, your charisms, your gifts. Then we help you build (or hone) a team around you, that helps you focus on evangelization and leadership. This team then brings good leadership and sound principles to build up the five systems towards a more healthy parish.

As pastors and Bishops have taken the jump into coaching, they often find that it's exactly what they needed. It provides much-needed impetus to get them towards where they want to go. This is borne out in how often we coach people for multiple years, as initial one-year agreements turn into fruitful multiple-year relationships. With a diocese, it's usually a three-year initial term because of the bigger scope of the work to be accomplished.

What is coaching? What happens?

- **Coaching is not about “fixing” people.** Sometimes Bishops or teams will engage a coach for their clergy, in the hope that they will be somehow ‘fixed’. Rather than ‘fixing’, coaching aims for transformation. As they see themselves differently, as their identity starts to shift, as they take responsibility for outcomes and fruitfulness, and as they start to become more intentional and skill up, they start to get results, and their leadership is transformed in a way that frequently far exceeds what they ever dreamed or hoped for.
- **Coaching is not consulting.** A consultant studies you and your organization, gathers all the data and tells you what to do, so that you can then do it. Your leadership coach is more like a sports coach who joins you in the battle – they build a championship team out of you. The pastor is like the lead goal scorer and we build around him so that the whole team knows how to contribute in ways that we can push back the trends of culture.

**Coaching is seeing the best.
Speaking the best.**

And calling the best out in clergy and their teams so that we can win the day for Jesus.

- **Coaching is a coming alongside as someone who ‘gets it’.** Clergy who decide to be coached have passion and want to make a difference. They can have a feeling of relief that they're talking with somebody who ‘gets it’, that the coach is on their side and they've got an ally. So often clergy feel like they're battling on their own. The coach comes alongside, and firstly seeks to understand them in a very customized way. Then the coach helps them, if they don't already have a team, to get a team around them. With that team can come a

feeling of relief, of a release from carrying a solitary burden, of excitement. A coach can help you rekindle your hope for having greater Kingdom impact.

- **Coaching helps you get ‘unstuck’.** When feel stuck, your coach is there. Through conversations, sharing of experiences and wrestling possibilities you can find the next wave of breakthrough. You problem-solve together confident that you can communicate without being judged.

Is now the time to get started?

- **You are never fully ready to take on this journey. But:**
 - if you believe there's more,
 - if you're not jaded and burnt out,
 - if you have hope for greater impact,
 - if you believe in the power of Jesus,
 - and if you have already tried everything you thought would work, and you feel stuck or you're heading towards a wall,**then get coaching NOW - while you still have hope!**
Contact Huntley Leadership [here](#) and let's talk!
- **You feel ready to get started:** you may have read a few parish renewal books (or a lot of them), attended conferences or listened to podcasts. Now you feel ready to begin to lead more intentionally towards parish renewal. We would love to hear from you! Click [here](#) to fill in a form and we'll be in contact.
- **The Parish Leadership Course for Pastors is often a first step for those wanting to explore parish leadership coaching.** Over a series of six sessions, you and a small cohort of fellow-clergy are introduced to the foundational steps of parish renewal. Through videos, personal reflection and discussions you will gain an understanding of what it takes to renew a parish and go in a missional direction. Afterwards, a decision can be made about one-on-one deep dive coaching for you and your team. We have courses starting regularly. To enrol go to the website [here](#)
- **Maybe what you're looking for isn't something that Huntley Leadership is a good fit for?** Feel confident that if, together in conversation, we decide that we are not the best fit for you and your team, we will refer you on to someone who can support you more fruitfully. Because if we decide that we're going to get into this together, it has to be a win-win situation.
We want to make the most of your time and ours for the greater glory of God and the growth of the kingdom of God in our time!

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