

CALLED FOR MORE

Case Study

*Looking Back at Five Years of Ministry
and Learning for our Pastors*



Catholic Leadership
INSTITUTE

OBJECTIVES

Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI) felt a call from the Holy Spirit to do more for our priests. We heard a call – loud and clear – from the priests we serve that there was a place in their ministry where they were in need of further support. That call led to our innovative effort, *Called For More*.

SOLUTIONS

As we answered the call, we experienced a great gift – wisdom. This case study is meant to share this wisdom with priests, leaders, and dioceses so that we may better care for and foster happier, healthier, and holier shepherds.

Called For More offered key areas of support, including:

- **Priest Placement:** data gathering and technology create efficient and effective ways to match priests gifts to the needs of parishes. This intentional, strategic placement of priests has never been done before in our Church.
- **Transition Plans:** to support new assignments, priests will be accompanied in the creation of growth plans that care for priests corporally and spiritually.
- **Personalized Support:** ongoing coaching, feedback, mentoring, and support is available for priests to grow as leaders and tackle the issues they face as pastors.

In this report, you will read about the goals, milestones, results, impact, and what is next for the future of our ministry of emboldening the clergy and supporting their vocations in the following structure and through the eyes of four priests who helped lead the way for *Called For More*.

WHAT IS CALLED FOR MORE?

A two-year revitalization process using data and analysis of ministry to provide Church leaders with focus and courage to engage the culture with an apostolic mindset, creating a space for clergy to recall and live into the joy of their ministry and forming them to be more intentional with those they serve for and with.



I like to say that Catholic Leadership Institute's work is a marriage between the human science of leadership and the pastoral heart of the Church.

Archbishop Nelson Perez
Archdiocese of Philadelphia



WE ARE CALLED

Meet the Pastor

In Lansing, a struggling priest bounced from parish to parish, questioning his vocation, convinced he was not meant to be a priest. *Called For More* discovered why this was happening and created a path of learning to overcome the tension about his vocation and his struggle to succeed. In Tulsa, a highly effective priest suspected that something was holding him back in his leadership but could not articulate it. *Called For More* identified it clearly and supported his development. In other dioceses, priests are unsure of how to best use their gifts in ministry. *Called For More* helped these dioceses realize those shepherds' unique gifts and talents and employ those gifts for the good of our Church. These are the men for whom priests around the country – including Fr. Tom, Fr. Chris, Fr. Steve, and Fr. Kastl – worked, planned, and dreamed alongside CLI to ensure they could be supported.

Background

Catholic Leadership Institute identified an opportunity to transform the process of assigning priests to parishes and supporting them through critical ministry transitions. This resulted from serving 121 dioceses, 295 bishops, 6,185 priests & seminarians, and 36,258 lay leaders in the Catholic Church for 30 years.

In this process, CLI studied and worked alongside pastors across the country, analyzed our work over years of service to our Church, and dove into the data from our Disciple Maker Index Survey (DMI).

Inspired by love for priests, this innovative, data-informed initiative became what is now referred to as, *Called For More*. From 2018 until 2022 (the time of this case study), this endeavor forged a new reality where priests are self-aware, accepting of feedback, equipped with leadership knowledge, inspired, and equipped to plan for the future and bring more people to Christ.

This initiative encourages priests to look deeply into their hearts and into the priest assessment data to discover those gifts and better apply and grow those gifts as praise back to God. *Called For More* provides data and guidance in creating channels for pastors to catalyze the gifts of their parishioners and the strengths and opportunities of their parishes. In addition, dioceses discover, match, and deploy priestly gifts within parishes where each can best use his talents.

WISDOM! ACRONYM

This case study is organized by the WISDOM! acronym:

We Are Called

introduction, purpose, and abstract

Identifying the Challenge

the obstacle, opportunity, and solution

Sowing the Seeds for Change

methodology, milestones, and measurements of success

Daring to Make a Difference

results, analysis, and insights

Outstanding Learnings for Our Church

observations, themes, and refinements

More

next steps, learnings, and call to action

! (Exclamation Point)

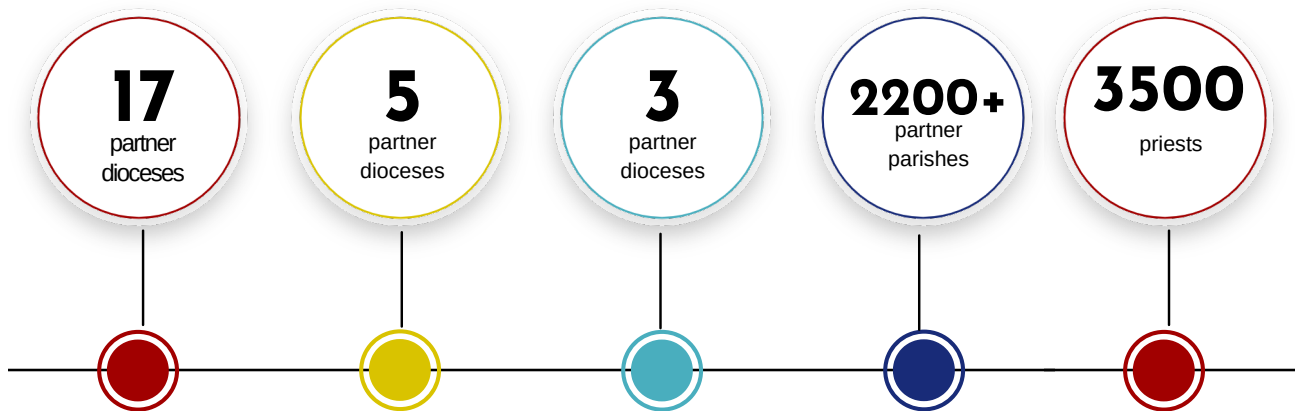
impact, inspiration, and testimonials

“Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding.” Proverbs 3:13



National Scope

Below is a snapshot of our current and projected reach as of this report's completion date of January 2024:



17 Partner dioceses, where *Called For More* is complete to date

5 Partner dioceses, where *Called For More* is in progress to date

3 Partner dioceses, where *Called For More* is scheduled in 2023

2200+ Parishes impacted by *Called For More*

3500 Priests participating in *Called For More*

Purpose

CLI's Founder, Tim Flanagan, established Catholic Leadership Institute on the vision that Church leaders needed and deserved leadership formation. Tim's favorite quote is: "God's gift to us is our potential, and what we do with it is our gift back to God." *Called For More* has a similar aim in helping priests better identify their God-given gifts and use them for His glory.

Called For More builds and refines a healthier, comprehensive pastoral placement, support, and transition process in the Catholic Church. Fulfilling this mission requires research, development, facilitation, innovation, and coaching that inspires exponential impact for dioceses, priests, and parishes. This data-driven effort prioritizes care for priests' corporal and spiritual needs, fostering leadership, education, and vitality so that priests are better equipped to care for the parishes they shepherd.

This case study offers the profound learnings discovered, implemented, and cultivated as well as the important insights about the priestly vocation and challenges of pastoring and the confirmed deep need for *Called For More*, as of December 2022.



IDENTIFYING THE CHALLENGE

Meet the Pastor

There are ripple effects both within the parish and throughout the diocesan landscape when a priest is not properly matched with the best parish or when his transition is overwhelming and under-supported. Almost 70% of priests look to others to create a roadmap or process they can follow. Given these percentages, it is less likely that most priests will feel confident or competent to design a program of self-care and support for themselves. Priest like Fr. Steve Verhelst, pastor of four parishes in the Diocese of New Ulm, need a roadmap to follow and shape their efforts. However, they may not be willing to ask for the help they need or find the support they need. *Called For More* provides this plan, support, and guidance.



It was challenging being made a pastor only three years after his ordination, but even more so because I was asked to pastor four parishes! After several years, I became overwhelmed by the idea of having to do ministry in four places at the same time and I knew I needed to seek out additional support if I wanted to continue serving well in my vocation. I needed a plan and a roadmap.

Fr. Steve Verhelst

Pastor, Diocese of New Ulm

The Challenge

After years of formal research, experience, and information gathering, CLI identified a game-changing opportunity to transform the process by which pastors are assigned to parishes and supported through these critical ministry transitions. The current reality – often haphazard, reactive, and more focused on “plugging holes” than matching strength with need – hinders not only priests from thriving in their Catholic ministry settings and their congregations from coming to know Jesus more deeply through their participation in a flourishing parish community. Fr. Steve is just that story of an overwhelmed priest faced with daunting challenges and in need of accompaniment. *Called For More* was designed with priests like Fr. Steve in mind, so that we may put processes, support, plans, and great care in place to get ahead of these obstacles, walk with our shepherds, and discern a path forward.

The Solution

To meet this challenge head-on, Catholic Leadership Institute recognized a great opportunity to transform the process of assigning priests to parishes and supporting them through critical ministry transitions by:

- Using technology to better align priests' gifts and skills with the needs of the parish community as part of the placement process.
- Equipping pastors and their new parishes with an individualized, long-term transition plan.
- Offering a targeted roadmap for self-care and professional development to support pastors through their ministry transitions.

Inspired by love for priests, the innovative, data-informed initiative, *Called For More*, forges a new reality where priests have the tools to grow in self-awareness, receiving feedback, leadership, and planning, and utilizing their gifts to bring more people to Christ. Reflected in its name, this effort spurs priests to embrace the call to maximize their leadership potential.



Our Hypothesis

As we began to dream about and plan for this endeavor, Catholic Leadership Institute believed that providing transformational care for priests enables happier, holier, and healthier priests to provide a similar level of care for the parishioners entrusted to them. We believed that dioceses could be bolstered by technology and data-based support, priestly gifts could be discovered and integrated to best shepherd a parish, and rich insights could inform, inspire, and ignite parishes.

CLI strongly believed that transformational care for priests – both spiritually and corporally – enables happier, holier, and healthier priests who could then provide a similar level of care to the parishioners entrusted to them. This pilot has proved that to be true.

SOWING THE SEEDS FOR CHANGE

Meet the Pastor

Among the 121 dioceses CLI has served, it is common for pastors to be assigned to parishes with little consultation and even less helpful information prior to the transition. Likewise, there is often little objective information used to initially discern the assignment as opposed to matching a leader's strengths with specific parish needs. *Called For More* transforms this process with data, discernment, and clarity.

I was handed a file with some basic financial and statistical information and invited to contact the current pastor. I was told wonderful anecdotes about St. Raymond, but there was little to no actual data about the neighborhood or the parish. I am not sure the staff of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia or the people of the parish were fully aware of the great financial and pastoral needs of the community at that point. In addition, the archdiocese did not have any mechanisms or resources to assist me in assuming the role of pastor for the first time, other than a few basic workshops that informed me of diocesan policies and procedures.

Fr. Chris Walsh

Pastor of St. Raymond
Archdiocese of Philadelphia



Fr. Chris Walsh, pastor of St. Raymond - a primarily African American parish in the inner city - is just one example of the anxiety that is often caused by lack of information and need to do better for our priests at this critical juncture of their ministry. His experience had made access to quality information, transition planning, and a focus on the emotions and personal care for our priests a cornerstone of this pilot. *Called For More* is CLI's roadmap for inspiring that change.



Key Activities

Called For More revolutionizes the discernment, appointment, and transition of priests through intentional, research-based, and faith-filled attention to:

- **Innovative Technology Integration:** Parishes participate in assessment via the *Disciple Maker Index (DMI)* survey and priests participate in a deep personal assessment.
- **Priest Placement:** Intentional strategic placement for priests aligns their gifts and skills with identified parish needs. Personalized support and tools further foster those talents.
- **Growth Plans:** Pastors and parishes have means and tools to formulate individualized, long-term growth plans to help priests transition, lead, and establish parish vision.
- **Personalized Support:** Sustaining resources include guidance in creating and utilizing targeted roadmaps for self-care, mentorship, coaching, and professional development.

Ministry Milestones

Year 1: Orient, Invite, & Gather Data

- Priests: Priests are fully oriented and begin an assessment process via CLI's technology-based survey and peer assessments.
- Parishes: Every parish in the diocese begins *Disciple Maker Index* Survey.
- Archdiocese: Collaboration, training, and assessment with diocesan staff.

Year 2: Assess, Plan, & Support

- Priests: Priests receive consultations about their personal profile results, begin synthesizing their data into personal growth plans, and are invited to special mentorship opportunities.
- Parishes: After assessing the results of *Disciple Maker Index* Surveys, priests and parish leaders receive instruction on how to understand DMI data and create parish action plans.
- Archdiocese: CLI Leadership Consultants provide ongoing support to archdiocese, including support in utilizing data and coaching and placing priests.

***Called For More's* multi-dimensional approach touches every parish in a diocese and supports the bishops' leadership while deepening the love entrusted to dioceses for shepherds and their flocks.**



DARING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Meet the Pastor

Like many priests, I am quick to put the needs of others before my own. Amid the stress of transitioning to a new parish, I quickly gained 20 pounds in my first year as a pastor. Only when my health became an issue did I finally allocate the time and support I needed to get things in check. I have since lost almost 100 pounds and my people are better served because of my increased energy level and better leadership discipline.

Fr. Tom Wittingham

Pastor, Archdiocese of Philadelphia



Fr. Tom's story is not uncommon. According to CLI's research, 45% of priests are instinctively more likely to accommodate others' needs before their own. *Called For More* places high importance on focusing on the needs of the priest as a whole person, spiritually, corporally, and in his personal life. As a result, Fr. Tom can better minister to his flock.

Fr. Tom's story was eye opening in helping us truly see that we must care for our shepherds as a person and child of Jesus. They have professional, spiritual, and physical needs. In *Called For More*, we committed to better sustain and nurture priests in their needs. Below you will see some of the ways in which we cared better for our pastors.



Rich Results

Called For More has been a gamechanger in:

- strengthening dioceses via technology and data-based support.
- equipping priests with growth plans and with meaningful feedback.
- guiding pastors and parishes in strong action planning.
- informing, inspiring, and igniting parishes with rich insights and data.
- discovering and employing priestly gifts to best shepherd parishes.
- disseminating best practices on a national level.



Our summary results below are categorized by the impact on pastors, parishes, and dioceses:

Pastors Served by *Called For More* – Three Broad Categories of Participating Pastors

Supporting over 2,000 priests, we observe – not surprisingly – that different priests are having different experiences.

- **Focused on Feedback & the Future:** The first and top-performing segment of priests involves experiencing, coaching, and mentoring them for the first time and utilizing their learnings and support to look toward the future with growth plans, continuous learning, self-directed goals, and ongoing formation. This category of pastors ranges from highly effective pastors to pastors who are struggling in their vocation. One example is an outstanding pastor from the Diocese of Tulsa. Thriving as a leader, he sensed that there was something holding him back in his relationship with parishioners and in his leadership that he could not articulate. Looking at both his *Called For More* priestly assessment in tandem with *Disciple Maker Index* feedback from his congregation, it was abundantly clear that his lack of optimism was the missing piece that he could not put his finger on; it was creeping into his interactions with his flock and affecting his planning for the future. Committed to personally developing and availing himself of *Called For More's* toolkit and support, this priest was grateful to finally understand and grow.
- **Covid Catalysts with Proactive Parishioners:** The second category of priests does not concentrate as acutely on themselves individually. Rather, they are more focused on working alongside parishioners to drive change and vision through *Disciple Maker Index* data. They are focused on jumpstarting parish life in the wake of Covid, with a great desire to hear from parishioners out of concern for the future of their parish. This part of our experience with pastors and parishes is enlightening, encouraging, and integral to how CLI will sustain and improve *Called For More*.
- **Struggling... Yet Stepping Forward:** One constant need throughout *Called For More* is that of a mindset shift to providing feedback. The third and lowest-performing category of priests struggles with this. In many cases, *Called For More* is the very first time they receive feedback. They grapple with emotions around how they are seen and experienced. Providing feedback is the first systemic step in shifting this mindset. This is an immense step forward and a new experience for priests and the Church.

Thinking Differently; Leading Differently

- **Priestly Gifts Discovered & Integrated to Best Shepherd Parishes:** CLI's many levels of accompaniment, expertise, and instructive tools within *Called For More* provide priests with awareness of leadership preferences and skills, consultation to support ministry preferences, individualized growth plan opportunities, and new means of pastoral support. Every priest participates in an inventory of preferences, ministry assignments, and competencies, often for the first time. They are usually surprised, encouraged, and hopeful as a result. *Called For More* offers priests the space and support to create growth plans to care for themselves spiritually and corporally, outlining formational training needs and approaches for ministry. Peer support and mentoring resources, based on competency inventories, have increased self-care evaluations and practices amongst priests - something very rarely considered in ministry. Pastors are leading with purpose, planning, data, and joy.



Thinking Differently; Leading Differently, continued

- **Pastors Benefitted by Data-Driven Decision Making:** Pastors are thinking differently in their congregational leadership by using the Disciple Maker Index to truly see where they are as a parish, where they want to go, and how to use data, vision, and the gifts of their parishioners to get there. Truly knowing their sheep offers a channel for new leaders to rise and support the priorities of their parish community. When transitioning to a new pastoral role, knowing the landscape, strengths, and needs of a parish is also invaluable. The DMI has taken an increasingly significant and impactful role as pastors deeply desire a snapshot of their parishes post-Covid. The Diocese of Lansing is one example of a new perspective on looking toward the future, handling pastor transitions, and rallying the community resulting from the guidance of *Called For More*.
- **Convocations, Connecting & Coaching:** Convocation gatherings for diocesan leaders and priests facilitate the review of inventory results and creation of growth plans. At these gatherings, dioceses identify and invite coaches to provide guidance to priests on training and development plans, based on analysis of parish survey results and priest assessments. Priests are then encouraged and provided support into creating growth plans. Connecting priests with expert leaders from a variety of areas and working with a mentor on growth goals increases their circle of support and resources for learning, growing, and fellowship. We have seen coaches provide invaluable knowledge regarding leadership, financial management, execution of tasks, spiritual guidance, meeting planning assistance, tips for balancing habits and expectations, and ways to lead with confidence and competence. In light of struggles to inspire priests to participate in coaching, we have a clear opportunity to market and encourage priests to take advantage of this aspect of *Called For More*. One priest confided that as a result of working with a coach, “I am sleeping better at night.”
- **Shifting Stuck Mindsets:** The need for a shift in mindsets has been a motif throughout *Called For More*. Prior to this initiative, the Diocese of Orange used coaching activities as disciplinary actions for a failing parish. *Called For More* shifts the paradigm. There is a desire to know. Priests want to know more about their leadership style; they are seeking constructive feedback; they have a greatly deepened desire to know the path to becoming stronger shepherds. In the same light, parishes want to know about the beliefs and spiritual journeys of the people in the pews. Dioceses want to better know their landscapes, priests, and temperatures of parishes.
- **Leveraging the Gifts of All Priests:** One of the most promising stories from *Called For More* is found in the Diocese of Cleveland. The diocese found new ways to leverage the gifts of these priests and create opportunities to share them. At a time when our number of priests is lacking, this endeavor has uncovered a way to take priests with a variety of unique gifts and best place them in ministry opportunities. Also in Cleveland, Vicar for Clergy, Fr. Dan Schlegel, has a great diligence and passion for building the coach mentor network. His focus has been on aligning the skillsets of coach mentors to the needs of pastors and parishes. His dedication has sparked priests’ willingness to learn and has played a role in finding a place for each priest to live his vocation with purpose.



Congregational Impact: Parishes

- **Rich Insights Inform, Inspire, & Ignite a Parish:** *Called For More* has seen over 1600 parishes take the *Disciple Maker Index*. A *Called For More* parish is poised to thrive. Each parish receives an objective assessment of its community landscape, parishioner voices and dynamics, as well as a snapshot of parishioners' faith journeys that can be leveraged in creating a multi-year plan for growth. Every parish in the diocese participates in the *Disciple Maker Index* to measure strengths and growth opportunities. Success is evidenced when this knowledge is put into action to aid parish growth, deepen spiritual engagement, and foster community discipleship. Priestly participation and DMI parish participation contribute to this success. As a pastors' vitality, faith, and health is enhanced from *Called for More* learnings, so too is that of their parishes.
- **Vitality of Parishes Explored:** One key learning is that parish vitality is concentrated in very few people. Only 5-10% of parishioners are volunteering more than four hours a week outside of Mass. *Called For More* first asks a pastor to assess his own gifts. Equipped with that knowledge, he is better able to invite members of his parish to share their gifts.
- **Need to Overcome Nostalgia:** Within our on-the-ground ministry in parishes, there is often a lingering mindset of nostalgia and belief that the parish of the past is what the parish actually is at any given time. While parishes struggle to see themselves for where they truly are, the *Disciple Maker Index* reveals that data with clarity and creates a space for parishes to assess themselves accurately and move forward. This is a crucial step for parishes struggling to adapt.
- **Confirmations, Challenge, & Confession:** Fr. Scott Jablonski in the Diocese of Madison was a leader in bringing *Called For More* to his diocese. He speaks of the DMI: "It's been really interesting in the sense that it's confirmed things that I thought I knew. It also has challenged some other things that I thought I knew." Fr. Scott was surprised by how few of his flock believed in the Real Presence of the Eucharist, how many people relied on the Church for their relationship with God, and the level of support and trust his parishioners had in him, even as a new pastor who began his assignment during Covid. He found that areas for improvement included equipping his people to share their witness and evangelize, creating retreat experiences, and overcoming reservations about participating in the sacrament of Confession. The DMI inspired him to dig further, and in doing so, he discovered that privacy and confessional location were contributing to this lack of participation. He is building a new confessional and working on new ways to invite others to Confession, which the DMI continuously affirms is pivotal in furthering faith journeys.



Congregational Impact: Dioceses

- **Diocese Bolstered by Technology & Data-based Support:** Beyond parish congregations, dioceses have been revitalized and inspired. Bishops, diocesan leaders, and clergy personnel boards can now select for new assignments based on *Disciple Maker Index* and individual priest assessment results that incorporate priest competencies, preferences, and unique parish needs while ensuring growth opportunities for priests and parishes. Diocesan leadership is empowered with ongoing clarity. Through our comprehensive assessment, dioceses are receiving a full picture of priests' preferences and skills, the ability to match priest preferences and competencies with parish needs, the opportunity to plan and prepare for future assignments, and an understanding of parish strengths, opportunities, and leadership needs.
- **Determined, Persistent, & Driven Dioceses:** Much like our priests, many dioceses felt similarly fearful of feedback and maintained a rigid mindset about their ability to do things differently. There is solid progress in this area as confidence grows. Early *Called For More* Dioceses of Milwaukee, Lansing, and Tulsa are still using their data to make informed decisions about priest placement. We are impressed with their ability to continue progressing, persevering, and growing. The Dioceses of Orange and Cleveland are persistent, driven, and determined in keeping DMI data at the forefront of planning and ministry.

OUTSTANDING LEARNINGS FOR OUR CHURCH

Meet the Pastor

Fr. Gary Kastl in the Diocese of Tulsa is an example of someone with a strong pastoral identity, who still struggled with pastoral challenges. Pastoral leaders do not always have the knowledge and ability to seek this support on their own. *Called For More* inherently provides these opportunities for professional development, peer support, and mentorship.



Fr. Kastl explained, “When I began as an associate pastor, it felt daunting at times to respond to the needs and motives of the many people who came to me for both pastoral and temporal needs.” As he grew in his pastoral identity and sought professional development opportunities, he said, “I gained newfound skills that allowed me to lead with greater confidence, especially once I became a pastor. This was critical as I helped set the vision for the parish and led the community in a common direction.”

Fr. Gary Katsl

Pastor, Diocese of Tulsa



Fr. Kastl is an example of a priest who seeks to continue learning and developing as a pastor. Catholic Leadership Institute must also continue learning, growing, and discovering insights about effective pastors in order to meet Fr. Kastl's needs and the needs of pastors around the country. Below are some of those learnings:

Deepening & Affirming the Power of Data, Tools & Priestly Leadership

We have seen the below aspects of pastoral ministry strongly affirmed via Called For More:

- **The Power & Potential of Pastoral Leadership:** Called For More affirms the importance and implications of pastoral ministry. The *Disciple Maker Index* reveals that pastoral leadership is essential to a parish that is either thriving or declining. Parishioners are 9x more likely to recommend their parish if they recommend their pastor and 4x times more likely to say their parish is helping them grow spiritually if they recommend their pastor.
- **Tremendous Toolkit; Magnitude of Matching; Data-Driven Decisions:** Catholic Leadership Institute's initial pilot was founded firmly on the belief that dioceses could plan more intentionally for a personnel transition with the presence of practical leadership tools. Participation rates have been strong as parishes and priests see the potential in that data. No match of priest and parish will be completely perfect, yet there is immense value in seeing what each priest can bring to a parish and identifying what the community needs and deserves.
- **Feedback & Fair Expectations of Pastors from Parishioners:** Data and research affirm the common characteristics and reasonable expectations of effective pastoring that are expected by parishioners. Through *Called For More*, priests are able to grow intentionality towards these reasonable and attainable expectations. The opportunity lies in their ability to learn and receive proper tools, coaching, and guidance.
- **Prioritization, Parishioner Support, and Prayer Life are Paramount:** Through coaching and data, we see a deepened need to seriously address competing priorities amidst pastoral ministry, particularly in prayer life and taking time to care for themselves personally and professionally. There is also a need to pause and create accountability processes with pastors' supporting staff, volunteers, and themselves. While our research shows how much depends on the pastor, everything cannot rest solely upon his shoulders.
- **Feedback: New, Necessary, and Navigating a New Mindset:** The key to this endeavor is feedback. We underestimated the tremendous emotional baggage and fear on the part of priests as to having any type of information about them available. Priests often feared that sharing information would pigeonhole them into one specific type of assignment and wondered how data was being used. We recognized this and responded transparently. We sought to ask priests, "What gives you life? How can we help you with what you struggle with?"



- **Clear Disconnect Revealed and Remedied:** One example of the power of feedback is seen in the example of a priest from the Diocese of Lansing. This struggling priest has bounced from parish to parish, ultimately failing and reassigned each time. He was at a loss and felt he was not cut out to be a priest. When DMI results were received at his most recent parish assignment, a lay staff person called CLI for guidance after noticing low scores given to this priest's preaching (almost all of his 300 parishioners had given him an extremely low rating on preaching). CLI saw in this priest's self-evaluation that he rated himself as an excellent preacher. There was a clear disconnect and opportunity to coach and help this priest. He went from a pastor who felt like a failure to a shepherd with clarity and a plan forward.
- **Call to Care:** Throughout this journey, we notice that pastors have a strong awareness of the need for change, a care to learn and grow, and a desire to take action for the future of our faith. There is much work to be done, and we are encouraged by this spark of hope.

Always Altering & Continuously Learning How to Best Support Shepherds & Their Sheep

Below are areas of learning and opportunity for change in both leadership and *Called For More*.

- **Covid Challenges:** Because of Covid, larger existing systemic issues have become more pronounced. Shedding light on and working on these issues is critical.
- **Underestimating the Demands of New Technology:** As an organization, we underestimated the demands of creating new technology. The process took more time, money, and education than anticipated, but we are continuing to learn. It was also more difficult than expected to acclimate priests with technology, which is a critical learning. As these unprecedented times exacerbated the need to connect via technology, we found that priests' inabilities to navigate this world were more profound than we had realized.
- **Discovering the Gifts of the People in the Pews is More Difficult Than Imagined:** We also underestimated the ability of pastors to know, understand, and easily identify talented leaders in their parishes. We learned through experience, evaluation, and interviews that priests struggle in this key area. To further understand this concept and aid the parish, we have added questions to the *Disciple Maker Index* to specifically focus on this obstacle.
- **Bishops Must Lead the Way:** We have seen how drastically leadership matters in inspiring a diocese. If the effort is aligned to the bishop's vision and desire, it inevitably succeeds. When a bishop steps up and participates in this experience himself, he sets the tone for how his entire diocese responds. In the Diocese of Tulsa, Bishop David Konderla made it clear that he and his vicars would take assessments, conduct growth plans, and work with a coach and his leadership visibility modeled behavior for feedback and coaching.
- **Need Exceeds Expectations:** In the beginning stages and research of *Called For More*, we received critical and honest feedback that it would be exceedingly difficult and slow for priests and dioceses to be willing to participate and use the tools. This is a revolutionary mindset shift for our Church. However, the adoption and desire for *Called For More* has exceeded our expectations.

Throughout this program – which began as a pilot and developed into a key ministry of CLI – we realized and embraced learnings about what it takes to thrive as a pastor and where this program can grow and evolve to meet those needs.



MORE: THE NEXT STEP & WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

Meet the Pastors

Catholic Leadership Institute thanks all of the priests who inspired, informed, and implemented *Called For More*. Fr. Tom, Fr. Steve, Fr. Chris, and Fr. Kastl are just four of the countless courageous priests who shared their stories to benefit this endeavor and to support, love, and care for other faithful priests around the country who struggle with these same challenges. We pray that many more priests will answer the call to lead like Jesus.

Thriving in Ministry

While many apostolates have seen challenges to getting programs off the ground or continuing them amidst these unprecedented times, CLI has had a quite different and encouraging experience – in the midst of a global pandemic. The challenges of our world bring about increasing requests for Catholic Leadership Institute's support, specifically for *Called For More*.

Throughout its ministry, Catholic Leadership Institute has identified four areas to expand and enhance ministry in order to better care for priests, particularly considering the following learnings we gleaned over the past four years:

- **Expanding Reach:** we must continue to expand our reach and inspire continued philanthropic and diocesan support to meet the need of dioceses who wish to participate in *Called For More* - a level of interest and engagement that has fortuitously exceeded our predictions.
- **Enhancing Technology:** CLI is focused on improving the technology used to drive *Called For More*, specifically improved ease of use, better training support, better matching between profiles and parishes, better training resources, and subscription opportunities for ongoing use.
- **Empowering Life-changing Coaching:** *Called For More* has shown that coach mentoring – an element of the total *Called For More* endeavor – can be immensely helpful to parish priests. While there is an opportunity for improvement in better marketing for the program, adoption rates are low for coach mentoring. To change this, we will conduct a variety of focus groups to understand the obstacles and work to overcome them. This research will provide information, inspiration, and direction for producing better marketing strategies, promotional materials, and powerful videos to encourage participation.
- **Extending Impact of the Disciple Maker Index:** We aim to pilot accompaniment of *Called For More* parishes in furthering their ability to envision, plan, and drive change from the DMI. We will again convene four focus groups of parishes to assist more fully in creating a pastoral plan. In these sessions, CLI will accompany parishes intensely throughout the planning process. Afterwards, we will use learnings to apply a deeper level of support to our current model.



In addition to the above goals, *Called For More* has responded to a burning passion in our hearts to better care for all priests. We seek to do even more for our Church through *Called For More*, fostering more skilled leaders, more thriving parishes, and more people in love with Christ.

Embodied in Catholic Leadership Institute's mission and in *Called For More* is true care for Catholics. CLI's Vice President, Sam Mazzairelli, asks, "What if – in five years – each and every parish in the country cares for every one of their priests this deeply and fully?"

This pilot's greatest learning is this: we must do more to care for priests, more to fortify parishes, and more to support dioceses.

This innovative endeavor, *Called For More*, answers the call for more – more skilled leaders, more thriving parishes, and more people growing in love with Christ. CLI is poised and passionate about doing more. Catholic Leadership Institute is ready to do even more through this ministry.

! (EXCLAMATION POINT)

The exclamation point on this case study and *Called For More* is the impact on those we are humbled to serve. Below are testimonials from the bishops, priests, and diocesan leaders who Catholic Leadership Institute has been joyfully privileged to accompany:



Right now, the assignment process can be filled with anxiety, a lack of information, and a vague path forward. *Called For More* hopefully changes that. Priests will be informed, self-aware, equipped with insights, and guided in creating a vision, milestones, and goals for their critical first years in their new assignment. To lead like Jesus and live a priestly vocation requires support, prayer, vision, and direction. *Called For More* and CLI provide that for our priests.

Most Reverend Bernard A. Hebda

Archbishop of Saint Paul and
Minneapolis, MN



The Diocese of Tulsa is made up of great priests, deacons, religious, and faithful people who work tirelessly for the building of God's Kingdom. I am deeply thankful for CLI's care for pastoral leaders, particularly their understanding of the ministry of Catholic bishops and priests. I believe that *Called For More* is an excellent initiative with great potential."

**Most Reverend David
Konderla**

Bishop of Tulsa, OK





“We are called to renew constantly, renew ourselves, and our Church, and become closer and closer to God. My greatest joy in working with CLI via Called For More by far is the accessibility to such important, strategic, and well-designed tools and people who know how to introduce them, use them, and facilitate. I am so impressed with CLI and what’s been put together and the integrity of the tools themselves. They are impeccably designed with science behind them.”

Deacon Greg Moran

Director of Organizational Development and Strategic Planning, Diocese of Buffalo , NY



“The more we know about the human person, our individual traits and God-given ways, the better we are able to unpack values, overcome obstacles and help other people... Called For More allows for reflection from different angles. It is good to have the questionnaires and the peer feedback. The Preferences and Passions section helped me to look inside myself. We will get input from the people and from peers who we choose to respond on our behalf, often as separate from our role in the parish. And the Coach-Mentor section provides the opportunity for learning through questions and feedback.”

Fr. Scott Winchel

Diocese of Savannah, GA



“Over 80% of our priests participated in Called For More assessments leading to insights on assignment preferences, elements of priestly life that bring pastors the most joy, and how to align their unique skills to best serve parishes. Priests now have a personal growth plan that aligns with the vision of the Diocese and their local parish strategic plan, further enabling opportunities for growth and dynamic evangelization.”

Deb Amato

Chief of Staff, Diocese of Lansing, MI



“Called For More is needed to continue to form leaders within the Church so that they may be visionary, courageous, holy, selfless, and inspiring... anything geared towards that is going to help the entire Church.”

Fr. Scott Jablonski

Diocese of Madison, WI



READER REFLECTION

Below are questions for your consideration and prayerful reflection after reading this study:

- How can dioceses and parishes continue to better care for priests personally, spiritually, and as pastors? How could you personally contribute to that care?
- Have you ever experienced a pastor transition within a parish? How might that experience have benefitted from an initiative like *Called For More*?
- Revisit and reflect upon the question posed on page 11: What if, in five years, each and every parish in the country cares for every one of their priests this deeply and fully?

