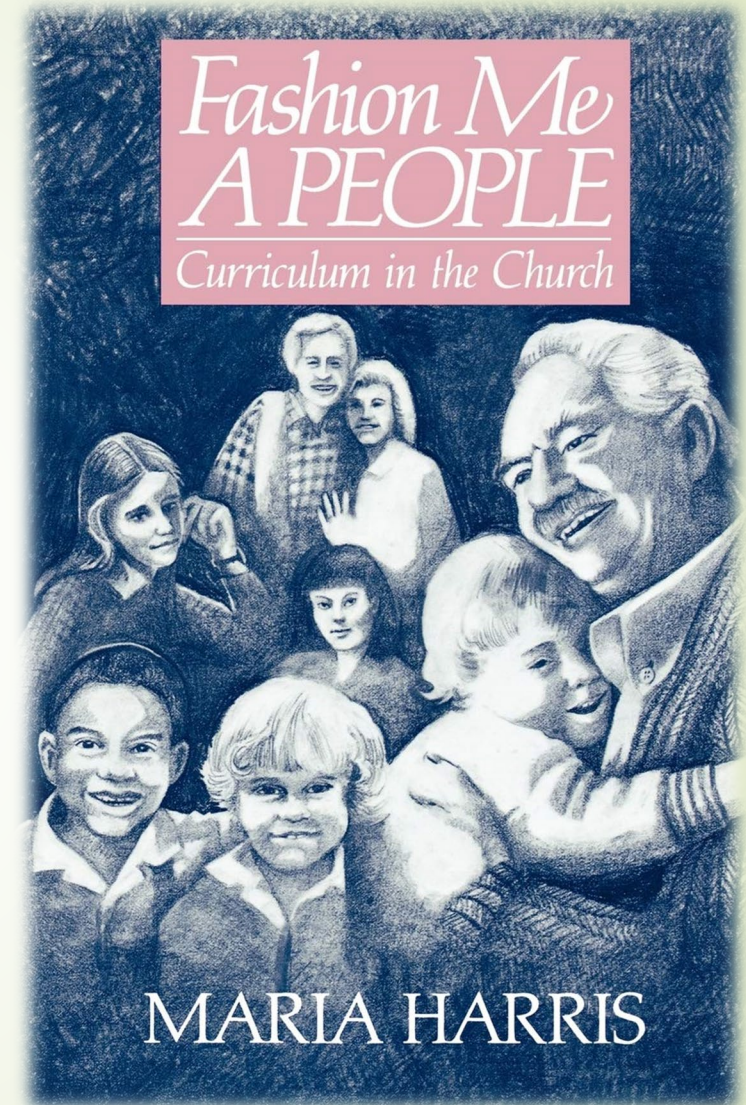


CHRISTIAN VOCATION


KOINONIA: The Curriculum of Community





Prayer for the Parish

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*





Mark McIntosh in *Mysteries of Faith*

The creation is the language in which God the Holy Trinity speaks its infinite love and fruitfulness into time and space. The Trinity refers to God's own inner life of mutual relationships in which Word and Spirit are eternally enacting the communion who is God. In other words God is in eternal community with Godself where the three persons of the Trinity freely choose mutual love and communion.



Augustine

“Communion” is derived from the Latin terms *com-* “together” and *unus* “oneness, union.”

So to be created in the image of God means that we are social beings who, by nature, need community and communion with our fellow human beings just as God is in communion in Trinity.



Humanity in the Image of God

Being created in the image of God also means that we are spiritual beings. So if the essence of God is a Trinitarian flow of loving communication and divine intimacy of relationship, then to be created in God's image means that we possess the gift to converse freely (interact) with the Creator in the intimate manner of God's self-communication within the Trinity.



Ekklesia

The *Ekklesia* of God - all those who are called out of the world by God to assemble, pray, worship, and work together and then are sent back into the world “to witness and to serve.”

Ekklesia suggests a large assembly of people. The Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures used the term to denote the entire assembly of the covenant community – the Israelites as a single unit. In Christianity today the term represents the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.



Koinonia

The worshiping community which expresses the essence of parish life and articulates what we as a parish hold in common; a shared inheritance, mutual responsibility, and a shared ministry. A shared inheritance gives us a sense of identity. We know as God's children who we are and whose we are. We are adopted through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:5), and we belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ. We live in shared intimacy, relatedness, and mutual feeling that is a visible sign to the world of our family roots.

Traits of Koinonia as Family

- **Presence:** not only physical presence, but emotional investment in each other's humanity; building self-understanding and empathy.
- **Receptivity:** the readiness to listen and respond appropriately to each other in our needs and triumphs.
- **Responsibility:** the capacity to be accountable to each other; the practice loving reciprocity with its practical consequences – negatively not standing in judgment on each other, or speaking evil against each other and positively being kind and compassionate to each other, forbearing and forgiving each other, submitting to each other and building each other up, practicing hospitality to each other ungrudgingly, encouraging each other, admonishing and comforting each other, praying for each other and bearing each other's burdens.”



Traits of Koinonia as Parish

- **Inclusion:** members may have different perspectives on what it is to be the church, divergent views on beliefs and practices but room for these differences. Inclusion of those who may feel alienated from the church (racial and ethnic minorities, women, members of the LGBTQ community, etc.).
- **Leadership:** roles of clergy and laity in the ministries of the church are articulated and enacted to enhance the life of the parishioners and the community. “We are all ministers working together to do Christ’s work in the world.”
- **Outreach:** parish is the root of spiritual and social witness and action. Parish life cannot thrive if it exists as an isolated enclave. We need to reach out to a broken world with the same compassion and hospitality we extend to each other.



Questions for discussion

- In what ways do you experience St. Paul's as an inclusive community?
 - How do you experience a sense of spiritual growth in the intra-parish and outreach ministries of St. Paul's?
 - In what ways do you feel a sense of presence and receptivity with your parish family members?
 - How do you exercise responsibility within the parish family?
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