

PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY: A DEFINITION IN 90 SECONDS



Pope Benedict explained that there are three inseparable elements to being Catholic:

1. Proclaiming the word of God
2. Celebrating the sacraments
3. Exercising the ministry of charity (direct service and the institutional – political – path)

(Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Est Caritas*, 2005.)

How are these manifested in the parish?

1. **Proclaiming the word of God:** Parishes have some version of a Liturgy Ministry and a Music Ministry to assist the assembled believers to hear, learn, express and share the gift of faith. The choir is not a committee that exists for themselves. The choir goes off to practice and comes back to the parish to lead them in song.
2. **Celebrating the sacraments:** Parishes offer Baptismal Prep for parents, Confirmation Prep, often as part of Youth Ministry; Sacramental Preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion; RCIA
3. **Exercising the ministry of charity: This is Parish Social Ministry:** St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, Peace and Justice Ministry, Social Concerns, Respect Life, Habitat for Humanity, etc.

Like the choir, none exist for themselves. Each ministry practices and organizes and engages the parish with opportunities for involvement.

This parish engagement is the evolution of a Parish Social Committee into a ministry; **a Parish Social Ministry.**



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