

THE ORATORY AND PARISH MINISTRY

Historically, parish ministry has not necessarily been the primary expression of the Oratorian apostolate. Balancing the demands of community life with the needs of parish ministry can be challenging. Nevertheless, the present reality is that most Oratories are involved in parish ministry, often as their main source of work and income.

There are several aspects of parish ministry that are compatible with the Oratorian charism. It can be a locus for expressing many features of the Oratorian apostolate. For example, in imitation of St. Philip, Oratorian priests are called to exercise spiritual fatherhood towards those in their pastoral care. This one-on-one ministry can be expressed in a parish setting through Confession, spiritual counseling and direction, as well as through preparing couples for marriage, parents for their children's Baptism, and converts for membership in the Church. Work with young people has always been central to the Oratorian apostolate. Oratorians engage in relational evangelization, forming genuine relationships that lead people to Christ and His Church. They also care deeply for the ongoing spiritual formation of all the faithful.

Another prominent feature of Oratorian parish ministry is a focus on the life of worship. Glorifying God through liturgy that is reverent without being pretentious, and dynamic while remaining faithful to rubric, is an Oratorian hallmark that can enrich and even transform the life of a parish.

The Oratorian parish also benefits from being served by priests who enjoy the mutual support of community life, as well as the stability of place that allows them to take a long-term approach to developing parish life and maintaining the parish's physical plant.