

An Introduction to the Remnant Approach to Mission
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The purpose of this essay is to introduce the rationale and principles of the Remnant approach to mission, then to outline the steps a church can take to reorient its ministry and mission around this approach. These themes will be developed at September's mission retreat.

Why should we reorient our approach to mission? There is, of course, the practical issue. Many of our churches are aging or declining in numbers because they are not reproducing themselves at a sustainable rate. However, mere survival is an unworthy motive for mission. Christ sent his apostles into the world to be witnesses for Him, not to preserve themselves. This raises deeper questions about our ministry and mission. Do we have a mission that is larger than being a chaplaincy to existing traditionalists? Do we have a gospel to preach that is something more than a defensive response to a culture that is increasingly hostile to Christian faith? Do we have something to offer to the lost and wounded of our culture? Do we have good news to preach to the poor and the captives? (Isaiah 61).

Many churches would answer yes to these questions. However, there is widespread acceptance of the non-missionary status quo. There are two reasons for this. One is that churches don't know what to do, so they keep on doing the same things. The other is that there is always strong resistance to change in a system. To truly change things, leaders must be willing to persevere against opposition. Many clergy and church leaders are not willing to rock the boat. The result of not knowing what to do, combined with an unwillingness to endure opposition, means that mission is typically focused on renewed efforts to do the things a church is already doing. Thus, things stay the same—except that churches that don't reach out become increasingly inward-focused and insular over time.

Now, there is good ministry going on in many of our small churches. If a church is content to continue with things as they are, there is no requirement that it change. No one has to join a movement to do new things. However, some of us are not content with the status quo. Some of us believe that God is calling us to a larger mission. Some of us believe we have good news to preach to those who are not now among us. The call to form a Remnant committed to mission is for those who have a vocation for mission.

For all of the struggles Anglo-Catholics have had with mission, the irony is that our tradition has an ethos, temperament, and natural gifts that can be very effective in reaching people in our current cultural setting. However, these gifts need to be resurrected and cultivated. This will require a reorientation of our approach to ministry and mission. Most significantly, it will require commitment, time, and perseverance as we learn to do new things.

The end of evangelism by marketing

The way we have been accustomed to approaching mission doesn't work anymore. There has been a cultural shift in the last generation. When the Continuing Church began in the late 1970s, the primary way churches attracted new members was by advertising. Churches publicized their programs and distinctive features to people who were shopping for a church. Traditional Anglicans could count on finding a group of people in an area that would be drawn to us and would have a basic idea of who we are.

This is decreasingly the case. Many people are content not to go to church. Those who visit our churches often don't know who we are or what we are doing. There are exceptions to this. Some people are looking for us and still find us online. This approach works better in some areas of the country than others. But this approach is not the future of our mission.

A closer look at the marketing model reveals an inherent flaw from a biblical perspective. Church is viewed (sometimes unwittingly) as a product that is evaluated in consumer terms. Mission is reduced to selling the unique features of our church to prospective religious customers. A generation ago, the Canadian philosopher Marshall McLuhan observed that "the medium is the message." If you present your church in the medium of advertising, then what you are doing will be assessed as a product.

For us, this often resulted in attracting traditionalist consumers. They were looking for a church that did things in a certain way. They often had distinct ideas about what that way should be. They were often contentious when things were not as they thought they should be. This is the irony of the traditionalist consumer. He rails against the culture, but is unaware how much a product of that culture he is. For he is also a consumer. He just has traditionalist tastes!

There is another fatal flaw in the marketing model. It was rooted in the idea that church comprised a part of life. When people were shopping for a church, they were typically looking for something to fill the "church part" of their life. The church part of life was often separate from the work part of life and the social part of life. This atomized understanding of life was rooted in the (sometimes unwitting) assumption that there is a separation of faith and life: faith and church have a "place," but faith and church must be kept in their place. This muted the prophetic voice of the church, which is why it did not have much impact on the culture.

One reason not as many people are looking to "go to church" is the death of this atomized vision for life. Fewer people feel a need to fill the church part of life. If faith in Jesus Christ is worth living for, it must impact everything. That faith often did not is a judgment on the church in our culture. This led to hypocrisy. The things preached and prayed about on Sunday were not always evident in the fruits of one's behavior at the office, the social gathering, or the home. Culturally, this is reflected in the fact that statistics for things like

abortion did not differ much for Christians and non-Christians. One reason younger people are less attracted to church is that they reject this atomized vision for faith and life.

A missionary future will be rooted in the rejection of the marketing model. We will have to stop advertising our churches in terms of things like liturgy and programs. Instead, we have to start calling people to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This means calling people to live a life of prayer and service that touches every part of life.

Paradoxically, the call to greater commitment will make us more attractive to people who are looking to connect with God and others. Genuine religious seekers want to live for something more than money, pleasure, and a safe retirement. We have often been complicit in the cultural error by offering and settling for a lot less.

A reorientation of church life and ministry

The reorientation of church ministry and mission begins with the truth that life in Christ is not a product. It is a life. Christ is not a part of life. He is life. The local church is the Body of Christ in a place. Its foundational vocation is to cultivate the life Christ has given to us and help its members grow to maturity (Eph. 4:11-16). It expands itself by spiritual reproduction as its members share the life they have with others.

The description of the early church in Acts is idealistic and hard to reproduce exactly. Some things in Acts were unique to that time and circumstance. However, Acts points us to an ethos and pattern that must be recaptured and cultivated for mission. St. Luke writes:

They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:42-47).

There are some themes in the life and mission of the first church:

1. A common rule of faith and prayer that the church observed together.
2. A sense that God was at work in their midst. God was doing things.
3. A concern for the needs of others expressed through generous giving.
4. A vibrant social life. They liked being together. There was communal joy.
5. The life of the early church was attractive. "The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."

In our tradition, references to Acts 2 typically stop at 2:42, with our commitment to the apostles doctrine and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers. But what validated that doctrine, fellowship, and prayer in the eyes of those who witnessed the church was the joy and vibrant communal life it produced. To reorient our communities towards mission, our doctrine and prayer must begin to produce the fruit of generous mutual concern, an attractive communal social life that members want to participate in, and a real experience of joy in the Holy Spirit. This will be attractive in the best missionary sense of the word.

The work of mission begins within

A community that wants to share its faith and life must have a faith and life to share. Thus, the Remnant approach to mission begins by refocusing ministry toward the cultivation of the communal spiritual and social life of the most committed members—the Remnant. This starts by calling our own people to a deeper commitment. Rather than starting our mission with an advertisement aimed at those who are not coming, mission begins by developing the faith and communal life of those who are already there. We cannot share a life that we are not experiencing. We cannot be witnesses to a life that no one can see. We cannot produce fruit if there is not a growing plant.

The distinction between marketing and horticulture is significant. Most of the biblical analogies for the spiritual life are organic and horticultural. They relate to how plants and people grow. We often function as though we have a product that we call “Anglo Catholic” or “traditional” faith and liturgy. We advertise these to consumers. Those who are drawn to these things come. Those who are not don’t. But commitment to traditional faith and liturgy (Acts 2:42) too frequently has not produced the communal fruit of the Spirit (Acts 2:43-45).

To begin mission by focusing on the formation of the Remnant, the core of committed people, is to face a fact. Most of our communities are not as spiritually committed or mature as they think they are. We often pride ourselves on holding on to the true faith where other churches have succumbed to the temptations of heresy and compromise. However, beneath the surface of our bravado, we have exhibited an epidemic of spiritual and emotional immaturity that calls our faithfulness into question in the eyes of those who look at us.

The evidence for this is the number of arguments, divisions, and church splits that have plagued us. We have claimed to stand for essential truth, but we have argued and divided over personal preferences and non-essential things. We begin by opposing the heretic. We end up shooting our own people when they put the wrong number of candles on the altar, wear the wrong vestment, or don’t do the liturgy exactly the “right way.” We are convicted by the words of our Lord. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (Jn. 13:35). This is why our commitment to traditional faith and liturgy has not always drawn people to us—the Lord has not continually added to us those who are being saved. Often, he has merely added to us the grumpy traditionalists we advertised for.

A shift in focus from liturgy and teaching to spiritual formation and direction

There is an important distinction between growth in intellectual knowledge and growth in holiness. There is an important distinction between the outward form of liturgy and the inward transformation of the heart. We have focused on defending the cognitive truths of our faith, but our commitment to doctrinal truth has not always produced an evident holiness of life. We have often maintained a rigid liturgical orthodoxy, but our liturgical practice has not always produced new and converted hearts. The main case to be made against the Continuing Church is that we have not produced enough that is different from the world to make the world take notice of us. We have, in fact, argued and divided in the same way the world argues and divides.

Now, to be honest, the critique of the last two paragraphs is too broad. There are many churches in our midst where the fruits of the Spirit are evident. But we must assess ourselves honestly and acknowledge where we have fallen short. At the end of our first generation of life together, our movement is not known for its vibrant communal spiritual life and the fruit of the Spirit. This must change for a new future in our second generation.

The Remnant approach to mission is rooted in the teaching of Martin Thornton, an Anglican priest and spiritual director who lived in the twentieth century. His concepts need to be adapted to our different settings. But his core ideas remain applicable. In his book *Pastoral Theology, A Reorientation*, he diagnosed the fatal flaw of the Anglo-Catholic renewal that stemmed from the Oxford movement:

By a regrettable historical contingency, [the doctrinal reform of the Oxford Movement] led directly to a revival of liturgical and ritualistic interests. This is, in some ways, tragic, not because ceremonial is unimportant—far from it—but because it came out of its true turn. The obvious child of this doctrinal reform is a rediscovery of ascetical practice in its fullness . . . Had ascetic been reborn at the end of the nineteenth century, the liturgical problem would have been solved without all the bitterness and silliness of the High Church—Low Church controversy that is still with us. Had the new-found Remnants of zeal been directed rather than taught, the Anglo-Catholic liturgy would have evolved simply and naturally (112).

Thornton's point is this: Anglo Catholics have focused on doctrine and liturgy at the expense of spiritual formation and progress in holiness. The missing element in Anglo-Catholic life and mission is a fully developed ascetical theology and practice (See *Pastoral Theology*, Part II). This should be at the center of church life, but it is frequently neglected. The embodied practice of spiritual disciplines in a community produces change in people over time. Teaching and liturgy, divorced from ascetical practice, produce theologically-informed people with liturgical preferences—but not always a corresponding growth in virtue.

Our liturgical preferences often reveal our spiritual immaturity. A spiritually and emotionally mature Anglo-Catholic ought to be able to worship at a church with a lower church tradition without grave discontentment and murmuring. Likewise, a spiritually and emotionally-mature low churchman ought to be able to participate in Solemn High Mass with all “the bells and whistles” without bellyaching. The fact that this is frequently not the case is evidence for our epidemic of our emotional and spiritual immaturity and our consumerism.

The Remnant approach shifts the focus of ministry away from “mere” teaching and liturgical forms and towards the life of prayer and the practice of spiritual disciplines. The life of prayer is evaluated in terms of moral theology: What the life of prayer is producing within us in terms of virtue and the fruit of the Spirit. The ministerial framework for this reorientation is spiritual direction. Spiritual direction includes teaching, but it connects intellectual knowledge with embodied spiritual disciplines that are assessed in terms of spiritual progress. This is the essential point of Thornton’s “speculative affective synthesis” (*English Spirituality*, 48-49). What we believe informs our prayer and our prayer is explained by our doctrine. The separation of the intellect from ascetical practice—of mind from body—is a chief error of modernity.

The primacy of experience in mission

An approach to mission based on teaching-convincing people of the truth—is rooted in a false assumption of the modern world: Namely, that if we can accurately explain the faith to non-believers, the logic of the argument will lead people to faith. The evidence that this is our primary approach can be seen in the typical traditional church website. The focus is usually on explaining what we believe in language and terms that are familiar to us—but not to many people beyond us. This reflects the prejudice of the modern world for rational knowledge over experiential knowledge.

The world we live in isn’t characterized by people looking to be convinced about the truth of a religious argument. However, many contemporary people retain a desire to connect with God and others. There is a desire for meaning and purpose that makes people want to give and serve in meaningful ways, to love and be loved, to know others and to be known. Thus, even when we present a compelling argument, the response is often, “So what?” Intellectual assent alone does not lead to a changed life.

To be sure, theology is experiential for some people. New insights are a form of religious experience and contribute to conversion. But this experience is never merely the result of rational argument. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament teaches that one cannot understand the deep things of God without the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:11-16). The apostles did not understand Jesus’ teaching about the crucifixion until after the resurrection, when he “opened their minds” (Luke 24:45). Their experience of the Risen Christ preceded their understanding of exactly who he is and what he had done.

Some traditionalists criticize the post-modern emphasis on experience. However, the movement toward experience corrects the modern over-emphasis on the mind. Theology and experience need to be integrated for a genuine spiritual renewal. A central point for effective mission to our world is the biblical truth that the experience of God precedes the doctrine about God. A person's system of belief is not usually changed by rational argument alone. There must be a new experience of God that cannot be accounted for by the existing system of belief. The new experience leads to a new system of belief that accounts for the new experience.

The pattern can be observed in the Bible. Redemption begins with the experience of God's saving power. Theology and doctrine explain the experience. God led Israel out of Egypt in the Exodus—an obviously life-changing experience. Then he led the people to Mt. Sinai where he explained to them who He is, what He just did, and the implications for their communal life. The Church began with the obviously life changing experience of Pentecost. The church then spent the next 300 years explaining the experience, culminating with the Nicene Creed. The error of beginning with cognitive knowledge is the error of attempting to explain an experience that the unbeliever has not yet had. Conversion does not result from proving a philosophical argument—though the explanation has a role in conversion. Conversion results from an encounter with the living God.

Now, the idea that experience is primary scares many traditionalists. It calls to mind the excesses of the tent revival and movements that focus on the phenomena of the Holy Spirit. But religious experience in the historical and sacramental sense is about how God is experienced in all of ordinary life. Martin Thornton quotes William Temple, who said that religious experience is “but the special ways in which the whole of life is experienced by religious man.” (*Pastoral Theology*, 3). When we stop separating faith from life, all of life becomes our religious experience.

Spiritual direction as the framework for ministry

As the focus shifts from doctrine to experience, the focus of ministry shifts from “mere” teaching to spiritual direction. The ministry of spiritual direction focuses on helping people understand their total experience of life in terms of their faith. Direction includes theology, but it applies theology to the disciplines of the spiritual life. It does not separate doctrine from ascetical practice. It does not separate what we believe in from what we do.

Spiritual direction as a framework can be best understood in contrast with what is often called “pastoral counseling.” In pastoral counseling, people typically come to the priest or minister with a presenting problem. The counseling aims to solve or fix the problem. It has a therapeutic orientation. Direction, by contrast, is focused on periodic meetings that are scheduled without reference to any particular issue or crisis. It is an ongoing discussion about prayer and life that helps a person understand where God is in both, and helps a person to grow in the ways they experience the presence of God in all of life—including its trials.

For both the committed members of our churches and the seekers who visit us, the framework of spiritual direction begins with a conversation about how to understand life in terms of what God is doing. The conversation begins with questions and inquiries that reflect our genuine interest in the other person. Tell me your story. Tell me what is going on in your life. Tell me how you pray. Spiritual direction begins by listening.

This spiritually directive framework stands in contrast with an approach to mission that begins with questions about what a person believes or is doing wrong, then proceeds to correct perceived errors. This turns mission into a debate in which we try to argue people into the kingdom. My experience is that this is a very unsuccessful mission strategy.

One might object that the focus on experience will lead to heresy. I have discovered the exact opposite to be the case. When pastoral leaders are interested in people and their stories, when we help people understand their lives in terms of what God is doing and how God is speaking to them, people are far more willing to listen to us when we give the doctrinal explanation. They are also quite willing to let us instruct them about how to participate and experience God in the liturgy. But when we begin with the argument or the opinion about doctrine or liturgy, the perception is that we don't really care about people and their lives. Unfortunately, this perception is true in some churches.

The cultivation of experience in spiritual direction is contemplative rather than phenomenal, but this does not make it any less real. In our settings, the experience of God's presence will be centered on relationships and community. Experiences of God's presence can be mediated by a church whose common life bears witness to the love, power, and presence of Christ. When people experience God's presence in a community, they are willing to learn from the community the foundational truths that inform the experience. Without the experience, people will not care much about the explanation. This, in a nutshell, describes the failure of our mission.

A parochial Benedictine community

Martin Thornton envisions the Remnant as forming what can be called a parochial Benedictine community. The Book of Common Prayer adapts the Rule of St. Benedict to parish life. The Rule of prayer is the three-fold Rule of the church: Mass, the Daily Offices, and personal prayer (see *Pastoral Theology*, 192-254). As the Remnant lives by Rule in community and its members' prayer and lives are guided by direction, the members grow individually and as a community. This growing life in Christ has a vicarious impact on the larger church and even the surrounding community. This is our authentic Anglo-Catholic identity: a praying community that produces the fruit of the Spirit and becomes a witness for Christ in the world.

Benedictine monasteries typically focus their mission on hospitality. Visitors are welcome to join them in their prayer and in shared meals. This can be a model for our mission. The

creation of compelling and inviting social spaces is particularly important. We should enjoy gathering to pray and eat together. As we do what we naturally do, we can create an open door, empty seats, and an invitation for those who are not now among us. Evening Prayer and a meal is an excellent mission venue. When people join us, we should be happy to see them. We should want to get to know them. We should want to hear their stories. We should want to share with them our own experience of life in Christ.

Here a point must be highlighted. When visitors come to our churches, the focus is typically on explaining to them who we are—giving them a kind of “sales pitch” to get them to join us. This is counterproductive. It bears witness to our communal neediness; our need to survive and our hope that they will save us! But our need to sustain our churches is not mission. Few people are attracted by the invitation to help save a dying church! In the marketing model, we are trying to increase membership and giving to grow or sustain the business. In the Remnant model, we want to share Christ with others. An increase in numbers and giving may be a by-product of genuine mission. But they are not the aim.

The aim of true mission is two-fold: Conversion of the heart for those who do not believe, and spiritual growth for those who do. True mission is our desire to share Christ with others. We can't share Christ with someone until we know who they are. We can't know who they are unless we are interested in getting to know them. Without a genuine love for people, there can be no mission.

Mission as the desire to share our experience with others is the experiential expression of Trinitarian theology in the Body of Christ. God created the world because Trinitarian love naturally overflows into creative activity. God is so full of love that he shares it with his creation. This is what distinguishes the biblical account of creation from the pagan accounts. A church that believes in the doctrine of the Trinity should manifest that doctrine in its communal experience of love. Our experience of communal life and love should naturally overflow into good works and mission activity. Trinitarian doctrine without a Trinitarian experience of love and mission reveals the bankruptcy of the separation of doctrine from experience. This illustrates the necessity of Thornton's speculative-affective synthesis.

The failure of a communal life to produce the fruit of communal and missionary love is the primary evidence of a defect in a church's communal life and life of prayer. Here, for self-reflection, many of our churches should carefully meditate on the message of the Risen Christ to the church in Ephesus in Revelation:

I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first

works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. (Rev. 2:2-5).

The church in Ephesus was doing all the good things we see ourselves doing, but its failure to love is so culpable that none of that will matter. The Risen Christ will cause the church to cease to exist if it does not repent.

Here we see how it is possible to misunderstand the Remnant framework. A parish can come to see its insular and unwelcoming core group of members as “the true remnant.” A core group in a parish is not the missionary Remnant unless it is committed to reorienting its common life around prayer, personal spiritual formation, the cultivation of communal life and love, and a genuine concern for the lost and wounded beyond its borders. The remnant that insists everything remain unchanged, that visitors be vetted on whether they are “truly Anglican”, and that constantly complains about the world is a different kind of remnant!

How does a church begin the work of reorientation?

The call to reorient ministry around Remnant theology presents a challenge. It will take time, commitment, and perseverance. The marketing model tempts us to seek quick fixes—perhaps a weekend conference on mission or a new book for all to read. The Remnant approach operates on a different set of assumptions and principles that run against the assumptions of the consumer and marketing culture. Without a willingness to move in a new direction and persevere against opposition, this reorientation cannot be accomplished.

A reorientation requires strong clergy and lay leaders who are willing to think in terms of years rather than days and months. We are not selling a product, we are cultivating a plant. Someone said, “Most people overestimate what they can accomplish in a year and underestimate what they can accomplish in ten years.” You might say, “Ten years!” Well, ten years will pass whether you do anything new or not. The question is where your church and ministry will be in ten years.

The Remnant approach begins by identifying the Remnant of people who are willing to do the work. It does not require everyone in a church to agree to do it. It does require a committed Remnant that will do new things when others in the church are unwilling or, even, oppositional.

The Remnant doesn’t have to be large. A priest and two to five committed people can begin to reorient things. The reorientation begins with a commitment by the Remnant to pray and fast for mission. We encourage the practice of observing Wednesdays as a day of fasting and prayer for mission. We begin by admitting that we don’t know what to do or how to do it. We begin by praying that God will give us guidance, wisdom, and strength for mission. Prayer for mission must become habitual in a church. Mass should be regularly offered with intention for mission. Habitual prayer and fasting lays the spiritual foundation for mission.

This is the first and essential point of reorientation. If a church cannot create a Remnant committed to pray and fast for mission, the church is not serious about mission.

In Acts 1, between Ascension and Pentecost, the Apostles prayed and waited for the Holy Spirit to come. The Remnant commits to prayer and fasting, waiting for the Holy Spirit to lead them into the new direction of mission. Prayer and fasting will be accompanied by regular meetings to discuss and discern what those new directions for ministry might be. How will we cultivate the communal life of prayer in our church? How will we develop the ministry of spiritual direction? What new forms of education do we need? What new doors of entry do we want to create?

This reorientation requires training. If you are going to reorient your church around the framework of spiritual formation and direction, people must be trained in ascetical theology and practice and of spiritual direction. Many of our clergy need additional training. In fact, ongoing training ought to be a clerical requirement.

A church may also need to pursue other forms of education and training. For example, if a church is serious about reaching the lost and wounded, it will need to become educated in the language of trauma and addiction and how effective ministries in these areas can be carried out. Much damage can be done by churches that try to do things they are not trained and competent to do.

The Pastoral Ministry Class

St. Matthew's Church in Newport Beach, California provides a test case. We began to reorient our ministry around the Remnant framework eight years ago. The motivation for the reorientation was failure in mission. We sent people out in mission who did not persevere in the task. In some cases, the failures were pastorally damaging. I realized that our people needed deeper and more substantial spiritual formation. I decided to invite a group of our most committed people to a year-long class. The class was by invitation only. There was never any public announcement of the class in any church publication.

It is a ten month class. It meets from 9am to noon one Saturday a month, and from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm one Wednesday night a month. It meets from September through June. Attendance is required. If invitees tell me they might have to miss a few classes, I tell them I will invite them again next year.

The invitation only approach and the required commitment can be contrasted with the marketing approach. Typically in our churches, we advertise programs broadly and invite everyone. Then we regularly "sell" what we do to convince members to "buy in" to it. In the Remnant approach, people are personally called to greater commitment. Those who say that they do not want to do it are not pursued to try to convince them otherwise. Jesus did not

recruit volunteers. He said, “Follow me”—and he did not chase the rich young ruler to try to get him to change his mind!

The initial class evolved into a three-year program of spiritual formation. Here are some details about the program. The first year PM 101 class continued on into a second year, PM 201, then a third year, PM 301. These subsequent classes only meet one weeknight a month. After the third year, people enter into what we call “The Order of the Holy Trinity.” A new class has started each year for the last seven years. Currently we have over a hundred people in the program, and forty people in our Order of the Holy Trinity. All men studying for Holy Orders are required to be in the program.

The first year class is divided into two parts. The first half of the year focuses on the theology of the life of prayer and the development of a Rule of life. The second half of the year focuses on the principles of emotional and spiritual health and maturity through the lens of Bowen Family Systems Theory. This framework for understanding emotional health is especially helpful for understanding the dynamics of the church family and what genuine virtue in church looks like. It also helps reveal the presence of what we might call “faux virtue.”

The program requires people to write and tell their stories. Participants write a spiritual autobiography and share it in class. This has been one of the more important parts of the class. Often the people in our churches do not really know each other. When we hear each other’s stories, a bond develops. As stories are shared in the church setting, the division between faith and life is bridged.

This pastoral ministry program has substantially transformed the ministry of St. Matthew’s Church, and it is having a significant impact on the development of our mission church, St. Thomas in Fullerton, California. The model for mission in the Diocese of the Holy Trinity is that the core group of any mission work must participate in this class. The class provides both a methodology and a training framework for the reorientation of mission and ministry around the theology of the Remnant.

A willingness to share what we have learned

We will offer participation in the class to Remnant groups in other churches that want to reorient ministry in this direction. It is possible to participate online by video conference. Several people have done this for the last few years. We can explore other ways to develop the class in different settings. Any priest or parish leader who is interested in having a Remnant group from his church participate in the class can contact me directly—as long as it is okay with your bishop!

In the past there was great concern that a bishop might try to “steal” a parish. That doesn’t interest me at all. We don’t need discontented parishes shifting from one place to another—and running from their problems! We need more vibrant parishes everywhere. My vocation

as a bishop is to further the mission of our church. I am willing to invest effort in training clergy and churches IF there is a real commitment to move in a new direction.

Some concluding thoughts

I do not believe that the specific way we have established this reorientation in the Diocese of the Holy Trinity is the only way to do it. Many bright and enterprising clergy and lay people might take the Remnant principles and develop them in a slightly different direction. But a reorientation will require commitment to a long term program of formation and training.

I believe this reorientation is central to the effective future mission of the G-3 and our Anglo-Catholic mission partners. I do not believe we cannot fulfill our missionary vocation apart from a reorientation of our churches around ascetical theology and practice. We must cultivate communities of committed faith that live a life of common prayer through which they experience God's presence and power and, therefore, can be witnesses for Christ in the world. We must cultivate communities that are focused on the spiritual life and mission—and not merely on their own survival. We need a Remnant to devote itself to the patient cultivation of this new work.