

The "Call" is an ongoing manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church

A "Call" creates a holy relationship of respect, trust, and love between a rostered leader and a group of people who are united in a specific context. This context is usually a worshipping community. The "Call process" is the tool the Holy Spirit uses to connect a rostered leader to those people united in the specific context. For example, an ordained pastor is set apart for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Church of Jesus Christ and typically serves in a congregation.

The gifts, passions, and needs of the rostered leader are matched to the gifts, passions, and needs of the people in the specific context forming a partnership that God has joined together to accomplish God's will. Creating this partnership is God's work. Therefore, the union created through a "Call" should be held in high esteem by both partners and should never be reduced to an employee / employer relationship. Both partners work for God and share their time, energy, resources, and gifts to do ministry together.

Unfortunately, rostered leaders who destroy trust through laziness or unfaithful behavior can damage a congregation's understanding of "Call." Likewise, an employer / employee mentality that focuses on measuring the productivity of ministry through economic assessment tools can also damage a congregation's understanding of "Call." The damage is caused by the lack of love and respect shown toward God's good work of creating and sustaining a partnership.

Protecting a "Call" from damage through mutual respect, trust, and love is essential to the continued existence of the partnership. As a result, "Call" should never be understood as an ongoing business negotiation. Instead, it is an ongoing manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and in the partners who are continually discerning God's will.

An analysis of one's faith toward "Call" can be had through each partner's approach to potentially contentious issues such as the Synod's Compensation Guidelines. Partners or potential partners who approach the guidelines from a business perspective will either devalue the guidelines to enhance their negotiating position or will use the guidelines to express a sense of entitlement. Partners or potential partners who come together in mutual respect, trust, and love, will understand the guidelines to be an informed suggestion designed to facilitate a conversation of hope in God's plan for the future.

This mutual hope in God's plan is the foundation of "Call" and makes each partner dependant on the other so that both can remain useful to the work of the Holy Spirit in the world. Each partner is essential to the faithfulness of the other until God's "Call" changes through continued discernment. When a "Call" does change, another "Call process" will ensue. And, respect, trust, and love will prevail for those who believe "Call" is a manifestation of God's grace. Until a "Call" does change, each partner should strive to support and nurture what God has joined together with respect, trust, and love.