SHARED PARISHES

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WHAT IS A “SHARED PARISH”?

- Two or more distinct cultural communities
- Each has its own masses and ministries
- Share the parish facilities, administrative records, and perhaps leadership
75% of Hispanic Catholics communities share their church with another group (PARAL study 1999)

43% of parishioners at parishes with Hispanic ministry are non-Hispanic whites (National Study of Catholic Parishes with Hispanic Ministry, 2014)
Percent of parishes in diocese with mass in more than one language

2014

- Miami: 81%
- Los Angeles: 76%
- Galveston-Houston: 66%
- Brooklyn (NY): 70%
- Phoenix (AZ): 54%
- Chicago: 51%
- Charleston (SC): 41%
- St. Paul/Minneapolis: 17%
- Omaha (NE): 12%
- St. Louis (MO): 9%
The shared parish of All Saints in Havenville
(Midwest, pop. 30,000)
Demographics of Havenville

1990  2000  2007  2010
4.9%  19.3%  23.9%  28.1%
7.70%  25.30%  37.30%  48.50%

Hispanics in Census data
Minority population in school district
CULTURAL CONTEXT

Bifurcation of cultures
(reified differences)

Euro-American Midwestern

Hispano (Mexican)
NEGOTIATING THE PARISH

• The practice dimension

• Sites
  • Greeting
  • Room management
  • Parking

• Avoidance: anxiety-uncertainty management theory (W. Gudykunst)

• The “crucible of grief” (Stephen Dudek)
THE PARISH DIRECTORY DEBACLE

Negotiating across power differences

• The invisibility of power differences to Anglos
• The inescapability of power differences for Latinos
• Risk and the life of migrants without papers
THE SHARED PARISH PROJECT

Southern California Congregational Studies Team Fellowship
The Mission Statement
Affair

• Holy Nativity parish, Los Angeles

• Historically African American parish with Central American community present for decades

The pastor (a white priest) sums it up:
The first paragraph just said who we are. A Roman Catholic community rooted in a rich tradition of African American spirituality. We hear the call which Pope Paul VI spoke to all the sons and daughters of Africa. You must give your gift of blackness to the whole church. That’s where it stopped. But that’s not a mission statement. That’s just a statement of who we are. So we put in the second paragraph, and as soon as the world Hispanic was put in, it blew up.
• The Director of Religious Education described the problem: “We saw ourselves fading into oblivion.”

• A Latino parishioner described two leaders from the African American community telling him, “Look, we are going to tell you something specific. The African American community foresees that you are going to displace them here.”