

Clericalism: Let's Talk ...

Prepared for the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests, 2016 Assembly: June 30 Colloquium

We covered some of the subtle ways language and pastoral relationships can feed clericalism. But how do YOU experience such barriers? And what can you do about it—how do you guard against clericalism in your own behaviors while removing the barriers others may use to hold you on “your side” of the lay/clergy divide? Use the following questions, and your own, to open up that discussion.

1. Do you agree that as a priest/pastor **you are the “point person”** to begin to effect change in clergy/lay relations? **What is your greatest challenge** in moving people from deferential agreement to honest conversation?
2. Have you ever thought of your lay sisters and brothers as “priestly”? What might be the impact of treating them that way?
3. How have you gotten to know the people in your care? Do you provide opportunities for listening and honest feedback? Do they ever share in homily preparation or lead faith-sharing activities?
4. What do lay people need to STOP doing to help narrow the gulf between the relationship of priests and laity?
5. What is the most important thing you would like lay people in your care to know about you? Do they? If not, why not ... and what can you do about it?

Something to Consider

Choose one small thing you can do differently in the way you relate to lay people after reflecting on the “take aways” from this gathering.

Let us know what happened (or did not happen) after the change—how did it affect you? How did it affect those with whom you have a pastoral relationship? What else can you do? *Check out the AUSCP newsletter and web pages for ways to share your thoughts.*