



the BridgeDialogues

laity & clergy reimagining the church

A collaborative effort of Voice of the Faithful, FutureChurch, & Association of U.S. Catholic Priests

Clericalism: Let's Talk (prepared by Voice of the Faithful)

There are subtle ways that 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 to open up the discussion.

1. *For both clergy and lay people:* Do you agree that the priest/pastor is the “point person” to begin effecting change in clergy/lay relations? What is the greatest challenge in moving lay people from deferential agreement to honest conversation?
2. *For clergy:* Have you ever thought of your lay sisters and brothers as “priestly”?
For lay people: What might be the impact of treating lay people this way?
3. *For clergy:* Do you provide opportunities for listening and honest feedback?
For lay people: Do you actually provide honest feedback?
For both: How can you overcome such reluctance?
4. *For both clergy and lay people:* What do lay people need to STOP doing to help narrow the gulf between priests and laity? What do priests need to do and/or stop doing?
5. *For clergy:* Do lay people in your parish lead faith-sharing activities that include priests as equal participants (NOT as leaders)?
6. *For both clergy and lay people:* Is there anything else about clericalism that you would like to share?

Something to Consider

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