

ST. AUGUSTINE'S INSTITUTE, NSAMBYA

# Priesthood as Stewardship

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Time, Talent and Treasure

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Ongoing formation course to priests of Kabale diocese, on renewal of priestly ministry through increased attention to Jesus the divine Master: improving our relation with him, exercising our pastoral ministry as a constant response to his commands, and as members of his mystical body, in the actual existential situation of the Jubilee year of God's mercy

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## Introduction

Prayer

Self-introduction

My names and present appointment

Each introduces themselves in the same way

Introduction of topic

We identify ourselves with the work we do

And we do different jobs

However, there is one task which we all have in common as priests

We are custodians of God's people

To lead them to salvation

This we do in the different jobs we are assigned

By fostering others' salvation we foster our own

Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep...

You did not choose me, no, I chose you... to bear fruit that lasts

Our success or failure is measured upon that

Our topic for renewal is: Priesthood and Stewardship

To what extent is my work oriented to my vocation of saving souls?

Where do I need to improve?

Things to note:

It is not possible or necessary for me to know how well I am performing

God does not expect me to lead others to salvation single-handed

Rather, I am part of a team through which HE leads people to salvation

All he asks of me is to do my part to the best of my ability

Nonetheless, it is important that I know the general plan

That general plan is attained in the sum of many little things

In the quality of my prayer life

In my dedication to duty, hard work, sense of responsibility

In a life of virtue which edifies others

Love, compassion, generosity, kindness

Honesty and truth, reliability

Fidelity, endurance, perseverance

Prayerfulness, reverence for the sacred, etc

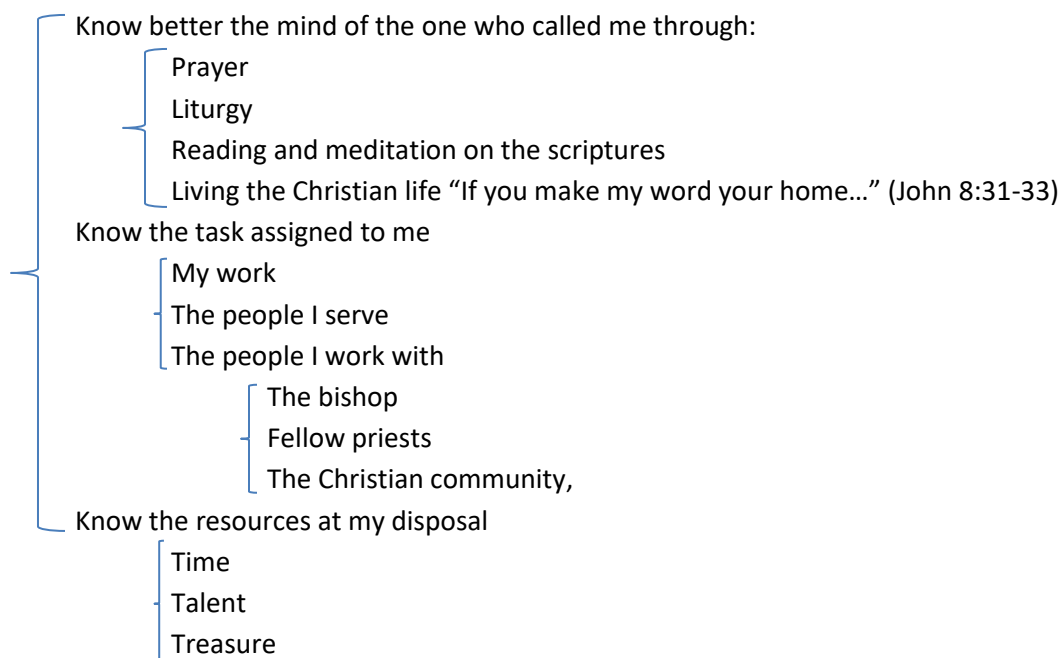
Approach

We shall have inputs on a number of selected topics

We shall have plenty of sharing on given topics

The mornings will be for the inputs, the afternoons for group discussion

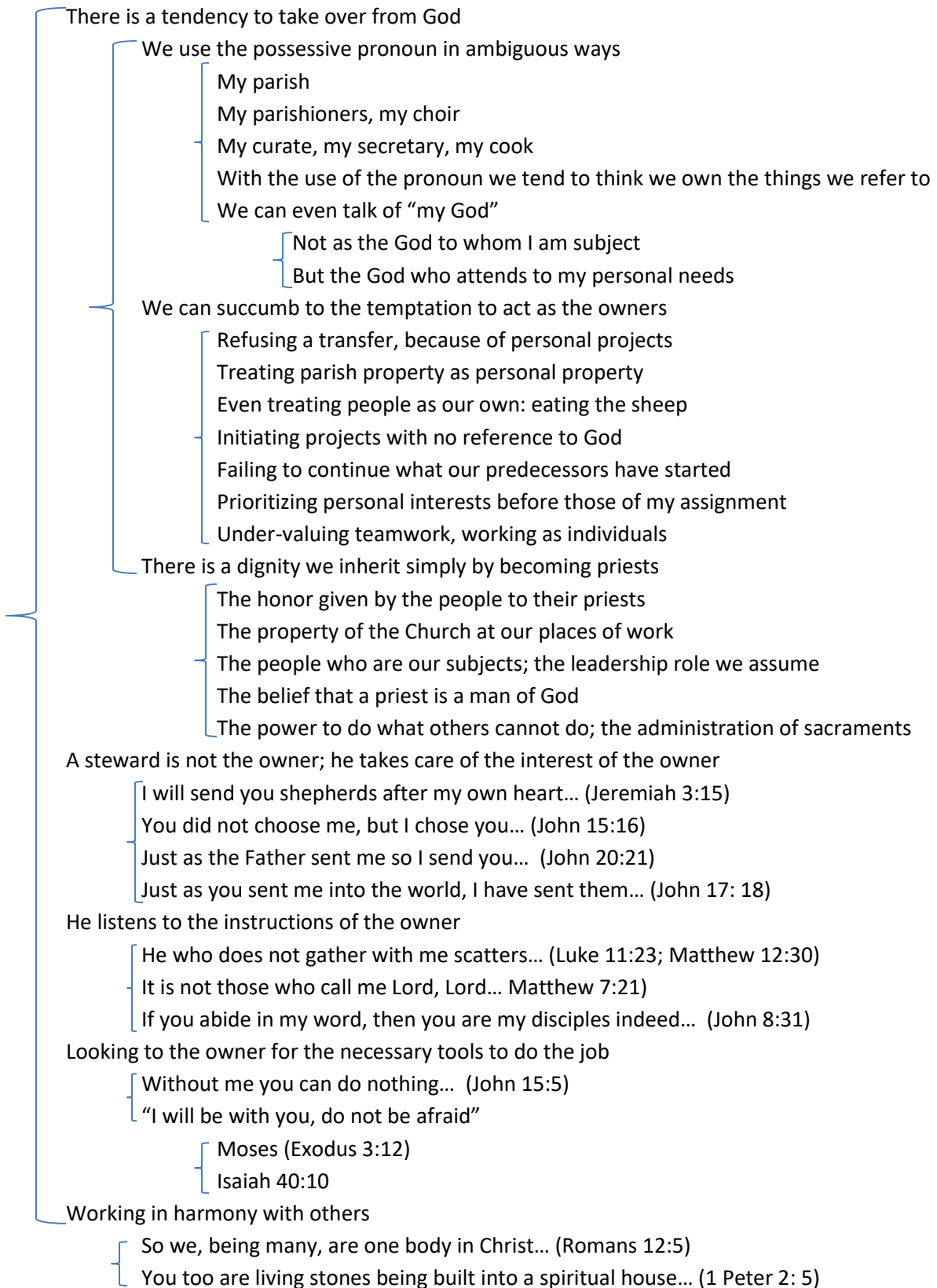
## Content of the inputs



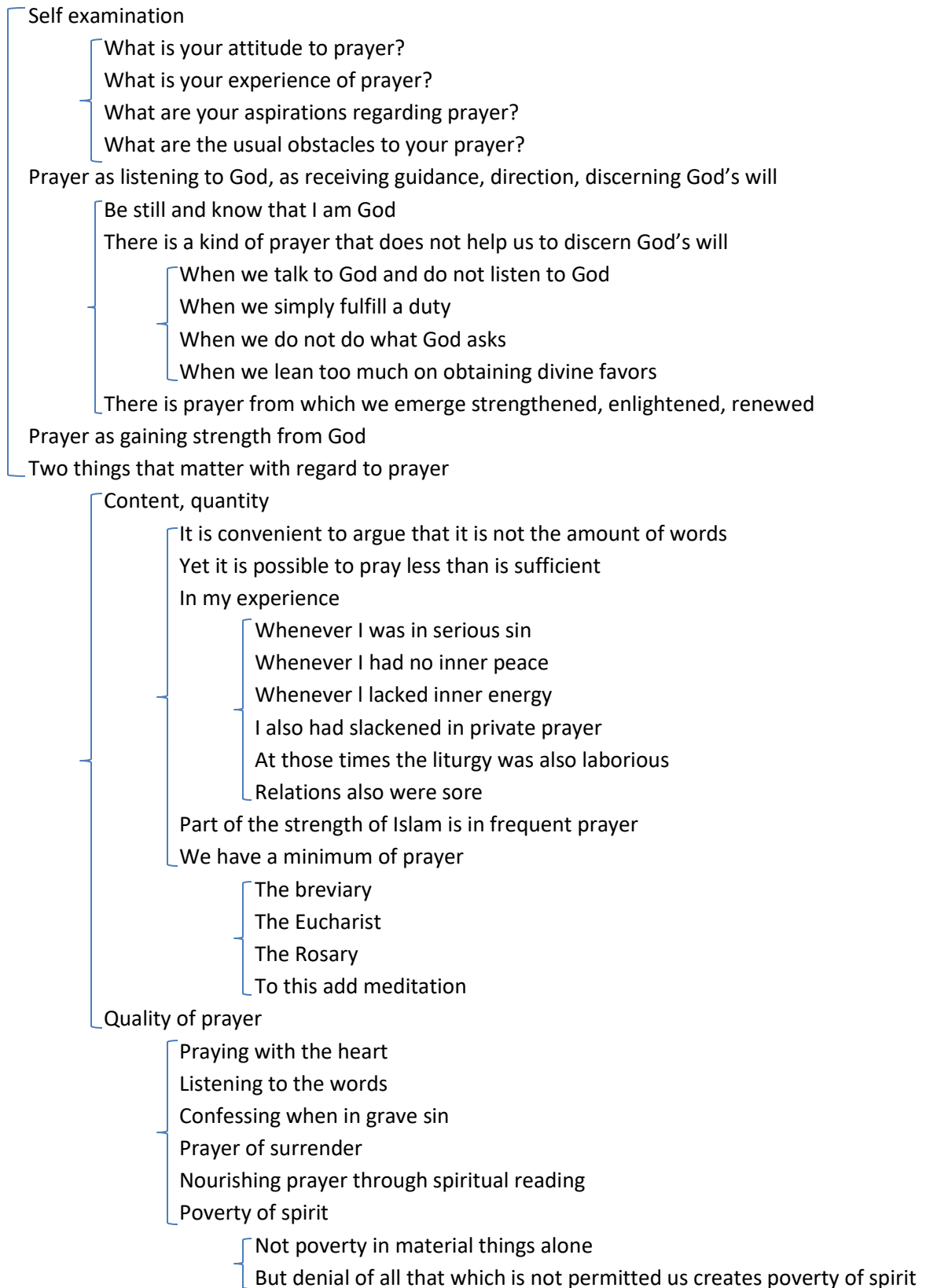
## Questionnaire

- How do I lead others to salvation through my particular assignment?
- Which of my present activities are geared to my calling?
- Which of them are indifferent to that calling?
- Which of them are counter-productive?

## As stewards we should know the mind of the Master



## Through Prayer



## In the Liturgy

We are sanctified by what we touch everyday

- If we strive to understand what we do

- If we prepare thoroughly

- If we purify our hearts before celebration

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

- Share your experience of difficulties of going to confession

- Share your experience of the benefits of going to confession

- Effects of this sacrament

  - Unrepented grave sin makes us lose taste of divine realities

  - The sacrament of penance unblocks the valves of divine grace

The Eucharist

- Share your experience of hearing a good homily

- Share your experience of the worst homily you ever heard

Do you recognize yourself in others' sharing of good and bad homilies?

There are obviously those more gifted than others in preaching

And good orators are not necessarily saints

While poor preachers can be very effective priests in other ways

However, we all have room to improve

  - Nourish homily delivery with a prayer life

  - Take time to prepare

  - Do spiritual reading

  - Know the people

Pope Francis has something to say about priests' ministry of preaching...

Daily self-oblation

  - Experience of the priest at the Eucharistic congress

  - Fr. George and daily offering at Mass

## In the work assigned to us

- He who listens to you listens to me... (Luke 10:16)

  - God speaks to us through our superior's decisions for us

  - As a child you went where you wanted...

  - Has anyone ever had an appointment they resented and later liked?

- God is the master planner, we are laborers

  - Think of an architectural work

  - The small laborers do not know the full plot

  - Yet by faithfully doing their little bit they contribute to the beauty of the whole

  - Avoid the temptation of neglecting duty to do what you think to be best

  - Share your experience of transfers

## In the sudden, the interruption, the unplanned, the undesirable

Have you ever carefully planned your day which ended totally differently?

Suffering undue interruption

Encountering situations of need beyond your means

Finding the people selfish and inconsiderate?

What is your typical reaction?

You are right not to turn yourself into a door mat

Yet such situations may also be opportunities to love, to grow

Share on the parable "At the Water's Edge" (see last page)



## Our Stewardship can be seen in three perspectives

### Time

Our general attitude regarding time

We think of time as something we own

I plan my time

I use my time profitably

I waste my time

Do not waste my time

We rarely think of it as something we have to account for

Some have come to know that time is precious

We are aware of the secular saying that "time is money"

Yet time is much more precious than money

Time is life

Time is the raw material for determining our eternal destiny

The time we have to forge our eternity is from now to our death

Many of us may already have gone through half our time

No one is too young to die

Time is a gift of God to be used responsibly

There is a time for everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

Time is short: Our span is 70 years... (Psalm 90:10)

The hour has come for you to wake from sleep (Romans 13:10)

"Late have I loved thee..." (Augustine)

Yet Augustine woke up not too late

How do you spend your typical day?

Go through the activities of a typical day. Or choose a specific day

When do you wake up?

What are the series of normal daily activities?

When do you go to bed?

What time did you spend profitably?

What time did you waste?

What time did you misuse? Do something you should not have done?

Symptoms of poor time management

Feeling overwhelmed by the number of things we have to do

Constant irritation by interruptions after careful planning of time

Dismay that time goes yet you accomplish so little

Over-estimating the amount of time you have

Under-estimating the amount of time each activity takes

Thinking that the busier you are the better we use our time

Unable to distinguish between the most important and most urgent

Not knowing what we want to get out of our time

Not able to know when we have got what we wanted out of our time

Thinking that we have so much time when we actually don't  
Or thinking that there is little to do when actually there is a lot to do  
Thinking that there is too much to do, when there is hardly anything important

#### Improving our time Management

- Are you satisfied with the way you use your time?
- What are the things that are given more time than they deserve?
- What are the things that are given less time than they deserve?
- What are the things that are given no time and should have it?
- What are the things that have no right to have time and yet have it?

#### Times for Time management

##### Plan each day

- Jot down things you intend to do
- Not the most important among them
- Avoid being too ambitious, be realistic, consider the available time
- If you can't do this on paper at least do it in the head

##### Prioritize your work

- Know time when you are most alert and awake
- Let the more important activities take this time
- Take time to do a quality job
- Assign less important activities to time when you are less active
- Or assign this time activities you can do with less concentration

##### Create order around you

- Office, bedroom, work place, etc
- Lack of order makes it difficult to get what you want quickly
- It also increases frustration and stress

##### If you are a workaholic, schedule time to rest

- Schedule time to rest and relax
- Respect your annual leave
- Take a weekly or monthly day of rest
- Have enough sleep

##### Learn to say "no" to non-essentials

- Do not easily give in to request for which you don't have time
- Drop undertakings that are of little value
- Learn to say "later"

##### Delegate where possible. (Read Exodus 18:17-24 and Acts 6:1-7).

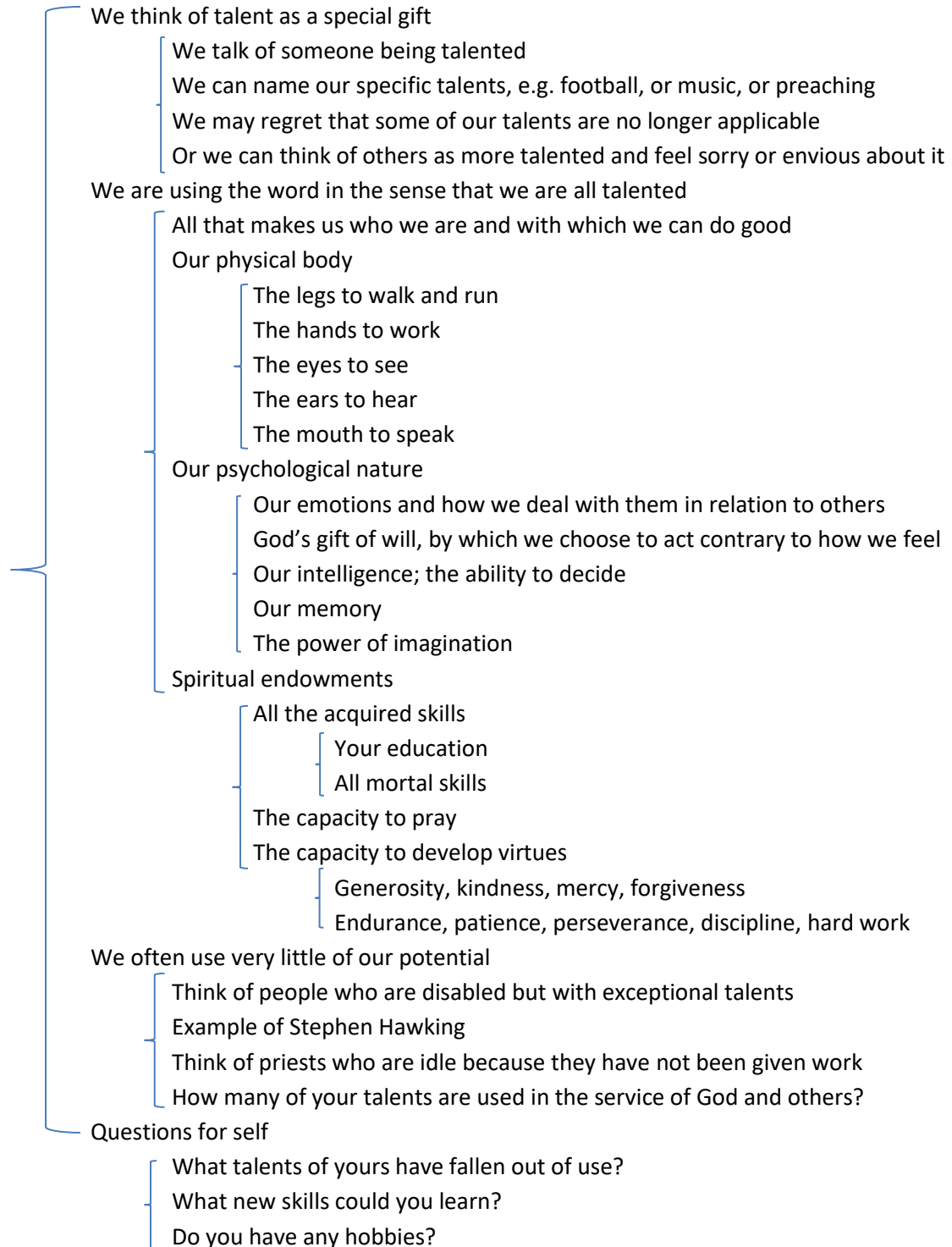
##### Evaluate how you are spending your time.

- Locate time that you could use more profitably
- You can choose to wake up earlier
- Or to watch less TV, or less socialization
- Or reduce on the siesta

Sharing:

In your view which social activities are a waste of valuable time? How can time be better used?  
How are priests involved in planned activities of the diocese? What areas need improvement?  
What are the minimum common activities of a healthy parish community?

## Talent



## Treasure

We think of treasure as something precious

— There was a time when people hid treasures in the ground

— You can think today of treasure as a fat bank account, or a piece of land, or car

While Talent refers to who you are, treasure refers to what you have

— Parish land

— Money

— Personal property

— Property of the parish

— Funds obtained as donations

We have to give accountability to all this

— To receive what we have got with gratitude

— To use it for its responsibly for its purpose and for others

— To keep proper records and to give accountability

There is a great advantage in being accountable

— You gain a sense of inner worth

— Your conscience does not blame you, even when things go wrong

— You gain the trust of others, they are even willing to give more

— It removes ill feelings among co-workers, that the other is oppressive

— It is a great lesson in a world that is so filled with selfishness and corruption

Sharing topics

How is money a danger to priestly ministry?

How do we balance appropriate self-reliance with freedom from love of money?

What should be the proper attitude regarding helping dependents?

## Stewardship in Teamwork

The value of teamwork: examples

Look around you and reflect

- The chair you are sitting on
- The house
- The clothes
- The paper and pen
- Our next meal
- All these

- Have a long history of evolution
- Involve the cooperation of so many people
- Reveal how much we depend on each other

Think of the termites

- How they start on a dangerous and lonely journey of two
- The division of labor among them

Paul's Image of the body

- Read the text
- The body is much more complex than that; think of the systems
  - The alimentary system
  - The central nervous system
  - The reproductive system
  - The respiratory system
  - All cooperate in ways we are not even aware of

The power of the Catholic Church as the strongest institution in the world

- Organized authority
  - In its head
  - In the scriptures
  - In its leadership
  - In its liturgy
  - In its legislation
  - In its endurance through history
- Flexibility to have unity in diversity
  - Division from Pope to parish priest
  - Different congregations
  - Lay apostolate movements

Oscar Romero's poem

- Read the poem together
- Share what strikes you most
- We are part of a bigger reality we cannot fully envision
- One day we shall have the capacity to envision it and be filled with wonder
- The joy will be in seeing the part I had to play, and how well I played it

One who fights unity impoverishes self

- The enemy has what you do not have
- You have what he does not have
- If you put your gifts together you would merge stronger than each alone
- If you subdue the enemy you rob yourself of his gifts
- You are also likely to sustain wounds
  - Damage of your ability to forgive
  - Fail in love, move further from God
  - Grow in false pride
  - Fear that the enemy may retaliate

One who turns the other cheek:

- Might appear a coward
- But may be the stronger in the long run
- “if you cannot defeat your enemy, join him”
- I overheard a man boasting on the street of having subdued the enemy
- The adversary instead took him and bought him a bear. Who was the stronger?

Manifestations of individualism in priesthood

- Invite sharing
- Failure to continue what our predecessors have began
- Failure to harness each other’s giftedness in the parish
- Undermining the success of each other
- Slander
- Failure to share
- Pursuit of individual interests at the expense of interests of the Church
- Establishment of cliques
- Not getting involved in diocesan meetings

He who knows us so well ardently desires our unity

- May they be one as we ourselves are one...
- Love your enemies
- Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful
- His own example...

Considering Kabale diocese, discuss ways we can advance through greater cooperation rather than fight

## We are called this year to be stewards of God's mercy

### Called to experience God's mercy

- Live Lent more intensely
  - The traditional discipline of prayer, almsgiving, fasting
  - Journey of conversion
  - A personal resolution
- We experience God's mercy specifically in the Sacrament of Reconciliation
  - Going to regular confession
  - Concerted effort to receive the sacrament conscientiously
- We make others experience God's mercy through availing this sacrament
  - Encouraging people to receive it
  - Establishing times for confession

### Called to convey God's mercy

- The corporal works of mercy
  - Feed the hungry
  - give drink to the thirsty
  - clothe the naked
  - shelter the homeless
  - visit the sick
  - visit the imprisoned
  - bury the dead
- The spiritual works of mercy
  - Counsel the doubtful
  - instruct the ignorant
  - admonish sinners
  - comfort the afflicted
  - forgive offenses
  - bear wrongs patiently
  - pray for the living and the dead

How have you experienced the Father's mercy in your own life?

Discuss how we can better live the Jubilee Year of Mercy in Kabale diocese

Which spiritual works of mercy might Christ be calling you to practice? Which corporal works of mercy?

#### Resources

[www.im.va](http://www.im.va) (by Pontifical Council for the Promotion of New Evangelization)

[www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)

**Evaluation of the Course**

What has been helpful to you in this workshop?

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What did you not like?

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What would you like to be included in similar future workshops?

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## Parable: At the water's edge

At the water's edge I found a cocoon of a butterfly.  
One day a small opening appeared  
I sat and watched the butterfly for several hours  
As it struggled to force its body through that little hole.  
Then it seemed to stop making any progress.  
It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could, and it could go no further.  
So I decided to help the butterfly.  
I took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon.  
The butterfly then emerged easily.  
But it had a swollen body and small, shrivelled wings.  
I continued to watch the butterfly because  
I expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge  
And expand to be able to support the body,  
Which would contract in time.  
Neither happened!  
In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life  
Crawling around with a swollen body and shrivelled wings.  
It never was able to fly.  
What I, in my kindness and haste, did not understand  
Was that the restricting cocoon  
And the struggle required for the butterfly to get through  
The tiny opening  
Were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings  
So that it would be ready for flight  
Once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.  
Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our lives.  
If we were allowed to go through our lives without any obstacles,  
It would cripple us.  
We would not be as strong as what we could have been.  
We could never fly!  
I asked for strength...  
But I was given difficulties to make me strong.  
I asked for wisdom...  
But I was given problems to solve.  
I asked for prosperity...  
But I was given brain and brawn to work.  
I asked for courage...  
But I was given danger to overcome.  
I asked for love...  
But I was given troubled people to help.  
I asked for favours...  
But I was given opportunities.  
I received nothing I wanted...  
I received everything I needed!

## **STEP BACK AND TAKE THE LONG VIEW**

*(Archbishop Oscar Romero – el Salvador)*

It helps now and then, to step back and take the long view.  
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction  
of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.  
Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying  
that the kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.  
No prayer fully expresses our faith.  
No confession brings perfection.  
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.  
No program accomplishes the Church's mission.  
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.  
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.  
We water the seeds already planted,  
Knowing that they hold future promise.  
We lay foundations that will need further development.  
We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities

We cannot do everything,  
And there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.  
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.  
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,  
An opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end result,  
But that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.  
We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.  
We are prophets of a future not our own.