

# The Marks of the Church

## *Case Studies*

For each situation list as many possible realistic responses to the dilemma as you can. Be as specific as possible in describing each response. Discuss the ways in which each response underscores or ignores the four marks of the Church.

1. There is a significant disagreement over the style of worship at your parish. One group thinks that worship should be just as it always has been, the other believes that worship should be “modernized” to attract people who do not come to church. What do you think?

2. The majority of people in the parish believe that a new building project is necessary; however a significant minority feels that the Church should use its money to help the poor. What do you think?

3. The parish youth group is organizing several sports’ teams. Youth have to try out for the teams and some youth may be cut from the teams. There are many in the parish who believe that Church-sponsored things should be open to everyone who wants to join them. There is a loud call for developing ground rules to govern the formation of every new group within the Church. What do you think?

4. There are three very distinct cultural groups at your parish. There is a strong push for three distinct worship services and for separate organizational structures to respond to the needs of each group. What do you think?

5. There is no standard pattern of sitting, standing, and kneeling at your parish for worship. It has become the practice for everyone to do whatever they want and are most comfortable with. Some people are complaining that the lack of unity distracts them from worship. What do you think?

6. There are several new Bible study groups being started in your parish. Some feel that anyone who wishes to start a Bible study group should be able to do so and to advertise it in the bulletin. Others feel that only those Bible studies which meet certain criteria and are led by certain people should be allowed to meet under the auspices of the Church. What do you think?

7. Your parish has been assisting a local soup kitchen for many years. The use of the soup kitchen has grown tremendously and the space that it is in is no longer adequate. Your parish has been approached to see if it would be willing to open its parish hall two days a week as a soup kitchen. The Church is divided between those who feel it would be sinful to refuse and those who feel that opening a soup kitchen in the church would bring an “undesirable element” into the neighborhood, making the neighborhood less safe and unfairly reducing the property values for those people (primarily parishioners) who had invested their lives into this neighborhood. What do you think?

8. Your parish is divided over what standards should exist for those who teach religious education, serve as sponsors, lectors, or eucharistic ministers. Some feel that any baptized Catholic who is committed enough to go through training and “do the job” should be accepted. Others feel that only those of “impeccable moral character” should be accepted. What do you think?