

## Visionary Leadership – The Art of Asking Questions

By Rich Harter, M.T.S.

Director of Missionary Planning and Leadership

When it comes to describing the traits of an effective leader, there are many qualities that can be identified. We think of things like dynamic disciple, clear communicator, strategic thinker, team-builder, inspiring visionary, creative innovator, one who delegates, coach-mentor, person of character, etc. These are important dimensions of leadership, but one dimension tends to be overlooked.

The often overlooked quality of the best leaders is this: visionary leaders practice the art of asking questions. And they ask questions fearlessly! They are not worried about appearing weak or confused. They are not worried about breaking the perception that they have all the answers. They ask questions because that is what the smartest, strongest, most courageous leaders do.

The best leaders don't just ask questions, they ask the hard questions. They ask the "elephant in the room" questions that no one wants to talk about. And they dig deeply into the hard questions to discover what root causes are under those questions. They intentionally ask the hard questions to upset the status quo, in order to discover a path toward something new and better.

Certainly, as faith-based leaders, we should be fearless about asking hard questions. Jesus has died and risen. He has promised to be with us until the end of time. The Holy Spirit has been unleashed, dwells within us, and is moving the Church with power and might. God is in charge, and he has big plans for our parishes. The battle has been won! In the confidence of steadfast faith, we can ask hard questions.

To give us practice in asking and answering hard questions, I encourage all leaders to watch the video, "*What if they don't come back?*" by Dan Cellucci. Watch the [video](#) and then discuss it at your next pastoral council or staff meeting. Better yet, don't discuss the video, discuss the hard questions raised in the video and wrestle with the hard answers.

Trust the Holy Spirit. Be bold. Be faithful. See what happens!