



## The New Vocabulary for Pastoral Ministry

**Why it's important for everyone to understand what we're talking about!**

Bill Huebsch | Visit [TheEchoWithin.com](https://TheEchoWithin.com) for more help

### 1. Pastoral theology

- Having folks who know this field helps shape well-rounded parish programs
- But having folks who are poorly trained or self-taught without sufficient formation and education can create false pastoral goals and strategies

### 2. Synodality

- Understanding this as the way in which all members of the church are invited to speak and be listened to allows the Spirit to move in the church
- But expecting that every impulse or idea from every parishioner is a good one that we must take forward will result in chaos and the messiest form of congregationalism

### 3. Discernment

- Learning how to listen to that echo within us and trust that we can perceive to what God may be calling us in our specific circumstances allows the rich experience of our consciences to guide us
- But a thin process of discernment can result in people following a course that merely implements their whims and selfish ambitions without regard for the deeper call of God which is always to love, self-giving, and the paschal mystery

### 4. Evangelization

- Inviting and welcoming people into the parish or family of God can provide a rich way in which to open our doors and make room for those who feel left out or whose faith has simply grown cold
- But if we don't lead them during this process to the way of Jesus, to forgiveness, generosity, a love for the poor, care for the climate, and a movement away from selfishness, then we have merely taken them in without offering them true conversion

### 5. Catechesis

- Studying our faith can lead to deep appreciation and understanding about how God is revealed to us and how God communicates Godself to us through grace

- But if the learning is mainly intellectual, ends early in life, or fails to help us hear God’s voice in the modern world, it may not change our lives which is what conversion means

#### 6. Accompaniment

- Entering into companionship with each other as we pass through life’s dilemmas and challenges can be a rich way for us Christians to help each other come to understand to what God may be calling us
- But sometimes we need more than a companion—we need a counsellor, mentor, spiritual director, or confessor to help us enter deeply into the discernment needed to follow the way of Jesus

#### 7. Theological reflection

- Prayerful reflection based on the sources of our faith—scripture, liturgy, tradition, our consciences, and the signs of the times—can yield rich results for both accompaniment and synodal decision making
- But there is always the temptation to agree to the view of the majority, to allow our prejudices to drive the process, to become judgmental of others, or to yield to the unseen power of darkness that surrounds us

#### 8. Missionary discipleship

- Reaching out of our comfort zones to announce to others that God loves them and has always loved them can open doors and hearts and help the mission of Jesus advance in the world and society around us
- But if the parish to which we invite people isn’t following a solid pastoral plan to welcome, coach, teach, heal, minister to, and pray with these folks, we may do more damage by offering them only a “false start” on their journey of faith