

Making Excellent Disciples

helping new clergy become effective leaders and ministers



The first five years of ordained ministry are a critical time for new clergy to acquire the skills, judgment and confidence necessary to minister effectively in a congregation. While seminaries excel in providing the theological and pastoral foundation for prospective priests, they are often ill-suited to train these new clergy in the practical aspects of congregational leadership, mission formation, leadership development, decision-making and assessing program effectiveness. The Diocese of Chicago is addressing this need through the Making Excellent Disciples (MED) project. Launched in July 2003 with funding from the Lily Endowment, MED aims to give newly ordained clergy the experience and skills to become effective leaders by placing them in mentoring congregations under the supervision of a gifted rector who serves as their mentor. These new curates spend two years in the mentoring congregation refining their pastoral skills, learning how to exercise proactive leadership, and engaging in collegial and mentoring relationships. After two years the curates are invited to apply their learning for three years as pastoral leaders of small “mustard seed” congregations which have a strong sense of mission and ministry and potential for growth.

Making Excellent Disciples is proving to be an engine for congregational revitalization in the Diocese of Chicago. Clergy and congregations are working more collaboratively, and the participating churches have redefined their vision and mission strategy using *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church* developed by Kennon Callahan. Through MED, the church in Northern Illinois is enthusiastically carrying out the Great Commission: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”

for information or to apply for a MED placement:

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MED Goals



- Guide new clergy into exercising effective ministry by giving them the tools and means to sustain pastoral excellence
- Renew, affirm and recognize the excellent ministry of mentoring clergy in order that it may be sustained and shared
- Lead, expand, enhance and sustain the inherent ministry within a vibrant, established congregation with growth potential
- Replicate and adapt the best practices of the established congregation in a nearby new congregation, thereby stimulating shared resources and congregational interconnection
- Sustain the ministerial and congregational mentoring process and institutionalize it within the Diocese of Chicago, to benefit pastors and congregations in an ongoing program