

# DIVINE RENOVATION

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## Guidebook

*A Step-by-Step Manual  
for Transforming Your Parish*

FR. JAMES MALLON

Foreword by PATRICK LENCIONI



“Everybody wants to belong to a fabulous parish. Fr. James Mallon is one of the most passionate people I know when it comes to helping priests and parishioners transform their parishes into dynamic communities centred on Jesus. This *Divine Renovation Guidebook* is a gem. Too often we talk about these things in theoretical ways that don’t translate into the practical reality of parish life. This guidebook is practical and insightful!”

**Matthew Kelly, founder of Dynamic Catholic and author of *Rediscover Jesus***

“When I started reading *Divine Renovation* and this new work, *Divine Renovation Guidebook*, I began to tear up. I am so moved by James Mallon’s love for the Church. More than that, I have visited his church on a Sunday and seen the evidence of what a divine renovation can do for the lives of people. This book is not only hyper-practical, it will make your heart swell with hope for the Church – the entire Church.”

**Carey Nieuwhof, author and Pastor, Connexus Church**

“I am delighted to recommend Fr. James Mallon’s *Divine Renovation Guidebook*. It is an extremely practical resource that offers many excellent tips and exercises to help plan and implement a vision for the transformation of the parish.”

**Nicky Gumbel, Vicar of Holy Trinity Brompton, London, and pioneer of Alpha**

“*Divine Renovation* and this guidebook constitute a unique resource for parishes and dioceses looking into concrete ways of living an effective pastoral conversion. We have trained over 600 priests and bishops on pastoral leadership and are overjoyed that they can use the hugely relevant and practical approach that Fr. James Mallon has generously shared. We can only imagine the huge amount of work this has required and are grateful for the fruit it is already bearing in Europe.”

**Marc and Florence de Leyritz, executive coaches and co-founders of Des Pasteurs Selon Mon Coeur**

“Finally, a very practical book for parishes that feel God is calling them to effectiveness. Fr. Mallon and the team at @SaintBP will help your team walk step by step to move from vision to implementation across a broad cross-section of ministry areas in your parish. Beneficial not only for Catholics but also for Evangelical churches.”

**Dave Travis, CEO, Leadership Network, the premier network for Evangelical congregations**

“We are so grateful for the work and ministry of James Mallon. He knows how to build a growing, healthy parish and is a great guide to any parish interested in doing the same.”

**(Rev.) Michael White and Tom Corcoran, authors of *Rebuilt***

“For a long time we’ve been looking for a toolbox to help renew parish life. And now there is one. Fr. Mallon’s *Divine Renovation Guidebook* takes the step-by-step approach we need to focus on becoming intentional disciples of Jesus and moving from maintenance to mission in ministry. This workbook is easy to use, extraordinarily practical in the strategies and tips recommended, and infused with a solid Gospel vision. Because it is also chock full of timely and wise suggestions, pithy anecdotes, assessment tools and discussion questions, the *Guidebook* is a superb resource for every 21st-century parish intent on making joyful missionary disciples.”

**J. Michael Miller, CSB, Archbishop of Vancouver**

“If the church is to meet the challenge of ministry in the 21st century, there must be something truly life-giving in the parish, the community where faith is nurtured and Catholics learn to live out their Christian calling. Fr. Mallon’s *Divine Renovation Guidebook* will equip readers to transform their parishes into robustly healthy, dynamic centres of evangelization and grace. At once practical and visionary, simple and comprehensive, this guidebook is a terrific resource for all Catholics who want to see their parishes flourish in ways they never dreamed possible.”

**William E. Simon, Jr., Founder, Parish Catalyst and author of *Great Catholic Parishes: A Living Mosaic***

“In North America, there are priests who pastor parishes and others who write about how to do it. Very few do both. Fr. James Mallon is one of a handful of exceptions – and that is what makes this book so wonderful. You hold in your hand the guidebook of the hard-won insights he and his team have achieved. It is a precious treasure. Use it well and you will see lives transform – including your own!”

**Dominic Perri, Lead Consultant, Amazing Parish Movement**

“*Divine Renovation Guidebook* is an invaluable problem solver when it comes to building healthy parishes. Fr. Mallon has not only identified the key issues to be addressed, but offers sound answers that will guide parishes into a new dimension of mission. Reading this guidebook brought hope to my heart regarding the future of parishes.”

**Jeff Cavins, founder of The Great Adventure Bible Study**

“With *Divine Renovation*, Fr. Mallon has inspired thousands of pastoral leaders to seek ‘missionary conversion’ in order to be faithful to Christ’s Great Commission to ‘go, and make disciples.’ This new guidebook marks another great contribution to the New Evangelization with its practical, step-by-step guidance and indispensable tools and resources to help parishes become true centres of evangelization.”

**Archbishop William E. Lori, Archdiocese of Baltimore**

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# The Pastor: It Starts with the Leader

The fact is, the leader of a parish is critical to its success. That sounds obvious, I realize. So let me put it another way. If the pastor of a parish is not prepared to lead the effort of transforming from maintenance to mission, then it simply isn't going to happen.

Fortunately, many pastors can do it. The vast majority of them love their vocation, even if they are tired or hurt. They want desperately to bring the people in their parish, whether they come to Mass on Sunday or not, to know and love Jesus through the Church he established more than two millennia ago.

But that isn't quite enough. While every pastor may have a different leadership capacity, every pastor has the capacity to be a better leader. A pastor is going to have to look at himself and be willing to address any shortcomings that could prevent his leadership from being successful. What might those shortcomings be?

For some, it might be the unwillingness to confront people and problems in the parish, and the desire to be liked by all staff members and parishioners all of the time. For others, it might be the belief that his schedule is simply too full to make changes, because those changes are only

going to result in more work. For others still, it might be the fear of acknowledging weakness or admitting mistakes, which is often related to the difficulty of balancing the roles of being a parish's spiritual shepherd and its organizational leader.

Perhaps the most difficult challenge a pastor will face is the sense that he is doing all of this alone. We will deal with that in the following chapter on teamwork, but for now, let me make a specific recommendation. If you are not currently working with a leadership team (this is not your staff team or pastoral council), find a person in your parish to go through this guidebook with you. This could be a trusted senior staff member, or a parishioner who is a confidant, or a fellow priest. Find someone who will be your partner, your coach, because that will make it much more likely that the "aha" moments you have as you read this guidebook will become real changes.

So go ahead. Think of someone who can do this with you. Right now. We'll wait.

Okay, now write that person's name here:

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You might want to call them and have them join you before going further.

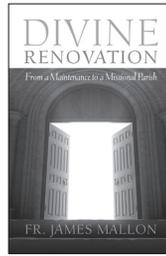
# Personal Vision



Go to [divinerenovation.net](http://divinerenovation.net). Under Media, go to Exploring themes and watch the second video, entitled “Leadership and Vision,” until the 7:30 mark.

The pastor, Bill Hybels, has described “vision” as a picture of the future that produces passion in us. As you think about the future of your parish, what kind of parish would it have to be to make you passionate about it? What is the picture of the future that makes your heart beat faster and keeps you up at night, not with worry, but with excitement? I believe that answering this question is essential for every single leader, in ministry or otherwise. This is a question you must be able to answer before you can gather people around you to truly lead your parish.

If this picture of the future is difficult for you to enunciate, one strategy is to express the things in your parish right now that drive you crazy. The aspects of parish life that make you wince and say inside, or aloud, it can be better than this, will be the mirror image of what you are passionate about.



At certain points along the way, I will be directing you to read specific portions of the book *Divine Renovation*. Watch for the book cover. Read about developing a vision for your parish on pages 244–253.

The pages that follow contain several exercises based on the pages mentioned above that will help you as a pastor find clarity about what you are passionate about and the direction in which you desire to lead your parish.

## Prayer Support

*If you’ve made it to this page, you may want to start thinking about recruiting special prayer support for what you are about to get into.*

*Spiritual warfare is real. The evil one does not desire to see the Church come to life. A maintenance parish or a parish in decline does not require his attention. However, as soon as you begin to shift your focus as a leader and engage your parish to begin this great journey, you will be on his radar.*

*In the next week, as you continue to work through these exercises, I strongly encourage you to connect with the leaders of the intercessory prayer groups in your parish. You don’t need to give all the specifics, but ask them to commit to interceding for the renovation or renewal of the parish.*

*Take a moment. Think about the prayer ministry leaders and the prayer warriors in your parish and write their names below:*

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# What is Your Discontent?

Within your sphere of influence, what are the things about your ministry that drive you crazy? What is it that makes you think, “It doesn’t have to be this way; it can be better than this!” Take some time to reflect on this prayerfully and write these things below.

SAMPLE



# What Does Your Parish Look Like in Ten Years?

What is your dream for your parish? If anything were possible, what would it look and feel like? Describe it. Don't write down a plan, but your dream. Use as much space as you like: don't be limited to this page.

SAMPLE

## My personal purpose statement:

Create a one-sentence personal purpose statement that summarizes your ministry and calling at this time in your life.



## @SaintBP

Throughout the guidebook I will be giving examples of what we do at Saint Benedict Parish on a particular topic.

Regarding personal purpose statements for ministry, we ask all our staff to develop one-sentence job descriptions. While this can be challenging and frustrating, it is also a great source of clarity and helps each member be mindful of their main focus.

## Charisms Reflection

As mentioned on pages 250–251 of *Divine Renovation*, charisms – the God-given passions and gifts we have received – will play a great role in shaping our vision and sense of purpose. This is okay. The key is to be aware of it.

Most people are strong in two or three of the charisms mentioned in Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians (4:11). Take a few moments to reflect on this passage of Scripture, then choose and rank your top three charisms.

Now go back and reread your vision statement (see page 14) and your purpose statement (see page 15) and reflect on how your charisms have shaped what you have written.

<b>CHARISM</b>	<b>DESIRE</b>	<b>RANK THREE</b>
<b>Apostle</b>	<b>to go outside the Church</b>	
<b>Prophet</b>	<b>to speak out, to be annoying</b>	
<b>Evangelist</b>	<b>to bring people to Jesus</b>	
<b>Pastor</b>	<b>to care for people within the Church</b>	
<b>Teacher</b>	<b>to teach/doctrine/knowledge</b>	