

A Married Priests' Reflection on SCP

By Charles Schmitt

In the day to day activities of CITI priests over nearly 30 years, SCP had existed in the background as an esoteric concept few members had ever studied or comprehended. As a CITI member for 12 years, and recently tasked with synthesizing the principles of SCP within CITI Ministries, it occurred to me that my ministry has unwittingly evolved following the principles of SPC/FUI. From its inception, CITI priests have moved away from a concern for ecclesiastical validation to simply being available to "just get it done." Many of our members, myself included, because of our education and indoctrination, were timid about "rocking the boat." In time, CITI members have grown to be free of these inhibitions, fully recognizing that we must be fully united with those to whom we minister. This has been a natural, organic evolution both personally and as an organization.

Now that we have had years of experience we can look back and see that SCP has been there all along, providing a framework out of which we naturally developed our skills and approach to ministry as we believe that it needs to be exercised. We came to service not as judge, jury and executioner, but as equals who accept everyone who and where they are, offering compassionate pastoral care, often in contrast to contemporary modes of ministry.

As a married priest, I humbly and joyfully tell the young couples that I prepare for matrimony that I am a better man, a better person and a better minister because of my wife, who helps to ground me and is an actual sacramental presence of God in my life. Coming from a world where everything was "black and white", the maturing process and the influence of my wife has opened me up to a life filled with "gray", a truly liberating transition. This is the same maturing process experienced by CITI Ministries in its membership as well as an organization. This is the natural progression to Freedom – Unity – Integrity which SCP enables.

Years ago, a Roman Catholic priest friend of mine, knowing that I was a member of CITI Ministries said that we were "the competition". My response to him was "I'm not the competition; I'm doing damage control."