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Whenever I speak to any group – whether it's secular, most of my speaking is to secular audiences or to Church audiences, I always start by announcing that I'm Catholic, which is not a surprise here, so that it's natural that I begin with a confession. The first confession I want to make is that my personality does not lend itself to a very linear focused talk. And today I have to give one of those. How many people here know of the Myers Briggs? In Myers Briggs language, I'm what's called an ENFP. Yes. People that are ENFP's will want to hug later. There's a prayer that goes with each Myers Briggs type, so if you don't know what the ENFP is the prayer goes like this: "Dear Lord help me to focus more on the things I need— oh look a bird – on the things I need to do." And it's so easy for me to get lost in my talks. So usually what I like to do is I like to take questions, and I like to be interrupted, but I don't have enough time today and I can't do that. So, I'm working without a net here, so please pray for me. Although I will say, though, that if a Cardinal raises his hand I will take a question. I will.

The second thing I want to confess is that everything I am going to cover today is very simple, and I'm ok with that. Samuel Johnson, the great writer from the 18th century once said, "People need to be reminded more than they need to be instructed." And I think that's true. And I am fine with the fact that I think God put me on Earth to remind people of things they already know. So as I go through this you won't be surprised to know that it's very simple. The third thing I want to confess is that I'm kind of nervous. Now many of you might think 'Well of course you are, there's cardinals and archbishops and bishops in the audience', but I have to say that is not why I am nervous, because I have had the opportunity, the blessing in these last few years to get to know quite a few bishops and archbishops and cardinals and pastors, and I have found them to be remarkably humble and kind and sweet people, and devout. All but one, and you know who you are. So I feel quite comfortable; they're so encouraging. And, I guess I'm kind of nervous because this is being televised, but that's not really the thing, it's not about being on TV, it's about who's watching on TV. And see, in Bakersfield, California right now, it's about, what time, 6:30 in the morning. And, my mom, my seventy-nine-year-old mother, is watching this on EWTN and if I say something stupid, or God forbid if a four letter word slips out, I am going to hear about it at every reunion and every phone call for the next 20 years. So that's got me a little unnerved, Mom.

So, I do most of my work in the secular world. I have a company that consults to CEOs and executive teams and companies like Southwest Airlines and Chick-Fil-A and other kind of organizations of all kinds. But I have also been blessed in the last ten years to do more in the Church, and in these last five years to do an apostolate. So I'm in an unique position where I get to bop in and out of the Catholic Church and the secular world. And it's so interesting, and at times kind of hard and painful because you see differences and things you want to fix. But also wonderful because I get to go into the Church and feel really good and then I go out into the secular world. But I have learned some things out there that I think we can do in here as well. But that's not to say that I think the Church is made good by strategy and management trends; I think it's all the Holy Spirit, but I think we have to do our very best to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, through excellence, so that He can surprise us and do things that we could never imagine.

So, as you all are prepared and getting to leave here today and to go into your breakouts to talk about what you're ready to apply, and to go back to your chancery offices or parishes or apostolates or organizations and apply some of this stuff, many of you are probably having a mix of emotions. You might be very hopeful and excited; I think this has been such a hopeful and exciting time, and that's good. Some of you might be feeling a little concerned, like, is this really going to work, and where do I start, and is this all practical and real? And that's what I want to talk about today: where you should start. The best way for me to explain this is to introduce, or to remind you about a concept that Steven Covey, the author of The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, came out with a model several years ago, called your 'Circle of Influence' and your 'Circle of Concern'. It's very simple. Your 'Circle of Influence' are those things in life that are very near to you that you have some control or impact over. Your 'Circle of Concern' are all the things in the world you wish you had control over and you'd like to change, but you can't.

So, what's in our 'Circle of Concern'? It's peace in the Middle East, world hunger and poverty, the throw-away culture of death, all those things, boy we wish we could change them. But most of us, we can't do that. Our 'Circle of Influence' is what we can do, what God puts closest to us in our lives. And it's really important that we don't get caught up in our 'Circle of Concern', because bad things can happen. Remember, God's 'Circle of Influence' is infinite, so we must always pray because nothing is impossible with God. We know that. But if we worry about things in our 'Circle of Concern' and don't focus on our 'Circle of Influence', two bad things can happen. Imagine somebody, a young person who watches cable news all the time, and sees stories about war in the Middle East, and about poverty and about all of these different things and they sit there and they pray, and they do nothing but watch TV and they worry. What happens is they lose hope and they often get bitter. And then also, interestingly, their 'Circle of Influence' actually shrinks in the world. Contrast that with somebody who sees these things and prays about them and then goes out and decides I'm going to try and solve hunger and poverty in my community. I'm going to volunteer in my school to teach about a culture of life. I'm going to bring peace to my neighbors on my street. What happens to them is they see hope, they see the fruits of their work cooperating with the Holy Spirit, and then their 'Circle of Influence' actually grows because people come to them and say, 'How did you do that in your community? Teach us do to that over here.' Or, 'I want to learn to do that in my school, or in my family.' It's like Mother Theresa of Calcutta. Her heart broke for poverty in the world, but she started by taking care of people in one city, and over time, her 'Circle of Influence' grew and grew until the whole world was looking to her to deal with this. So we have to make sure we are focused on our 'Circles of Influence', and that's what I want to encourage you to do, whether you are a bishop or a pastor or a leader of an apostolate, or a leader of any other organization in the Church, is to focus first on your 'Circle of Influence' so that it will grow. So, what's in your 'Circle of Influence'? Well, there's three things. Three things I think fall most squarely within your 'Circle of Influence'.

The first is your own interior peace and personal holiness and I know there is not a lot of knowledge about that in the room so I thought I'd spend the next 15 minutes lecturing you. OK, first... no. I'm not going to teach you anything about that because I've learned about that in my own life that I'm working on from many of the people in this room. So you know that, but I cannot overstate that if we don't have that interior peace and holiness in our heart, that daily prayer, the sacraments, that relationship with Jesus, no amount of effort that we want to strategize and change the world is going to work. And it's easy to say that ----- ok, and I have my first bird. So we have our hearing-impaired folks over here and

God bless you for being here, by the way, we've seen them, right? But they do a really great thing when there is applause. Can you show us what you do when there is applause? [Wave hands in the air] Could everybody do that? I like that, that's really cool. Thank you for doing that, God bless you. Sorry, I can't help but comment on things, OK focus, focus, focus ----- interior peace. Without interior peace, all the best efforts we have are not going to change the world. We need to cooperate with the Holy Spirit by doing the best we can in our 'Circles of Influence'.

The second thing that's in our 'Circle of Influence', and this is an area that I really want to focus on today and it's something that I have experience on, is this: If you are a Catholic leader, you have to go back and focus first on your team - that small group of men and women who share responsibility with. If you are a bishop or a pastor, not authority, but responsibility with, to lead the organization you lead. A small group of people. There the people you should work with intimately on the most regular basis to lead your organization. Now some people may say, 'That sounds secular' and 'business-y' and 'teamwork'. I don't think so. I'm convinced that it's biblical and I think about this and I am very reluctant to use Jesus as an example of leadership. I think it can be trite: well look how Jesus led, like it was a management theory or fad. I mean, he is God. But, it's almost impossible to deny that Jesus worked on a team. More than 2,000 years after He ascended into heaven, we know the names of the people that were on his team. I even think he had an inner circle, a kitchen cabinet of Peter, James, and John. I mean, I don't think anybody can say 'oh, He just did it on his own'. Teamwork is not a secular thing, I think the secular world really buys into it and sometimes in the Church I think we need to recommit to that in our parishes, our diocese, and our apostolates. And in fact, if we're going to spread the joy of the Gospel to the world, we have to be living it among those people first. And here's the thing, whether you're a bishop, pastor, run an apostolate, university president, whatever you are, when you're not working in a team of unity, passion, and love, we can tell. We know. And we know that your hearts want to do that but it's really hard. Pope Francis recently said that we need to suffer in order to share the Gospel. I think the first place we need to suffer is with those that are closest to us. Sometimes, I think, it is easier to prepare to suffer for strangers on the periphery, God bless them, than it is with the people we work with every day. So we need to start there. So what does that look like? What do we need to do if we are going to build that kind of team?

Well, there's five behaviors I want to talk about. I'm going to talk about 2.5 of them in-depth because I think they are particularly relevant. The first behavior we have to live on our team is we have to trust one another. Does that not sound obvious? I told you this was all simple, right? We have to trust one another.

But when I talk about trust on a team, I'm talking about a radical trust that's based on vulnerability, that's based on complete transparency and humility with one another. You have a small group of people that you run your organization with, your chancery, your parish, your apostolate, there needs to be a radical level of trust there of being completely vulnerable about who you are, what you're not good at, when you make a mistake, when you need help and when you've done something wrong - that radical level of trust. Jesus humbled himself to share in our humanity, and he is God. Yet we sometimes struggle to share with one another our humanity because it's scary, but we have to do that if we are going to build trust. I want to talk about the next thing we have to do quickly though because trust is important for many reasons but one of them is that it enables us to engage in conflict. Yes, I said conflict. This is an area that most churches and faith based organizations suffer from. I think there's something wrong with this. Now I'm not talking about mean-spirited interpersonal conflict, I'm talking about productive

healthy conflict around what's the best plan of action – the kind that you should have later today in your breakouts when you go back. Now of course it has to be built on trust, though, because without trust, without vulnerability, conflict become politics. But with trust, when we trust each other through vulnerability, conflict becomes nothing but the pursuit of truth for the best possible answer. What could be more important than a passionate, loving debate with a colleague about what's the right way to reach more people on the periphery. To not engage in that conflict in order to be “nice”, and I skipped over that part in the Bible where Jesus said ‘be nice to your neighbor as to yourself’, I just missed that. But I do think in our society, and even in our Church sometimes, we think that's the command. It's to love one another. And to love someone is to say ‘I owe it to you to share with you with you my honest feelings, in love and vulnerability, about the right way to go forward. Conflict is a good thing. When we don't have conflict, even with good intentions, bad things happen. Let me tell you a story. Let me use myself as an example. Let's say I have my parish council, I volunteer for my local parish, and I'm at a parish council meeting, or a committee of some kind, and the pastor says ‘Hey you guys, I want to get more people excited about their faith or excited about their parish. What should we do?’ And let's just imagine this wonderful lady – I like to say lady because I like to do her voice – this wonderful lady who's worked there for years says, ‘Well I think we should have a festival of balloons next week’ or something like that and I'm thinking ‘what is that?!’ But I don't say anything to her, right? I go, OK, festival of balloons, and I pretend to write it down. Alright everybody, good. Good meeting! See you next week. And then on a bad day I go out into the parking lot with a friend and go ‘She's kind of a ding bat, isn't she?’ And then we go to the next meeting and she says something and we kind of roll our eyes and we sigh and nobody ever asks her and then she finally goes ‘well nobody ever asks me about my ideas’ well, they think you're a ding bat. And now we've crushed her spirit, but at least we didn't disagree with her idea. Ladies and gentlemen, when we don't disagree with people around issues and idea, it ferments, inevitably, into disagreement with them as a person.

You know, when I speak to any audience, I always say, ‘Hey, which kind of organizations do you think have the worst kind of conflict behind the scenes?’ and inevitably, they go ‘Churches!’. And I say, ‘Ooh, you're cynical, but you're right.’ And then if it's a particularly non-Church-y audience, I say, ‘Well I've done some research and found out and you know why that is? It's because churches tend to hire very mean people.’ And they're like, ‘Where do you go to Church?’ And of course it's the opposite. Churches hire kind people who sometimes forget that part of being kind and loving is to say ‘I just don't see how that program is going to work. You know, I don't think anyone is going to come to that Bible study. It's a great idea, but we need to change it so it's actually going to be effective.’ Or, ‘I know your heart is in the right place.’ We have to disagree, because we have trust, and that's why we have to start there. It will turn into the pursuit of truth. Now, Ok, why is conflict so important? Oh by the way, I should say this. We all know conflict is important in our personal lives, right? I'm Italian and Irish so I came out of the womb ready for an argument. My wife is neither Italian, nor Irish, but she's a convert...both to the Catholic faith and to being Italian and Irish. My wife, as you know about converts, they're better than people that were born into something, she has learned to argue really well. So my wife and I have always had that kind of relationship. Well a year after we got married, my wife's littler sister, my sister-in-law, married my old roommate, my buddy. I thought this was the greatest thing, golf buddy for life brother-in-law. Well, a year and a half later, they got divorced and it was very sad. And he went to counseling and he finally came to me afterward and said ‘You know Pat, I always thought that you and Laura (my wife), had a bad marriage because you argued. Now I realize that we had a bad marriage because we couldn't argue.’ Which is not to say that the quality of your marriage or relationships is

based on the amount of fights you have. But what it is to say is that any two people in a strong relationship have gone there. They've disagreed. And this is what makes a relationship stronger. And some people will say well sometimes it might step over the line, inevitably. In my relationship, it does and it's never me, it's my wife. But here's the thing, you recover, you ask for forgiveness, and you heal. And you know, scar tissue heals stronger than tissue that hasn't been scarred. I didn't realize that. God made us so that we actually heal stronger than we are originally. And we are meant to do that in our personal relationships too. And if we go into a meeting or into a team and say 'Gosh, let's never ever say anything difficult to one another so that we might have to apologize', we are limiting ourselves to teams that aren't really in love, in God's love. Conflict is important. Why is conflict important? Because without it, we don't get real commitment. We don't get real commitment. When people don't commit to things what do they do? Well they alligator arm things. Oh, let me help with that program, and they don't really reach out. We need people to weigh in on the decisions so they'll buy in. By the way, when we landed yesterday, no joke, two days ago, in Orlando, the plane stopped and it couldn't go in because a huge alligator ran right across the tarmac. It was the craziest thing, I couldn't believe it. True story. Anyway. Oh look, a bird! Oh look, an alligator!

Why is commitment so important? Because it allows us to engage in the next activity that, including churches, all organizations suffer with. And that is holding one another accountable. Great team members hold one another accountable. Now notice what I said, they hold one another accountable. I didn't say that the leader holds people accountable. The primary source of accountability on a great team are peers. It's the Vicar of Priests who turns to the CFO and says 'Hey I think we need you to do a better job in this area'. They don't have to go, 'Hey Bishop, don't tell the CFO I told you this, but he's not doing what he's supposed to', and the bishop says 'Oh great'. 'Who told you that bishop?' 'Oh, I don't want to tell you.' That's terrible. The primary source of accountability is peer pressure on a great team that has trust and conflict and commitment. However, the leader has to be the ultimate arbiter of accountability. I know this because I don't like doing this. I don't like to tell people that they need to be better. And I used to think that was a good thing, and I realized it was an act of selfishness. You see, I just didn't want to engage in that kind of a relationship. Now, by the way, there's a technical term for leaders like me, if you've ever studied graduate level psychology or business you know this. Leaders like me who don't like to hold people accountable are what's called a wuss. I checked, that's not a four-letter word. I mean it is four letters, but it's ok. Many leaders, especially kind, loving leaders, hate that moment when they have to say, 'Listen, you're not doing enough, you need to be better.' This is such a problem in our church. I know that. I understand that. I feel it myself. But when someone is not doing what we need from them, it is an act of love to go to them and say, 'I want to help you get better.' And whether that's somebody in a choir who doesn't sing well or the head of CYO who's not doing a great job, or a liturgist – man, we have to love them enough to say 'I think we can do better.' Or, 'I think that there's other gifts that you have that you can do differently.' And we chuckle at that, but we know sometimes that's what we have to do. And when we don't do that, that is not virtue or love. It's withholding excellence. Cause here is the question I want to ask. What is more important: your parish or your chancery or your apostolate, or that software company down the street, or that Chik-fil-a store down the street? Well when I ask that question to people in The Amazing Parish they say well 'Ours is, right? I would say absolutely, you are bringing people to Jesus, saving their souls, this is the most important organization there could be! And I say, why would we tolerate things that they wouldn't? That doesn't mean harshness and firing people. That means entering the danger with people, in love, and saying that we can do better. We can do better for God.

So, we need to hold people accountable. I was worked with a CEO who was having trouble with this. He had all the big titles in his organization. He was the CEO, president, and chief operating officer. And he was tired of having all those jobs. And so after a year of stabilizing the organization, he asked the board if he could hire a president and chief operating officer. And they said, yeah, go ahead, go find somebody. So he went out looking for a new president and chief operating officer and while he was out looking, one of his director's reports went to him and started going to the rest of the organization and saying it's going to be me. Now this guy was not well-liked by his peers. He was not well-liked at all and people did not want to work for him, so they were really concerned. So one brave soul finally went to the CEO and said 'Excuse me, can I ask you a question?' and the CEO said, 'Yeah, what is it.' He goes, 'Hey, did you know that this guy Fred, I'll call him Fred, do you know he is telling everyone that he is going to be the next president?' And the CEO says, 'I didn't know that. That's news to me. That's the first I've heard that.' 'Oh, ok. Next question, is he going to be the next president?' And the CEO said, 'Oh, no. Absolutely not. He would be terrible.' 'Ok good, last question. Are you going to tell him to stop telling everybody that?' And here's what the CEO said and I hear leaders say this all the time, 'oh I don't have the time and the energy for that'. Which is ironic to me because I can just imagine the CEO like (pretends to talk on phone) 'Hey buddy how's it going? Hey yeah, you're not going to be the next president. No, you're not. You're kind of making me mad, you should stop saying that or something bad is going to happen to you. Yeah, yeah, yeah, have a great day buddy. Bye.' I'm not tired, that didn't take very long. And so often in our lives we come up with every reason not to have that conversation. But when God makes us a leader, we sign up for that conversation, in love...in love. Now that's how important accountability is so we can focus on results. Not silos. Not the results of my department. But let's say I work for the bishop and I'm on the executive team at the chancery. My responsibility is the diocese. If I work for a pastor, and I might be in charge of youth programs, I can't say that youth programs are going great, liturgy is not very good, finances are terrible, and faith formation and other areas are terrible. We have to take off our hats that say what our day jobs are and put on a hat that says I work for the parish, the diocese, for God. And we have to remember that we're all in this together. It sounds very simple, but it's very true.

So if our teams don't have trust, that radical kind of trust, or if they're not engaging in good healthy conflict, they're holding back, if they're not committing to decisions, holding one another accountable in love, or focusing on their silos, then start here. No matter what initiative or program comes out of this, or new idea you have for reaching the periphery, if we're not together inside, we're not going to be able to do that. We're not going to have credibility because they're going to see you guys don't even work together inside. And it's not going to be effective, we're not going to be making good decisions. But if we can hold one another accountable and make good decisions, the Holy Spirit is going to shock us with all the good things we can do for Him, for God.

Third area that we can do. First is our own interior peace and holiness, the second area is teamwork. The third area is the health of our organizations at large. That means the chancery office. This means the parish office. This means the headquarters office or our apostolates. We have to know that we are responsible for that. And here's my prayer. We consecrate all of this to Mary. Here's my prayer: that people will come visit a chancery office, a pastor, a parish employee, a janitor, a newspaper reporter, and they'll walk in the door and with the receptionist they see to the people they meet with to the employees they see in the hallways, they will be so blown away by the love of Christ that they say 'What do these people have here? I want this.' Right? And that that person that comes into the parish office to bring a form to sign his son up for confirmation or to ask about parking because she wants to go to the

store next door or whatever reason she comes in, she is like those people are the most amazing people and the joy in that place... I got to know more about this. Because if people are coming to our organizations and are like yeah, it seems like an insurance office, or God forbid the DMV, they're not going to be asking us about the programs we have or getting involved. But if they see the love of Christ in the places we work, they're going to want more, and God will surprise us. So let us consecrate all of this, all of this. I pray that we will cooperate better than ever with excellence and let's consecrate this to Mary by saying the *Hail Mary*:

Hail Mary, Full of Grace, The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of death. Amen.