

## The Power of Pastoral Care



The word “pastoral” has widely lost its power. It is used frequently in churches to mean a nice person, someone easy going, a good listener. “Pastoral care” has readily been elided with models of chaplaincy, rather than say a radical re-engagement with the corporal works of mercy, or a radical prophetic ministry, or good strategic planning. But “pastoral” is a big word. It has deep roots in the theology of the incarnation, and comprehends sacramental ministry, prophetic ministry and evangelisation. And yes, even good strategic planning. What modern handbooks call “conflict management” with all its challenges is certainly a fundamental part of the pastoral ministry of the priest. Just read Gregory the Great to see that.

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