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# Organizational Culture and Women's Leadership: A Study of Six Catholic Parishes

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## Abstract

I report results from a study of women's leadership among six Catholic parishes. I asked how these parishes differed, if at all, in the congregational

culture surrounding women's leadership and discovered distinct factors that characterized a progressive parish culture of women in leadership when compared to a more traditional culture. In progressive parishes priests actively encouraged women's leadership as part of a larger commitment to lay leadership, members viewed the priest shortage as an opportunity for more lay leadership, and female leaders talked about their agency to change the Church through their local parish. These findings expand the way researchers currently think about the role of women in the Church and provide models of mechanisms by which congregations might build and sustain cultures at odds with the institutions they inhabit

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