

Mary and Bob often find themselves sharing common ground when it comes to philosophy and ministry. When approaching ministerial concerns from different angles, *He said - She said* is a venue to share differing perspectives. *WE said* reflects some mutual food for thought.

(And then again, sometimes we're exactly on the same page – just sayin' – *Bob*)

He Said - She Said - We Said: SLUMP AVOIDANCE

It's the beginning of October... parish life has ramped up again. Chances are likely you're hitting the first slump of the year. Summer is over, Advent is coming, and you may feel overwhelmed by the onslaught of rehearsals, meetings, academic expectations, requests/requirements from co-workers, calendar adjustments, and the onset of lack of sunshine as the daylight hours are shorter. Other than that, you're "living the dream"! If your dream currently feels more nightmarish, here are some helpful suggestions you can do right now to improve the current quality of your life:

1) **Work smarter, not harder.**

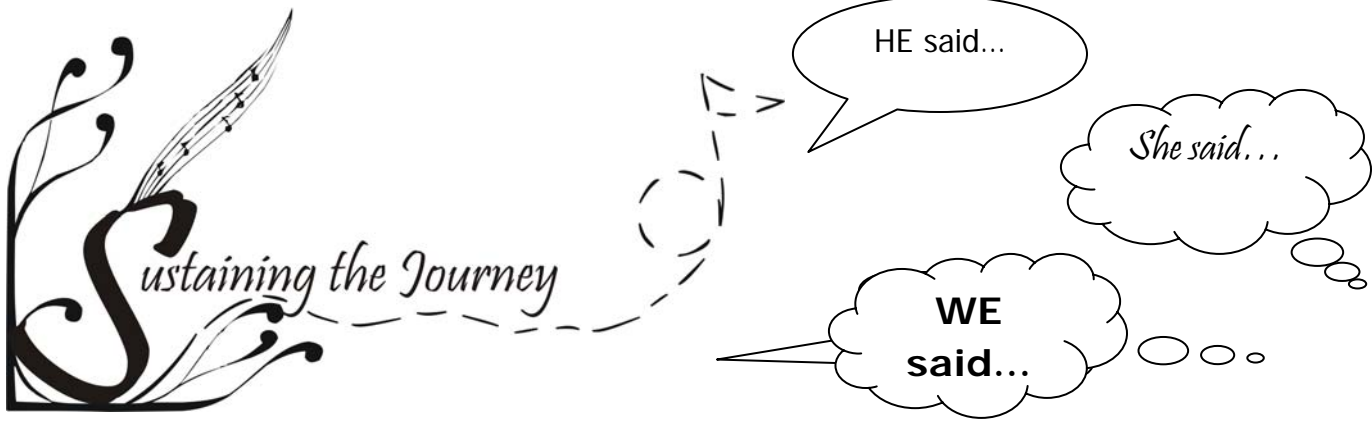
Many of the introductory meetings have pretty much the same content each year. There is no reason to start with a blank document when you know what the notes should be. It's much easier to put a new coat of paint on your house than to build a new house, especially when many of the living requirements are the same! Good things are worth repeating - there's a reason the Church has three cycles that repeat over and over.

2) **There's still plenty of time to get outside.**

A walk is very therapeutic - seeing the beauty in nature is inspiring, exercise is much better for your body than another gallon of coffee, and breathing fresh air can clear your head and make you sleep more deeply. If you must tend to the notes of the upcoming meeting, bring a recorder on your walk, and dictate your thoughts.

3) **Practice without practicing.**

Build small habits into your daily life to integrate what you do in life. For example, if you are a cantor, you pray every day...so pray the psalm that you will cantor this Sunday. If you are a martial artist, walk around the house on your tiptoes and you'll always have a good front kick position. If you are an instrumentalist, five or ten minutes of practice several times a day will get you farther than trying to find an hour straight (that often doesn't happen until 10pm). If you are committed to learning a piece of music, make it a point to listen to it throughout the



day. If your job involves communication, make it a point to smile regularly - it becomes a habit and you will be much more approachable.

4) Work on healthier eating habits.

Proper nutrition this time of year is vital. In the summer, you can get away with sketchy eating habits, but when those 12-hour days start kicking in, chips and a diet soda and a Milky Way won't get you through the day. Conversely, know when enough is enough. There is a reason for the adage "eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, and dinner like a pauper". The timing and quality of what you consume have definite impact on your physical and mental functioning.

5) Spend time with your family and friends.

It's easy to get caught up in working all the time. There is always more to be done, whether it's cleaning your house or finishing that filing at work, or preparing the next season's liturgies. When life is all about work, it becomes out of balance. Plan your work and work your plan. Many times, fatigue and frustration come from bouncing from one task to the next without feeding the rest of your mind - socially, mentally, and spiritually. This can be as simple as a to-do list, or more detailed in nature (we are talking to you Franklin Planner junkies!). Taking 30 minutes or an hour at the end of the day to plan tomorrow will make each week feel less frazzled and you will feel like you have accomplished things. That leads to more restful sleep and happier days. Taking time to nurture yourself physically, mentally, and spiritually is not selfish; it's essential!

All of this is easier said than done. However, putting some effort into seeking balance will pay off large dividends in the long run. Commit to it today!