



An Initiative of the OSV Institute for Catholic Innovation

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What Is CorWorks?

CorWorks is a 90-day challenge beginning with a week-long, retreat-style training that equips parish teams to tackle a real, local problem and to build a tested solution, not just a well-meaning idea that never leaves the page.

It is an initiative of the OSV Institute for Catholic Innovation, applying proven methods — design thinking, rapid prototyping, and community listening — to the Church's call to encounter Christ in the suffering through the Corporal Works of Mercy.

By the end of the CorWorks training retreat, your team will have a working prototype of a solution and a 90-day roadmap to launch it. Participating parishes may also receive up to \$25,000 in seed funding.

Where Does This Process Come From?

The world's most innovative companies rarely spend a year planning something and hoping it works. Instead, they run what the business world calls an accelerator: a short, structured sprint where a team moves from a real problem to a tested solution, learning as they build.

CorWorks brings that same discipline into the life of the Church and puts it to work through the Corporal Works of Mercy. St. Thomas Aquinas taught that grace builds upon nature. This is that principle at work: a proven human process, taken up by grace, so a parish can pray like contemplatives and execute like entrepreneurs.

Is CorWorks a Parish Renewal Program?

Not in the traditional sense. CorWorks assumes your parish already has a heart for mission. What it gives you is a disciplined process for moving that heart into concrete action on a specific, local problem. Think of it as the next step after renewal: you've built the team, now build the initiative.

What CorWorks Is Not

CorWorks is not strategic planning, another boxed program, or a theoretical workshop. It is a practical, tangible, and time-bound process designed to produce tested, working initiatives.

CorWorks is also not a program your parish does passively. It requires real commitment: a pastor who is an active champion, a team willing to experiment, and a problem your team truly cares about.

Who Is CorWorks Designed For?

CorWorks is designed for parish teams of 3–4 collaborators, who:

- Have their pastor's explicit support
- Are already convinced their parish is called to serve the suffering in their community
- Have a specific local problem they want to address, but lack a clear path forward
- Are open to experimentation and willing to learn from what doesn't work
- Can commit to the training retreat and engage through the 90-day challenge

You don't need to have all the answers before you apply. You do need to be ready to go looking for them.

What Kind of Problem Should We Be Bringing?

CorWorks is built for problems that are local, specific, and rooted in human suffering: the kind of need you can see in the faces of people in your community, not an abstract challenge. Examples might include:

- Isolated elderly parishioners with no meaningful connection or way to get to Mass
- Families experiencing housing insecurity beyond the reach of existing parish services
- Immigrants and newcomers in the parish boundary who have no point of contact with the Church

The stronger your understanding of who is affected and what they are actually experiencing, the more productive the training retreat will be.

Do We Need to Have a Solution in Mind Before Applying?

No. The CorWorks training retreat is where you develop and test potential solutions. What you do need before applying is a clearly defined problem and real firsthand contact with the people affected: conversations you've had and things you've seen with your own eyes. The application will ask you to share what you've seen.

CorWorks provides a Pre-Work Guide alongside the application to help your team get there if you haven't started yet.

What If We're a Small Parish With Limited Staff?

CorWorks is designed for a parish team of 3–4, including staff, lay leaders, and committed volunteers. These are people who know the community, care about the problem, and are willing to do the work. Passion and proximity matter more than professional credentials.

What Happens During the Training Retreat?

Each day is built around focused work sessions, prayer, and collaborative problem-solving. The week follows a disciplined process:

Listen ► Diagnose ► Design ► Prototype ► Test.

A sample daily schedule:

Time	Block
7:00 AM	Coffee available
7:30 AM	Morning Prayer
7:45 AM	Mass
8:30 AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM	Session 1 begins
10:30 AM	Break
10:45 AM	Session 2 begins
12:30 PM	Lunch
1:15 PM	Session 3 begins
3:00 PM	Break
3:15 PM	Session 4 begins (Mon–Thu only)
5:00 PM	Vespers
5:15 PM	Adoration
6:00 PM	Dinner
7:00 PM	Evening Reflection (Mon–Thu only)
7:30 PM	Free time

**Friday is a half day: morning sessions run as usual, and the retreat concludes after lunch.*

Where Does the Training Retreat Take Place? Do I Need to Travel?

CorWorks is a fully residential retreat: your team lives and works together at a retreat facility for the full week. The immersive, away-from-parish environment is what makes the depth of work possible. It removes the noise of daily operations, creates space for genuine discernment, and builds the kind of team trust that sustains the 90-day challenge ahead.

Your team’s travel, lodging, and meals for the week are fully covered by OSV.

Venue: The retreat takes place at a dedicated retreat center; your cohort’s exact location and travel details are shared at acceptance. Lodging, meals, and all program space are on-site.

What Happens After the Training Retreat?

The work continues, and CorWorks continues with you through the rest of your 90-day challenge. Regular contact is built into all twelve weeks:

Week 2: Group Check-In – full cohort with the OSV team, 60 minutes.

Week 3: Coaching Call – your team with your guide, 45 minutes.

Week 4: Virtual Debrief – full cohort, about 3 hours.

Week 5: Milestone Check-In 1 – your team, 30 minutes.

Week 7: Cohort Gathering 1 – full cohort, 60–75 minutes.

Week 9: Milestone Check-In 2 – your team, 30 minutes.

Week 11: Cohort Gathering 2 – full cohort, 60–75 minutes.

Week 12: Milestone Check-In 3 – your team, 30 minutes.

Coaching calls in Months 2 and 3 are optional, scheduled with your guide as needed.

And the relationship doesn't end at Week 12: in the months after your 90-day challenge closes, your team can schedule up to three quarterly check-ins with your guide.

What Does Our Team Walk Away With?

At the end of the full CorWorks program, your parish team will have:

- A prototype blueprint of your solution. Something real, not just a plan on paper.
- A 90-day roadmap with clear next steps and measurable goals
- Practical skills in design thinking, community listening, and rapid prototyping — yours to keep and use again
- A stronger team culture built through shared mission and collaboration
- Up to \$25,000 in seed funding to support the launch of your initiative

What Is the Seed Funding, and How Does It Work?

Participating parishes may receive up to \$25,000 from the OSV Institute for Catholic Innovation to fund the launch of their initiative. There's no competition for the funding. It's an investment in your team's work, meant to reduce the financial risk of trying something new and to show that OSV has skin in the game alongside you.

Details on funding distribution, eligibility, and reporting requirements are provided during the program. No formal funding proposal is required in the application.

What If We Try Something and It Doesn't Work?

That is part of the process. CorWorks gives you a sandbox: a structured space where failure is expected, learned from, and built upon. Rapid prototyping means testing small and learning

fast before you commit to anything fully. By the time you reach implementation, you've already filtered out what doesn't work.

The guides who walk alongside your team during the 90-day challenge are there precisely because implementation is where things get complicated. You won't be left to figure it out alone.

Our Pastor Is Supportive but Very Busy. Can We Still Apply?

Yes. We've designed the pastor's role with this reality in mind. The pastor does not need to attend the training retreat, though he is welcome on the parish team if he desires. What is required is genuine sponsorship: the pastor understands the initiative, has approved the direction, and commits to 15 minutes a week checking in with the team.

A pastor who is an active champion, even from a distance, makes an enormous difference for the team doing the work. Passive sign-off is not enough.

How Is CorWorks Different From Other Programs We've Tried?

Most parish programs give you content, frameworks, or inspiration. CorWorks gives you a process and stays with you while you use it.

- You leave with something built, not just something learned
- The tools are yours to keep and apply to future challenges, no perpetual dependency on CorWorks
- You are accompanied through implementation, long after the retreat energy fades
- The seed funding is OSV putting real money behind a conviction: your parish can change the reality of its neighborhood

The goal is not to create a CorWorks-dependent parish, but a parish with a new way of thinking that outlasts any single initiative.

Is There a Cost to Our Parish to Participate?

There is no program fee to participating parishes, and your team's travel, lodging, and meals for the training retreat are fully covered by OSV.

We do require a \$2,500 refundable deposit at the time of acceptance, returned in full when your team completes the 90-day challenge. It is not a fee; it is a commitment, and it comes back to you.