

Archdiocese of Baltimore

Called to Serve, Gifted to Lead

The Ministry of the Parish Pastoral Council

“Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them.” (Rom 12:6)

PREFACE

Foundational to Parish Pastoral Council ministry and the development of any parish pastoral plan is the recognition that *Christ calls all baptized persons to participate in the mission of Jesus as Priest, Prophet and King:*

The faithful exercise their “priesthood” by joining in the offering of the Eucharist, by receiving the sacraments, by offering prayer and thanksgiving, by witness through a holy life, and by practicing self-denial and active charity.

The faithful exercise the ministry of “prophet” by proclaiming the Gospel, not only in words, but by living the Gospel and following the message and example of Christ who taught us to be loving, compassionate, understanding, and forgiving.

The faithful exercise the ministry of “king,” not in the sense of power and authority, but as servant leaders. For the Parish Pastoral Council, in particular, this means to help shepherd, to exercise care as well as lead, to protect as well as guide.

As disciples of Christ, the laity along with the clergy and consecrated religious each have an obligation and a responsibility for the sanctification, teaching and stewardship of ourselves and of others.

The three-fold mission and ministry of Christ as priest, prophet and king, and the tasks that flow naturally from them, play out at the parish level among five categories or mission priorities:

**Evangelization, Liturgy, Education/Formation,
Service, and Stewardship.**

•Of all the mission priorities mentioned above Evangelization is the one that is a synthesis of the others.

•Evangelization can only be effective when parishioners are properly catechized and receive adequate formation concerning the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, what it means to fully live and proclaim the Gospel with our lives in the world in which we live.

•This is true for the individual baptized person and equally true for the parish as a whole.

•Individuals evangelize through the proper witness of God's power acting upon them.

•When a baptized Christian is properly formed they know how to pray well, worship well, share their faith, care for themselves and others and exercise reasonable responsibility for their personal finances and property as well as that of the parish.

The pastor has primary responsibility for the implementation and oversight of all parish ministries which in one way or another should fall within these broad mission priority categories.

Lumen Gentium reminds us our participation in the three-fold ministry of Christ, while differing in degree and kind, belongs to all the baptized.

The responsibility for the mission of the parish is a shared co-responsibility among all members of the parish community: priests, deacons, professed religious, catechists, professional lay ecclesial ministers, lay ministers and parish volunteers.

Parish Pastoral Council is called upon to bring not only their members secular expertise but also their personal Faith and religious experience to bear in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the parish's mission.

This entails examining the strengths and weaknesses of each parish mission priority annually and recommending to the pastor not only where greater effort might be needed but researching possibilities for achieving greater mission success.

•Pastoral Councils need to constantly keep before them that the effectiveness of the parish mission is mostly based on the *effective witness of each parishioner to the mission, faith and teaching of Catholic Church.*

•It is of necessity today that the Pastoral leader and the Parish Pastoral Council constantly discern the effectiveness of the formation, catechesis and personal witness of the all the baptized entrusted to their care.

**PART ONE:
THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH
OUR MISSION**

CALL OF THE BAPTIZED

- ◆ Through baptism, all Christians share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal mission of Christ. This sharing calls each person to take responsibility for the mission of the Church in the world. All the gifts necessary to further the mission of Jesus are present in the community of believers.

CALL OF THE BAPTIZED

- ◆ St. Paul states that there are a variety of gifts but the same Spirit, a variety of service but the same Lord, and a variety of work but the same God who inspires everyone. To each person is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:4-7).
- ◆ One of the roles of the Parish Pastoral Council, together with the Pastoral Leader and staff, is to identify the gifts and talents present in the community to further the mission of Christ and His Church and build up the community of believers.

THE CHURCH AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

- ▶ The Church is made up of all the baptized, that is, the People of God, regardless of race, color, cultural or ethnic background, formed to be the Body of Christ.
- ▶ The Church does not exist for itself. It exists to permeate the world and bring the Kingdom of God more fully into existence.
- ▶ Jesus' commission: "*Go make disciples of all nations*" (MT28:19) challenges all the baptized, who are the Church, to invite others to be disciples. This challenge to invite others to discipleship is not limited to the members of our own immediate family or household.
- ▶ The mandate of all the baptized is to go throughout the world to invite others to be disciples: to our extended family, to our neighborhoods, our workplaces, even our leisure activities.

MISSION OF THE CHURCH

*“To make loving disciples
who will spread the word of Jesus Christ
And transform the world
into the kingdom of God
by it becoming a more
loving, caring and peaceful society
leading to everlasting life with God”*

The Mission of the Church, and of all disciples of Christ, is Evangelization. (cf. On Evangelization in the Modern World, no. 14).

“The basic task for which Jesus sends out his disciples is the proclamation of the Good News, that is, evangelization” (cf. Mk 16:15-18)

“to evangelize is the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her most profound identity.” (The Mission of the Church in America Today: The New Evangelization, no. 66)

**ARCHDIOCESAN
ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE
TO ACCOMPLISH THE MISSION**

COLLEGIAL BODIES

- ▶ **ARCHDIOCESAN CONSULTORS**
- ▶ **PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL**
- ▶ **ARCHDIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL**
- ▶ **BOARD OF FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION**
- ▶ **VICARIATES AND REGIONS**
- ▶ **CLUSTERS**
- ▶ **PARISH AND ITS MISSION**


PARISH AND ITS MISSION

- **The parish links an individual's experience of faith with that of the broader community of believers. It is a place where individuals are nurtured into a certain kind of community, one that participates in the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ.**
- **Through the life of the parish community, many come to discover their gifts and recognize God's call to use these gifts in the service of others.**
- **Most fundamentally, the parish reflects how Gospel values are lived out by individuals, by families, and by the community. The parish exists to assist parishioners in their Christian mission as followers of Jesus Christ.**

- **In the parish Christ's faithful are gathered together into one under the direction of the pastoral leader- a priest as Pastor, or Pastoral Life Director, or Parish Administrator .**
- **A parish is charged with the mission of the universal Church to preach the Good News, to teach, to celebrate the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist, to heal and to liberate the captive in the name of Jesus.**
- **Everything a parish undertakes is done in order to fulfill that mission in communion with the Archbishop who unites all parishes with one another and with the universal Church.**
- **Each parish truly reflects, at the local level, the life and mission of the Archdiocese and of the Catholic Church throughout the world.**

- Each parish is to have a Mission Statement that should answer three basic questions: *Who are we? What are we? Why are we?*
- A role of the Parish Pastoral Council is to ensure that the Parish has a Mission Statement that not only answers these questions, but also is relevant to addressing the “signs of the times” and future vision of the parish.

***THE PRESENT plus FUTURE VISION
equals
YOUR MISSION***



Through Baptism and Confirmation all are called to exercise both their right and responsibility to participate fully in the life and mission of the Church.

This mission of the Church is rooted in the mission of Christ who commanded everyone - clergy, religious and laity - to "Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to all of creation." (Mark 16:15).

It is the role of the Parish Pastoral Council, in collaboration with the Pastoral Leader and staff and the collegial structures of the Archdiocese, to do whatever is necessary to fulfill this mission.

PART TWO:

RATIONALE FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS



WHAT WAS THE ORIGIN OF PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS?

The concept of the Parish Pastoral Council emerged from the ecclesiological principles of the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, the Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church, and the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (par. 26).

Vatican Council II urged active involvement in the life of the Church by emphasizing the principles of collaboration, responsibility, consultation and lay participation. An important structure initiated to foster this collaboration in the mission of the Church by all its members is the Parish Pastoral Council.

The Pastor, PLD or Administrator needs to consult with the laity who in turn have the right to express their views and concerns to their Pastoral Leader.

The Parish Pastoral Council assists its Pastoral Leader in achieving the cooperation of the parishioners and staff in the task of carrying out the mission of the Church on the parish level.

PART THREE:

THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

What is a Parish Pastoral Council?

A “collegial” structure that touches the lives of the parish community where the Pastor/PLD, staff, and laity come together to carry forward the mission and ministry of Christ and his Church in the parish community

PURPOSE OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

- ◆ The Second Vatican Council recognized the importance of a pastoral council *“to investigate and to weigh matters which bear on pastoral activity and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them.”* (Documents of Vatican II, Decree of the Bishop’s Pastoral Office in the Church, par. 27).
- ◆ The Code of Canon Law states that through a council, where it exists, the Christian Faithful and those with offices of pastoral care *“help in fostering pastoral activity.”*

The purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council is to foster full participation of the entire parish in the life and mission of the parish and of the Universal Church.

The parish faith community participates in this mission by:

- **Worshiping God**
- **Creating and nurturing Christian Community**
- **Growing in Faith and Holiness**
- **Serving those in need, especially the poor**

A Parish Pastoral Council takes its cue from the word “*pastoral*,” which is the term used in the Code of Canon Law in describing this body. That is, it “*takes care of – it shepherds*” the community in collaboration with the Pastoral Leader, other ministers of the Church, and men and women of faith more generally.

The general function of the Parish Pastoral Council is to advise the Pastoral Leader in those pastoral matters presented to it by the Pastoral Leader.

Four Basic Beliefs about Parish Pastoral Councils:

- Parish Pastoral Council is a pastoral *reflection* and *planning* group
- Parish Pastoral Council develops the parish as a "*living Christian community.*"
- Parish Pastoral Council is a *Leadership* group
- Parish Pastoral Council must be *collaborative*

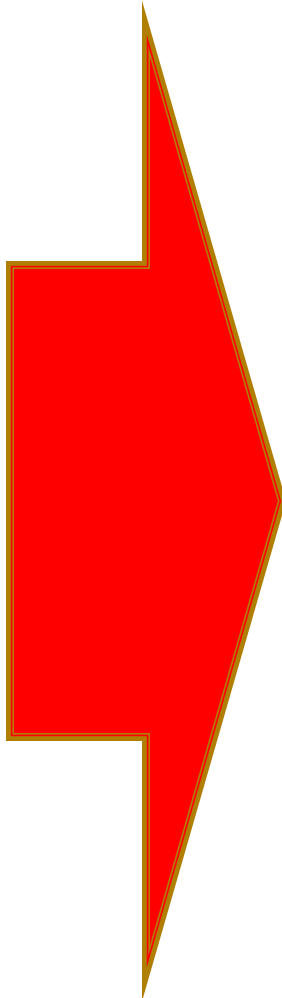


**TRANSITION FROM
“PARISH COUNCILS”
TO
“PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS”**

Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council

FROM

- Parish Council
- A Body of Leaders
- Reps of organizations
- Coordinating Ministries
- Crisis Management
- Doing Activities
- Business & Politics
- Competition
- Voting on Issues
- Committee Reporting
- Elected by Popularity
- Constitution & Bylaws



TO

- Parish Pastoral Council
- A Leadership Body
- A Visioning Body
- Articulating the Mission
- Pastoral Planning & Goals
- Empowerment & Oversight
- Prayer & Discernment
- Collaboration
- Building Consensus
- Active Listening
- Selected by Gifts & Charisms
- Guidelines

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

- **Serves as a consultative body to the Pastoral Leader**
- **Identifies and prioritizes the needs of the parish and wider community, and determines the ways in which the parish can respond to those needs.**
- **Forges ministerial structures for diversity, utilizes commonly accepted methods available for knowing the demographics, the trends and social and economic, multilingual and multicultural indicators affecting their communities.**

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

- **Develops the parish mission statement and a plan to carry out the mission:**
 - **Ensures the implementation of the plan by developing goals and objectives related to meeting those needs,**
 - **Establishes committees to implement these goals and design programs to insure accomplishing the mission.**
 - **Allocates and secures resources needed**
 - **Oversees the implementation of those programs**
 - **Evaluates how well the parish's and the Church's mission are being fulfilled**

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

- Searches out and empowers the gifts of community members and coordinates various groups, committees, and activities related to the life of the parish community and mission fulfillment.
- Promotes archdiocesan needs and priorities particularly those promoting vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, consecrated life and professional lay ecclesial ministry and implements archdiocesan policies and procedures.
- Encourages a network of communication within the parish and surrounding community and serves as a forum for *the* dialogue among parishioners, pastoral leader and staff, neighborhood groups, neighboring churches, and other local organizations.
- Reviews and recommends the parish budget to the Pastoral Leader.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

- **Prayerful**. The work of the Council is rooted in personal and communal prayer, which bonds, centers, and guides the good judgment of the Council.
- **Discerning**. A prayerful ,reflective process that recognizes that the Holy Spirit is at work among the members to discern the direction of the parish.
- **Pastoral**. Service to the parish with concern for the pastoral and spiritual issues of the whole parish and community such as formation, spirituality and worship, outreach, senior citizens, and youth.

As pastoral councilors you are asked to shepherd or guide the community of faith, together with the Pastoral Leader.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

- **Representative**. Serves the entire community and represents the whole body, i.e. culturally and ethnically sensitive, diverse, and representative of parishioners of all ages, ethnicities, cultural and economic backgrounds as well as those with disabilities.
- **Prophetic**. Articulates a vision of what the people of God are called to be - a keen sense of God's justice for the poor, the disadvantaged, and the marginalized. The Council needs to be able to move in a direction that is faithful to the Gospel even if it is not the popular choice.

The need is to move the parish from maintaining the status quo to a challenging mission.

- **Enabling**. Seeks the means to identify the gifts of parishioners, enable those gifts to be shared with the community, and foster volunteerism.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

- **Collaborative**. Seeks to *work together* by carefully listening to one another, saying what one believes to be true or needed, and moving toward the common good of the parish.
- **Accountable**. Accountable in carrying out its mission and action plans as well as its financial stewardship. It is a Church willing to work collaboratively and consultatively as it makes decisions for the future.

The Council represents the entire parish in planning its work to accomplish the mission of the parish and the Church and, therefore, is accountable to the parish in what it discusses, decides and recommends.

PART FOUR:

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

- ✘ The Council membership, whether selected, elected or appointed, is made up of lay women and men who feel called by the Holy Spirit to this roll in leadership and who, after prayerful discernment, are presented to and affirmed in their call by parishioners to represent the entire parish community and fulfill the responsibilities of pastoral leadership in the council.
- ✘ Membership on the Parish Pastoral Council should be determined in a way that ensures the participation and representation of the entire parish community and reflects the diversity of the parish, including youth, seniors, cultural and ethnic diversity, a variety of viewpoints, and life experiences.

QUALITIES FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS

- ✘ Registered and participating member of the parish
- ✘ A working knowledge of parish life
- ✘ Ability to listen to the needs of parishioners
- ✘ A desire for spiritual growth
- ✘ An openness toward study and reflection
- ✘ An eagerness to carry out the parish mission
- ✘ An ease in working with groups – a team player
- ✘ A willingness to empower others
- ✘ A desire to work with consensus decision making
- ✘ An availability of time and energy

CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP

- ✘ Baptized and confirmed members of the parish in good standing with the Church at least sixteen years of age
- ✘ Willing and available to serve for the elected or appointed term
- ✘ Contributing members of the parish in “time, talent and treasure”
- ✘ Willing to engage in ongoing training and personal development
- ✘ Catholics whose public posture is not inconsistent with Church teaching

NUMBER OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

- ✘ The work of the Parish Pastoral Council requires that its size facilitate participation, interaction and decision making.
- ✘ Too few members may limit the good work of the Council and too many members may hinder its ability to do the work effectively.
- ✘ Ideally, Councils should be no fewer than eight persons and no more than twenty.
- ✘ Parishes with large staffs may select specific staff members to serve on the council as *ex officio* members to prevent over-representation by staff persons.

SELECTION PROCESS

- ✘ Each parish determines its own process for selecting Parish Pastoral Council members.
- ✘ Whatever process is used should foster a sense of ownership among parishioners for promoting the parish's mission and the Council's work.
- ✘ The most effective method to obtain the caliber of Council the parish needs is to call forth those who possess the gifts and talents needed for the parish at this time in order to fulfill its mission.

SELECTION PROCESS

- ✘ Discernment - the prayerful determination of the best possible choice in the present circumstances - should be a key factor in nominating and selecting members for the council.
- ✘ The selection process itself should be reviewed regularly and revised as necessary to be responsive to a changing parish community.

SELECTION PROCESS

SELECTION PROCESS

- ✘ **Form a Nominating Committee to oversee the process, including review of nominations and presentation of slate to the pastoral leader for approval**
- ✘ **Educate the parish community about Parish Pastoral Council ministry.**

SELECTION PROCESS

- ✘ Determine the actual method of selecting new Council members including:
 - + A slate of nominees submitted by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Pastoral Leader through a discernment process (Best practice)
 - + A parish-wide vote by means of ballots
- ✘ The Pastoral Leader may appoint parishioners to the Parish Pastoral Council to insure the diversity of its members

TERM OF OFFICE

- ✘ Parish Pastoral Council members usually serve a two or three-year term with an option to serve for a second consecutive term.
- ✘ Each Parish Pastoral Council determines how to stagger members' terms for continuity and how to fill vacancies.

LEADERSHIP ON THE PASTORAL COUNCIL

- ✘ Because the Parish Pastoral Council serves as the key group with which the Pastoral Leader consults, it is appropriate for the Parish Pastoral Council to select officers who can work more closely with the Pastoral Leader on council matters and who can organize the plan for the effective working of the council. These officers can be of great assistance to the Pastoral Leader when the whole council is not in session.

OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- ✘ Pastor or Pastoral Leader:, Presides over the work of the Council and has ultimate responsibility. (Code of Canon Law, #536,)

Chairperson or Facilitator: Chairs all Parish Pastoral Council meetings and facilitates the work of the Council and its committees

- ✘ Vice-chairperson/facilitator: Assumes the role of the chairperson in the chairperson's absence

- ✘ Secretary: Maintains a written record of Council meetings and the work of the Council. Corresponds with the members of the Council, making sure that they receive the agenda in advance of meetings, and handles all correspondence in the name of the Council with individuals or groups within or outside of the parish. Contacts the media for newsworthy events including articles to the archdiocesan newspaper, The Catholic Review and other media as appropriate.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- ✘ Prepares the agenda for upcoming Council meetings in consultation with the Pastoral Leader and distributes this agenda to members at least a week in advance of the meeting
- ✘ Consults with the Pastoral Leader on matters relating to Council business as necessary
- ✘ May serve one to three years with the option for a second term, depending on the Parish Pastoral Council's own guidelines or constitution
- ✘ Is responsible for the parish's representation on the Regional Council (where applicable) and regular reports between the two bodies
- ✘ Does not do the work of the full Council, but rather enables the Council to operate more effectively and efficiently.

PART FIVE:

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL RELATIONSHIPS

COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE ARCHDIOCESE

- ✘ The Archdiocese is the local church and is composed of many parishes.
- ✘ A parish is not a separate entity unto itself; it is not a franchise. *All parishes form one community of faith under the leadership of the Archbishop to be one Church of Baltimore.*
- ✘ The Parish Pastoral Council listens to the parish community and the broader Church in promoting the overall mission of the local faith community, which is the Archdiocese

COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE PASTORAL LEADER

- ✘ In matters of pastoral ministry, policies, and decisions that affect the entire parish body, the Parish Pastoral Leader should act in consultation with the Parish Pastoral Council.
- ✘ A true spirit of respect, mutuality, and collaboration ought to characterize the relationship between Pastoral Leader and Parish Pastoral Council, so that the council is not a mere “rubber stamp” but an integral part in determining and carrying out the parish’s mission and ministry.

COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE PARISH:

- ✘ **The Parish Pastoral Council looks to the parish to:**
 - + **Aid it by providing information, insights, concerns, and constructive feedback through established channels**
 - + **Support, encourage, and pray for the Parish Pastoral Council and its members**

COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE PARISH STAFF

- ✘ A parish requires a staff to carry out the day-to-day business of the parish. It normally consists of the Pastoral Leader, (other) clergy (whether priests and/or deacons), religious in different parish capacities, and laity.
- ✘ Staff members are usually salaried and may work full- or part-time. One staff person may perform any number of roles as listed.
- ✘ Parish Pastoral Council members usually do not work directly with members of the staff unless so directed by the Pastoral Leader.

COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE PARISH STAFF

- ✘ Pastoral staff positions usually have specific job descriptions and frequently require that they coordinate and administer pastoral programs and activities within specific areas of ministry.
- ✘ Some pastoral staff members, designated to serve as *ex officio* members of the Parish Pastoral Council, provide essential information and broad perspective to Council discussions. In addition, because oftentimes they are the ones to carry out policy, they should be a part of its formation.
- ✘ **Matters of administration are distinct from Parish Pastoral Council activity and should not involve the council. These are, more properly, the responsibility of the Pastoral Leader and staff and include: daily operation of the parish, personnel matters, parish programming (i.e., calendar keeping), implementation of the pastoral plan, daily monitoring of finances of the parish**

COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE PARISH CORPORATION

- ✘ Every parish in the Archdiocese of Baltimore is incorporated under the laws of the State of Maryland.

- ✘ The officers of the Parish Corporation are:
 - + Archbishop as president
 - + Vicar Bishop as vice-president
 - + Pastor as secretary-treasurer.
 - + In addition, two members of the parish, nominated by the Pastor and approved by the Archbishop serve as Lay Corporators.
 - + In parishes where there is no Pastor, the Vicar Forane for the region and the Pastoral Life Director or Parish Administrator serve as members of the Board of Corporators.

COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE PARISH CORPORATION

- ✘ Corporators are responsible for assuring that matters such as safety, condition of the physical plant, personnel procedures, finances, security of parish assets, operation in light of archdiocesan policies, child and youth protection policies and procedures, and compliance with state and federal laws are being dealt with in a reasonable and prudent manner. Corporators need not do these things themselves, but must assure that they are being done.
- ✘ Corporators may delegate authority to the Parish Pastoral Council to handle pastoral matters.
- ✘ Unlike the parish corporation, the Parish Pastoral Council is not recognized by civil law as a legal entity and is not subject to regulation by civil law. If the Parish Pastoral Council fails to perform its delegated tasks adequately, the Board of Corporators of the parish is responsible for the inadequacy. *(More information regarding parish corporations may be obtained through the Chancery Office of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.)*

COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO PARISH COMMITTEES, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS

- ✘ A parish needs small groups of men and women with similar interests and skills to carry out the specific work of the parish along the lines set by its mission statement and three to five-year plan.
- ✘ Whether these groups are called committees, boards, commissions, or other term, it is important that their area of expertise and responsibility be clearly stated and understood by the ministry group itself and the Parish Pastoral Council.

COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO PARISH COMMITTEES, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS

Committees:

- ✘ **Are working units of the Parish Pastoral Council organized to carry out specific functions by using the gifts and talents of parishioners offered in service to the parish community**
- ✘ **Exist only in relationship with the Parish Pastoral Council, which coordinates and unifies the work of committees within the overall mission of the parish**
- ✘ **May be represented on the Parish Pastoral Council by chairpersons or a designated council member**
- ✘ **May meet with the Parish Pastoral Council periodically to discuss and evaluate specific activities and programs sponsored by the committee**

COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO PARISH COMMITTEES, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS

Committees:

- ✘ Include most often, but are not limited to, the following interest areas:

Evangelization

Liturgy & Spiritual life

Social Justice & Outreach

Finance

Maintenance & Facilities

Respect Life

Vocations

Religious Education & Formation

Youth & Young Adult Ministry

Planning

Stewardship

- ✘ Committees report to the Parish Pastoral Council on their progress in contributing to the achievement of parish and committee goals and objectives and the overall mission of the parish.

The **Finance Committee** consists of experts in the realm of finance.

It aids the pastor/PLD in the management of the parish's goods (canon 537).



COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

- ✘ *The Parish Finance Committee* mandated by the Code of Canon Law (#537), may be a committee of the Parish Pastoral Council. Good communication between the Parish Pastoral Council and the Finance Committee is essential. In order to this communication, a member of the Parish Finance Committee should serve on the Parish Pastoral Council.
- ✘ Parish Finance Committee shares with the Parish Pastoral Council information regarding the parish finances and temporal goods on a regular basis. The Parish Finance Committee assists the Pastoral Leader in implementing the pastoral plans suggested by the Parish Pastoral Council by making fiscally responsible recommendations.
- ✘ The Parish Finance Committee is an essential committee because it assists a parish, its pastoral staff, and Parish Pastoral Council in being realistic about expectations and goals. The Finance Committee does not determine which programs or policies to pursue, which is a function left to the Parish Pastoral Council and Pastoral Leader. It does advise on what is possible in light of the parish's financial condition. It fulfills its role in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, reporting, oversight of financial matters, fundraising, and proposing a parish budget.
- ✘ Without adequate funding, the best intentions of a parish may never be put into action.

COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

- ✘ The budget process does not originate with the Finance Council. Budgeting always goes back to the parish's mission statement and the goals and objectives identified to fulfill this mission.
- ✘ A good planning process ensures that the parish's mission drives the budget rather than vice versa. In order for the budget to reflect parish priorities and goals, full and accurate information about program costs and any projected income from programs is needed. This information should be in hand by the time the Finance Committee prepares its proposed parish budget for the Parish Pastoral Council's review.
- ✘ In reviewing the proposed budget, the Parish Pastoral Council does not duplicate the work of the Finance Council. Rather, its discussion should focus on whether the proposed budget adequately reflects the parish mission and goals.

COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

- ✘ All the work of the parish is not limited to the pastoral staff, Parish Pastoral Council, or its committees.
- ✘ A parish draws its richness from its diversity, and allows all its parishioners to make good use of their gifts, through a range of activities in which individuals can take part.
- ✘ Parish organizations, from Sodality to Holy Name Society to Scouting for youth to Knights of Columbus to seniors clubs draw upon the many talents of parishioners and allow individuals to appreciate that there is “something for everyone.”
- ✘ An activity should not be undertaken or a parish organization created just because a few individuals express their interest in it. A Parish Pastoral Council needs to see and understand how a current or proposed parish organization relates to the overall mission and goals of the parish.

COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE REGIONAL COUNCIL (WHERE APPLICABLE)

- ✘ There exists in some regions a council, composed of representatives from parishes in a particular geographic area, called together by the Vicar Bishop to assist in ministering to local concerns and as a forum for dialogue.

- ✘ Through membership on the Regional Council, parishes make their own needs known, respond to the Bishop's need for information and communication, and have a part in formulating and implementing Archdiocesan policies that may affect parish life in very real ways. Thus, it is important that a parish through its Parish Pastoral Council:
 - + Be represented at the Vicariate level through membership on a Regional Council

 - + Provide periodic reports to the Regional Council on parish plans, activities, needs, and challenges, and report back to the Parish Pastoral Council on regional plans and activities

COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE ARCHDIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

- ✘ Just as Vicar Bishops need to hear from regional groups or councils and have their assistance in carrying out policies and programs, the Archbishop also draws upon an Archdiocesan Pastoral Council to assist him in his leadership and ministry to the Archdiocese.
- ✘ Through elected representatives from each Regional Council as well as clergy, religious, and appointed laity, the Archbishop and the APC hear the concerns and opinions of parishes throughout the Archdiocese, and in turn communicate to parishes just how the Archdiocese needs their cooperation and assistance in realizing archdiocesan-wide goals and objectives

COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

- ✘ Several parishes may support an interparish or regional school.
- ✘ *All parishes should promote and support Catholic Education even though it may not have a school or be connected to an interparish or regional school.*
- ✘ All schools, whether parish, interparish or regional, have school boards. While the school board's area of concern is the school, the Parish Pastoral Council's concern is the overall mission of the parish, which includes the education of the young.
- ✘ The relationship between the school board and the Parish Pastoral Council should be one of mutual cooperation and collaboration. Information should be shared frequently between the two bodies to ensure mutual support and understanding.

PART SIX:



OPERATING PRINCIPLES

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

- ▶ MISSION
- ▶ COLLABORATION
- ▶ EMPOWERMENT
- ▶ SUBSIDIARITY
- ▶ CONSULTATION
- ▶ CONFLICT MANAGEMENT
- ▶ PLANNING & POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PLANNING

The Gospel and the spiritual life need to be at the heart of a Parish Pastoral Council's planning, and, as part of the universal Church, appreciate and celebrate the diverse makeup of our Archdiocese.

The Parish Pastoral Council's work is more properly planning and policy development, and not administration. It needs to keep the "big picture," while the Pastoral Leader, staff, committees, and organizations deal with the specifics.

The Parish Pastoral Council oversees the development of a pastoral plan by establishing a Planning Committee. This Planning Committee ensures ongoing collaboration in developing and renewing a pastoral plan for the ministries and life of the parish.

PLANNING

The pastoral plan promotes the full mission of the Church, but in particular, how the parish takes part in that broad mission. While other groups within the parish may focus on a specific area of mission and ministry, the Parish Pastoral Council is responsible for determining how the parish can be most effective in fulfilling its total mission.

It is the Pastoral Leader in collaboration with Council that identifies what needs to be supported, changed, or developed to make the parish more faithful to its discernment of God's call.

PLANNING

- It is important to note that the Parish Pastoral Council's role is not to plan and conduct programs, but to make sure that programs are designed to accomplish the mission. The Mission and Mission Priorities are the foundational reference points for all the other elements of planning.
- The question that should be continually posed, "*How does this relate to the Mission?*" Mission Priorities include: Evangelization, Liturgy, Education/Formation, Service/Outreach, and Stewardship (time, talent, resources).

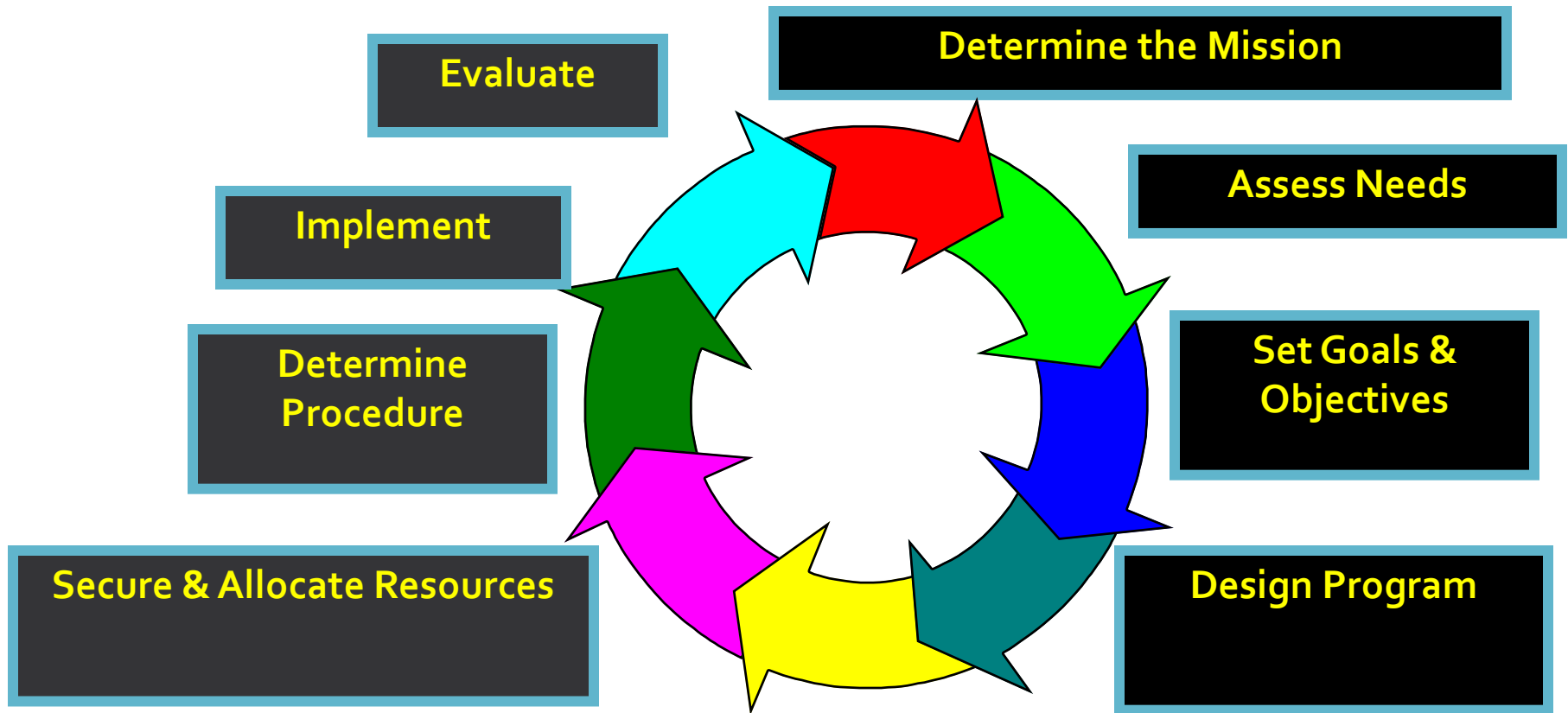
PLANNING

There are several ways to go about planning effectively. Regardless of the planning method chosen, certain elements are essential to the planning process in order to address all the factors involved.

Since planning is a major task of the Parish Pastoral Council, it should be done annually so that sufficient time, talent, and resources can be allocated in advance to insure success and completion of the plan's goals and objectives.

Essential Elements of Planning

Cycle of Planning



PART SEVEN:

OPERATING PROCEDURES

MEETINGS

- ▶ Each Parish Pastoral Council determines the number of meetings to be held each year. Ordinarily, a council meets monthly, although it may meet more or less frequently as determined to insure accomplishment of its goals.
- ▶ Council members give council meetings high priority and plan them into their schedules as necessary. Attendance at meetings is not a matter of personal convenience but of responsibility and accountability to the parish.
- ▶ Council members and anyone asked to be at the meeting should come prepared to participate and contribute to council discussions.
- ▶ Meetings should start on time and end at the agreed to time.

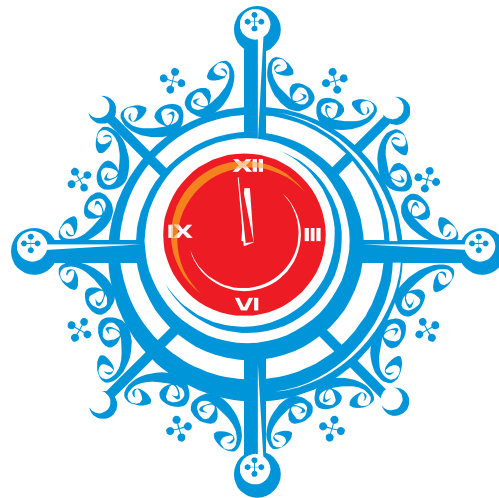
Meetings

Who plans the agenda and runs the Council's meetings?



Most guidelines for Councils recommend the establishment of an “**executive**” or “**agenda**” committee.
It designs the Council’s meetings.

The main purpose of the Executive or agenda committee is to plan the council meeting so that the *time is well spent.*



AGENDA

- ▶ **The Executive Committee makes sure that the agenda reflects the mission and goals of the parish. It brings to the agenda what it believes is important from the community's point of view.**
- ▶ **The Executive Committee plans the agenda and communicates it to the full council at least a week in advance of the meeting.**
- ▶ **The Pastoral Leader, Parish Pastoral Council members, and/or parishioners may propose agenda items for consideration by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may place an item on the agenda or refer it to the appropriate group or persons if it is not properly a council matter.**

AGENDA

- ▶ The Parish Pastoral Council should determine the process for submitting agenda items to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee develops the agenda so that items may be addressed adequately within a given time-frame at a regular or special council meeting.
- ▶ The agenda and all necessary background information for agenda items should be sent to Council members in advance. Minutes and committee reports should also be sent in advance of the meeting for review by Council members. *Only approval of the Minutes and updates to reports should be done in the meeting.*
- ▶ The majority of the time in council meetings should be devoted to discerning and discussing issues related to fulfilling the parish's mission and needs of the parish and its parishioners.

AGENDA

- ▶ Each agenda should have three key elements:
 - Inspiration
 - Information
 - Formation

- ▶ The agenda lists items that are
 - 1) matters of information,
 - 2) matters requiring council action,
 - 3) matters that call for prayerful discernment and discussion leading to a recommendation or decision.

AGENDA

- ▶ Items on the agenda under the heading of information should not become lengthy discussions items or report giving, since they are for information only.
- ▶
- ▶ Items on the agenda under the heading of action should be decided at the meeting. It is assumed that the council is ready to make a recommendation or a decision.
- ▶
- ▶ Items on the agenda under the heading of discernment or discussion should be discussed with openness and the understanding that decisions may not be made at present. It is important that all council members have the opportunity to participate in any discussion. Discernment leads to decision.

AGENDA

- Check-in: What we have seen and heard in the parish
- Gathering prayer/ ritual
- Information Items:
 - Secretary's report
 - Approval of minutes
 - Updates to Committee Reports
- Discussion Items:
 - Study and reflection; discussion and discernment
 - Update and dialogue on long range goal: (examples)
 - Developing the spiritual life of parishioners
 - Creating an awareness of justice issues
- The Pastor's concerns
- Announcements
- Next steps – future needs, next meeting
- Final blessing

DECISION MAKING

- ▶ The Parish Pastoral Council makes decisions consistent with the mission and goals of the parish, after prayer, reflection, and discussion. Some decisions require wider consultation with the parish community and/or experts in particular fields.
- ▶ All decisions are the result of careful listening to various opinions and proposals and of thoughtful evaluation of reliable data.
- ▶ Decisions should also include a procedure for evaluating the action at a later time.
- ▶ Decisions should not be thought of as occasions for vote taking, but rather as moments to gather the best and prayerful consideration of all Parish Pastoral Council members to act on behalf of the whole community.

DECISION MAKING

- ▶ All decisions of the Parish Pastoral Council must be affirmed by the Pastoral Leader.
- ▶ A Pastoral Leader may decline to accept a decision by the Council if that Pastoral Leader judges that the decision violates any of the following: Matters of faith or morals, Church law and regulations, Archdiocesan policy and procedures, Good order in the parish and the good of the whole parish
- ▶ If the Pastoral Leader has participated fully in the discernment and decision-making process, conflict between the Council's recommendation (decision) and the Pastoral Leader's final decision is unlikely

METHODS OF DECISION MAKING

- ▶ **Consensus.** Decision making by consensus involves prayer, reflection, data analysis, open discussion of the positive and negative consequences of particular actions, confirmation of an intended course of action determined by a group, and, in the end, the consent of everyone involved. In a consensus process, each council member is expected to speak to the issue under consideration, so that all points of view are expressed and considered. Consensus does not mean that everyone agrees, but that everyone accepts and supports the decision of the group.
- ▶ **Voting.** Often called for in matters of procedure, including acceptance of reports and other matters not requiring a prayerful discernment process. Or, if the Council needs to bring closure to a discernment process, vote taking (a straw vote) may take place to be sure that there is consensus regarding the recommendation or decision being made

Question:
What makes a successful council?

FORMATION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Parish Pastoral Council members should commit themselves to:

- ▶ **Regular times of prayer and reflection, individually and together as a Council with regular prayer and reflection during council meetings as a community of faith**
- ▶ **An annual retreat weekend and/or days of recollection centered upon the Parish Pastoral Council and its ministry**
- ▶ **Periodic workshops and seminars relating to skills development and discussion that build mutual trust and understanding among council members**
- ▶ **Study of the history and nature of the Church**

FORMATION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

GROUP FORMATION

Council members should commit themselves to:

- ▶ Opportunities to know one another as individuals who are unique human beings and persons of faith
- ▶ Training sessions or workshops in communication skills, conflict management, team building, and other group interaction skills
- ▶ Development of their understanding of Church systems, council development, pastoral planning, and organizational structures
- ▶ An annual evaluation of the work of the Council
- ▶ An annual orientation day for new Parish Pastoral Council members
- ▶ Annual Parish Pastoral Council planning day

VACANCY OF THE PASTORATE

- ▶ At the reassignment, transfer, resignation, incapacity, or death of the Pastor or Pastoral Leader, the Parish Pastoral Council continues to serve the parish community until a new Pastor or Pastoral Leader is appointed.
- ▶ The Council acts as a consultative body to the appointed Administrator during the vacancy.
- ▶ No policy changes are made until after the Parish Pastoral Council is reconvened under the new Pastoral Leader's leadership.

SAMPLE CALENDAR

- Parish Pastoral Councils throughout the Archdiocese may not be on the same calendar. They may select new members at different times of the year. However, we have found that many of the selection processes are during the spring and summer, so we offer this calendar as a possibility. You can adapt these suggestions to the time of year when you select new members.
-
- July - August
 - Provide orientation for new Parish Pastoral Council members
 - Offer some socializing opportunities
 - Assist in the transition of new staff members
- September
 - Clarify who you are as a Parish Pastoral Council
 - Review mission statement and goals
- October - December
 - Examine and study pastoral issues
 - Host a parish assembly
 - Meet with Finance Council to review annual budget and long range plans
-

SAMPLE CALENDAR

- January
 - Have a retreat for your Parish pastoral Council
 - Share the conclusions of your parish assembly
- February – March
 - Brainstorm on new objectives and strategies for your goals
- April
 - Evaluate your Parish Pastoral Council on how well you...
 - Keep the vision alive
 - Articulate the mission of the parish
 - Deal with critical pastoral issues
 - Offer your wisdom to the pastoral leader
- May - June
 - Give annual feedback to the parish
 - Facilitate the selection of new Parish Pastoral Council members
 - Celebrate your successes

EVALUATION TOOLS

- ▶ To determine whether or not, and how well, the parish and the Parish Pastoral Council are achieving its goals and objectives necessary to accomplish its mission and mission priorities, it is important to do at least an annual evaluation or “check-up.” This will indicate what has been accomplished and what still needs to be done which should lead to setting goals and objectives for the next year, be it a calendar or fiscal year. Included here are some suggestions.
- ▶ To further help each parish in the Archdiocese determine its strengths and needs, a strong recommendation is for each parish periodically to do a *self-assessment*.
- ▶ The assessment is one part of a picture of the parish that, when combined with data from Archdiocesan Central Services, will assist a parish in planning for present and future needs. A Parish may be encouraged and guided to collaborate with neighboring parishes to share strengths and help each other meet its individual and regional collective needs in providing quality pastoral care to their parishioners and the community at large.

CRITERIA FOR A GOOD PARISH

STRUCTURAL CRITERIA: What a Parish Is?

- Sense of Community
- Lay Ministry
- Pastor or Pastoral Life Director (PLD)
- Staff

CRITERIA FOR A GOOD PARISH

- **FUNCTIONAL CRITERIA: What a Parish Does?**
- **Participation**
- **Vitality of Worship**
- **Evangelization:**
- **Religious Education, Formation, and Vocations**

CRITERIA FOR A GOOD PARISH

- **FUNCTIONAL CRITERIA: What a Parish Does?**
- Service to the Poor and Needy
- Presence to the Neighborhood
- Other Service Ministry

CRITERIA FOR A GOOD PARISH

- **SUPPORTIVE CRITERIA: What a Parish Needs?**
- **Size of Community**
- **Facilities**
- **Financial Condition**

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL EVALUATION

- **PURPOSE**
- **MEMBERSHIP**
- **OTHER POINTS TO CONSIDER**

Final Thoughts

**Only as high as we reach can we grow.
Only as far as we seek can we go.
Only as deep as we look can we see.
Only as much as we dream can we be.**

Final Thoughts

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- **Those whom we seek to serve may come our way but once, let us neglect none for among them may be the one to lead us to everlasting peace**

THE END