

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL GUIDELINES

ARCHDIOCESAN DIRECTIVES

After the diocesan bishop has listened to the Presbyteral Council and if he judges it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish. The pastor presides over it, and through it the Christian faithful, along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish by virtue of their office, give their help in fostering pastoral activity. The pastoral council possesses a consultative vote and is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop. (Canon 536)

1. All the members of the parish communion are to share in the decision-making process through a broadly based Council. Each parish must have such a Council formed according to guidelines established by the Archbishop. (See Synod 69)
2. The Parish Pastoral Council is responsible for developing a Parish Mission Statement reflecting the mission of Christ and the Universal Church.
3. Parish goals must be reviewed and objectives set each year by the Parish Pastoral Council for the following year in light of current Archdiocesan goals. (See Handbook, p.24)
4. A process for acquiring appropriate members for the Parish Pastoral Council will be held either: 1.) in the Spring of each year, new members to take office July 1; or 2.) in the Fall of each year, new members to take office January 1. (See Handbook, p.24)
5. The membership, structure and operation for the Parish Pastoral Council must be outlined in a set of Operational Procedures. They are to be reviewed and approved by the Office for Leadership Formation before being adopted by the Parish. (See Handbook, p.4)
6. The Parish Pastoral Council must choose one of its members to become a member of the Vicariate Pastoral Council.
7. The Annual Parish budget is to be submitted to the Archdiocesan Department of Finance/Administration signed by the Pastoral Council.
8. Ongoing Formation must be integrative to the life and activity of the Parish Pastoral Council. (See Handbook, p.16)

ROLE OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The Parish Pastoral Council, (herein after referred to as Council), is a consultative body to the pastor and the coordinating and unifying structure of the parish community. The Council is the means of achieving the full participation of the whole parish in its mission by giving all a voice in supporting, guiding, and directing the various aspects of parish life. Its members gather together the visions, hopes, and needs of the community, reflecting upon them until a consensus is reached, and translates this consensus into parish planning through the establishment of goals

and objectives. The Council sees that these goals and objectives are implemented by the parish Commissions and Committees and are evaluated annually by the faith community.

DUTIES OF MEMBERS

The duties of members of Council include:

- Attend all regular meetings of Council unless excused by the Chairperson
- Attend three annual Leadership Nights
- Serve on at least one sub-committee of the Council; Members must attend sub-committee meetings and communicate to the Council the progress of their work, (excludes Commission Representatives)
- Participate actively and express ideas freely
- Contribute input for consensus decision making process
- Prepare adequately for each meeting by reading all agenda materials
- Support decision and foster communication between all leadership groups and the parish at large

DUTIES OF PASTOR

The Pastor must ratify all decisions of the Council. He should withhold ratification when, in his judgment, such decision departs from Church law, the teaching of the Church or the known policy of the Archdiocese. This should happen very seldom if the Pastor is taking part in all deliberations of the Council. When the Pastor feels he cannot ratify a decision, he should present the reasons for his refusal to ratify. They should seriously consider again all the salient aspects of the question before coming to another decision. During their reconsideration, the Council shall give due deliberation and consideration to the input of the entire parish. The Council, while mindful of their duties, shall also take cognizance of the seriousness of the issue of issues before it in their deliberations, recognizing and appreciating the consequences of its decision or decision upon the parish as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

...The pastoral Council's purpose is to promote community, to be a sign and witness of unity, and to assist the pastor in pastoral planning. The Council performs its function of pastoral planning by listening to the parish community and formulating broad priorities, goals, and policies which articulate and foster the mission of the parish.

Commissions and Sub-Commissions are responsible for the development of strategic plans and policies in response to the broad directions articulated by the pastor and Parish Pastoral Council.

The Stewardship Commission, required by the Code of Canon Law, advises the pastor and Parish Pastoral Council about effective stewardship of the parish's financial resources. It is responsible for developing and overseeing a parish budget process, as well as conducting long range financial planning.

Parish staff, under the direction of the pastor or his delegate, develop and oversee parish programs and ministries which flow from the directions determined as a result of the Council's planning process. Staff may also have responsibilities in financial and personnel administration.

ROLE OF THE PASTORAL STAFF

The Pastoral Staff serve as the professional advisors of their Departments on their respective Commissions. The Pastoral Staff person(s) should guide, coordinate, and assist Commission members in implementing the objectives of the Commission.

STRUCTURE OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

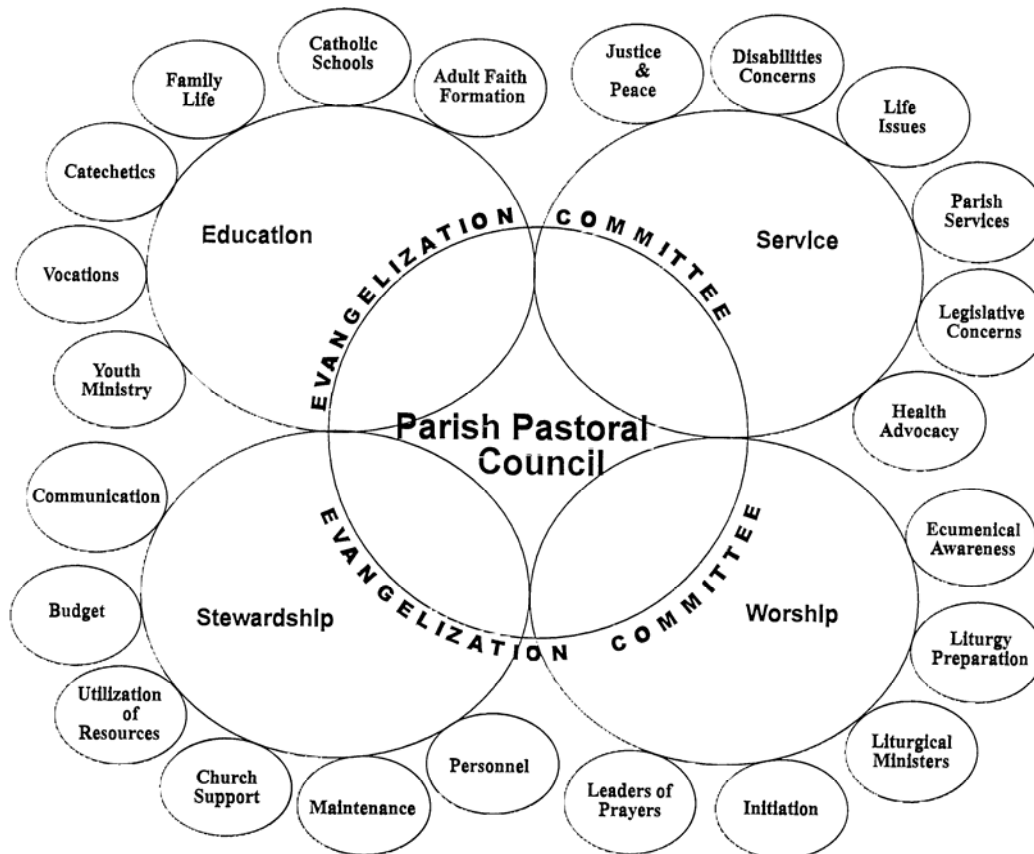
Members of the Council The personal interaction desirable in a group like a Parish Pastoral Council is difficult in groups of less than seven or more than twenty persons. The ideal number would seem to be between twelve and sixteen. The Council should include the following:

- The pastor
- Other priest(s) assigned to full-time ministry in the parish by the archbishop
- A member from each commission
- Members who speak to the concerns and needs of significant groups within the parish, e.g., persons with disabilities, youth, young adults, seniors, unemployed persons.
- Members-at large who are involved and active in the life of the parish.

FUNCTIONS OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

- Prayerful pastoral planning
- ■ Mission statement
- ■ Goals and objectives
- ■ Continual evaluation
- ■ On-going visioning for the future
- Acting as consultors to the pastor
- Expressing the “voice of the parish”
- Creating opportunities for dialogue
- Enabling talents; utilizing resources
- Coordinating activities when necessary
- Helping the parish meet the challenges of being church in today’s world

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



FUNCTIONS OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL COMMISSIONS

The Commissions work:

- to investigate the needs of their own areas of concern in Parish life and to make recommendations to the Parish Pastoral Council on meeting these needs;
- to ascertain needs and to understand and implement policies of the Church, e.g.: Parish, Diocesan, National, and Universal;
- to collaborate with the Pastoral Staff in its areas of concern;
- to develop objectives flowing from the Parish Mission Statement and Goals;
- to provide an annual evaluation of objectives and programs;
- to promote and infuse Justice and Peace concepts into their respective areas of concern;
- to report regularly to the Parish Pastoral Council on the status of their objectives, planning, and implementation--Council approval is needed for major changes, policies and actions, e.g.: an addition/deletion of an objective or projected budget overrun;
- to propose and to recommend a budget to the Parish Pastoral Council;
- to use the consensus method, respecting the principle of subsidiarity;
- to choose a Chairperson and to hold regular meetings;
- to choose a Spokesperson to the Parish Pastoral Council;
- to review and to implement the policies of the Archdiocese of Detroit and to take advantage of Archdiocesan Central Services and programs;
- to choose one of its members to become a member of the corresponding Vicariate Pastoral Council Commission;
- to propose policy for the Council's consideration
- to oversee the work of its committees.

SUBSIDIARITY

DECISION IN MOST APPROPRIATE AREA

CRITERIA:

Decision/Policy that affects
one commission/committee

or a small number of
parishioners is not the
responsibility of council.

Council is not involved in the minute details.

MEETING STRUCTURE

Regular Meetings

- Prayer
- Study, Reflection, and Sharing
- Business
- Evaluation

Once or twice a year: Days/Evenings of Reflection or Retreats

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHAIRPERSON-LEADER

Empower People

- Free folks--to think and to feel
- Encourage participation
- Track agenda and ideas expressed
- Be attentive to feelings

Enable Process

- Initiate new topics and ideas
 - Seek models and give information
 - Call for clarification
 - Track those who stray
 - Summarize and synthesize
 - Test for consensus
 - Help to achieve closure
-
- *Confront dysfunctional behavior kindly, clearly, and consistently in private.*
 - *Explain (with examples) how behavior can change, without blaming or “scolding”.*

CONSENSUS

Using the consensus process to reach substantial, though not necessarily unanimous, agreement on matters of direction and policy helps the Council model the kind of unity and harmonious relationships it strives to develop in the Parish at large.

Consensus demands that members be more caring, responsible and fair with each other. It provides a structure in which these qualities are legitimate and necessary.

THE PROCESS

The Consensus process is based on:

1. Honest dialogue among members;
2. The sharing of all pertinent data with all Council members;
3. Each Council member being prepared for the discussion;
4. Devoting enough time to the discussion so that each member clearly understands (though not necessarily agrees with) the issues and feelings shared at the table;
5. Each Council member voicing their opinion/judgment on the issues using “I” statements;
6. Each Council member open to the possibility of the discussion changing or modifying his/her opinions, feelings and position.

The consensus process allows for entirely new ideas or recommendations to emerge from the dialogue or the sharing of wisdom at the Council table. The process helps to guard against a win/lose competitive atmosphere that develops when parliamentary or voting procedures are used. No one person or small group can solely take credit for the agreement reached in consensus. Everyone shares in the discussion, everyone shares in the commitment to the direction recommended.

STEPS IN THE CONSENSUS PROCESS

1. A clear agenda needs to be set prior to and reviewed at the beginning of the meeting. Council members will know what the discussion will cover and what its parameters are to be.
2. The Chairperson introduces the item from the agenda.
3. Background information is given either by the person or by the group that requests the agenda discussion.
4. The Chairperson invites someone to begin discussion. An individual introduces an idea/opinion as to how the topic/issue might be approached.
5. A second speaker responds to that statement and adds ideas or reaction of their own.
6. A third speaker develops ideas further.
7. The Chairperson:
 - Keeps discussion on the topic. Should there be need, the Chairperson rephrases complicated or confusing comments. He or she summarizes points of agreement and points of difference;
 - Ensures that all viewpoints are heard and understood by the group;
 - Ensures that the person speaking uses “I” statements.

8. When most of the viewpoints have been expressed, all necessary information has been given and/or parts of the discussion begin to be repeated, the Chairperson states the direction in which the group appears to be moving.
9. The Chairperson tests for consensus by asking if there is anything else of importance to be offered that has not been said.
10. The Chairperson reviews the areas of agreement and areas of disagreement.
11. The Chairperson asks if consensus has been reached.
12. If consensus has not been reached, the discussion continues until the areas of disagreement are reduced or eliminated.
13. If the group cannot reach a consensus because more information is needed, a person(s) is delegated to gather the information within a certain time frame (e.g., next meeting).
14. The consensus that is reached may not completely satisfy everyone on the Council, but it must be one that all group members are willing to live with and to support.

COMMITMENT TO PLANNING

PHASES OF PLANNING

What is Planning?	Phase 1-- Commitment to Planning
Who are we?	Phase 2-- Contemporary Mission
Who are we?	Phase 3-- Accomplishments.--programs and resources identified
Who are we?	Phase 4-- Needs assessment
What do we want to do?	Phase 5— Goal Setting
What do we want to do?	Phase 6— Specification of Objectives
How are we going to do it?	Phase 7— Program Development
How are we going to do it?	Phase 8— Implementation
How did it go?	Phase 9— Evaluation
	Phase 10-- Celebration

FURTHER RESOURCES

A full copy of the Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines and Handbook can be obtained by calling the Catholic Bookstore at (313) 962-4490.