

THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL



SYNODALITY:

CALLING ALL
TO PARTICIPATE
IN THE
MISSION OF CHRIST
AND THE
LIFE OF THE CHURCH



ARCHDIOCESE
of NEWARK



The Parish Pastoral Council

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The acts of synodality do not look so much like sweeping dogmatic definitions as they do finetuning how the Gospel is applied to the signs of the times.

—Cardinal Joseph Tobin

Message from Cardinal Tobin



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Pope Francis is calling for the Church to go back to its roots of synodality. With its roots in two Greek words meaning “same road”, synodality is a method and process of discussion and participation in which the whole people of God can walk together by listening to the Holy Spirit and participating in the life and mission of the Church.

Pope Francis describes synodality this way:

The journey of synodality is the journey that God wants from his church in the third millennium. A synodal church is a listening church, aware that listening is more than hearing. It is a reciprocal listening in which each one has something to learn.

We want to practice synodality at all levels of the Archdiocese to ensure that listening and dialogue can take place. Some examples already in practice are councils that directly advise the Archbishop, such as the Council of Priests, College of Deans, the Archdiocesan Pastoral and Finance Councils and the V Encuentro. Others offer advice to those responsible for specific areas of archdiocesan life, such as Catholic education, catechetics, youth and young adult ministry, etc.

The parish mirrors diocesan councils with the finance and parish pastoral councils, ministry councils and various advisory groups. The members should always invoke the Holy Spirit, given to all of us by baptism, confirmation, and the other sacraments. Without a humble openness to the Holy Spirit, the work of synodality is nothing more than gathering opinions. All these councils provide pastors and parish leaders with advice by listening to “what the Spirit is saying to the Church” through the experiences of their sisters and brothers.

It is my expectation that each parish of the Archdiocese will have a pastoral council and find ways to listen to their fellow parishioners, seeking their advice regarding the best ways to make the Gospel alive in the hearts of all.

We want to continue to form strong Catholic families, young adults, and adults as missionary disciples – those who can witness their faith in love and action. We want to see parishes continue to remain close to their people, gathered by the Word, nourished by the sacraments, transmitting the faith to new generations and serving the poor and forgotten.

These guidelines offer useful models as well as ideas to create energetic councils that will produce solid pastoral strategies for spreading the Gospel and engaging parishioners in the life and mission of the church. This is the synodality that “*God wants from his church in the third millennium.*” Let us take a long and hope-filled view in our parish planning and evaluation.

May God bless you in all your efforts to bring about a renewed Church – *Forward in Faith Together: Our Road Ahead.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.".

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R

Introduction

What Makes a Parish Successful and Full of Vitality? It Takes a Village!

“It takes a village” to make a difference and nurture our parishioners in the faith and to create vital, energetic parishes. We all belong to the village, of the parish and the global Church. It is up to all of us to make Christ present in the world. The pastor, staff and parish pastoral council work together to assure that the mission of Christ is paramount in people’s lives and that, through baptism, all are called to be part of the mission, bringing it to all in varied ways. Scripture tells us that it takes many to be the Church, the Body of Christ, and bring vitality to our parishes. In Romans we read,

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. Romans 12:4

Again in 1 Corinthians:

But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the extent of the full stature of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

Successful parishes come in every size and style: large, medium, small; urban, suburban and rural; many resources, few resources; clustered, merged, and multi-cultural. Size and style are not important but what matters is intention. How the people view their parish is key. How the pastor, staff, parish pastoral and finance councils and key lay leaders view and guide the parish, is what can lead a parish to “success.” It starts at that very basic level of intention – WHY are we here and WHY do we do what we do as a parish community. Answering the question why leads us to WHAT and HOW.

The “intentional” parish knows who and what it is and why it has the mission to create disciples of Jesus. Being intentional means that parish leadership takes time to reflect and plan, develop and evaluate in an organized and regular fashion. Consistent meetings of parish staff, parish pastoral council, finance council and ministry leaders all contribute to the sense of direction, goals, and good ministry that a parish has. The intentional parish is about “excellent parish ministry” in the name of Jesus Christ.

Definition of Vitality

Vitality is defined as having a lively and animated character, with a power of enduring, and the capacity to live and develop. This is what we want for our parishes, the energy and vision to determine the Why of parish life and the energy to move it forward and serve all.

A recent study by FADICA (Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities), a consortium of Catholic funders, focused on parish vitality. The goal of this year-long initiative was to identify the characteristics and practices of parishes with vitality, surface innovative approaches to fostering and measuring it, and explore questions about vitality. They identified four primary focus areas as critical in developing vitality: Word, Worship, Service, and Leadership along with the development of a strong Community. After meeting with many people and parishes the study identified specific characteristics that give parishes vitality. Vital parishes:

Are innovative

- Grounded in the tradition and basic teachings of the church, is open to and actively seeks out new ways to listen, work with diverse groups, lead, respond, and adapt.
- Actively engaged in seeking new solutions for difficult problems so that they can meet the needs in their faith communities and the world around them in creative ways.

Have excellent pastors

- Have the desire, qualities, and skills to work collaboratively and co-responsibly with staff and parish leaders.
- Know how to be servant leaders, recruiting, affirming and empowering people.
- Have the relationship skills needed to listen, to communicate, and respond pastorally.
- Have the adaptability to meet the continuously changing context in which they find themselves.

Live the faith in service

- Reach beyond the four walls of the parish with opportunities to meet the spiritual, human and emotional needs of those who are marginalized, hungry, homeless, hurting, or in need.
- Live out the call to form missionary disciples. The baptized often respond by reaching out to the less fortunate on the local, national, and international levels.

Have leadership teams

- Recognize the essential contribution of the laity to the ongoing life of the church.
- Consist usually of staff but sometimes active parishioners, sharing responsibility for the life of the parish with the pastor. This group, when actively collaborating with the pastor, often does creative and innovative brainstorming, can have difficult conversations, provide timely and frank feedback, and assist the pastor in making complex decisions.
- Is reflective of the various cultures in the parish; balanced with women and men, young and the old; and open to the changing and complex nature of today's parish life.

Have a holistic, compelling vision

Pastoral leaders have a vision for parish life which includes

- engaging in relational ministry; fostering authentic relationships within the parish community; ensuring the proclamation of, and formation in the Word; Worship that nurtures one's relationship with God; and Service that reaches both parishioners and the community outside the parish walls.
- the focus is on the faith and spiritual life of adults who in turn are co-responsible for the vision and life of the community.

Place a priority on the Sunday experience

- Focus on the gathering of the community on Sunday to hear God's word, celebrate and share the Eucharist, and be sent forth in service.
- Place a priority on the key elements of the 3 Hs – Hospitality, Homily and Hymns
 - ✓ Hospitality: the felt experience of welcome and hospitality for all.
 - ✓ Homily: an uplifting homily that is applicable to the daily lives of parishioners.
 - ✓ Hymns: quality liturgical music that engages the hearts and voice of members.

Foster spiritual growth and maturity

Parishes recognize a wide multiplicity of ways in which the People of God journey to and build their relationship with Jesus.

- Provide a variety of opportunities to engage people in the parish.
- Listen to and build relationships with members of the community who are proud of their parish.
- Take ownership for the life and development of the community.

Utilize online communication tools

Good, interactive, and culturally sensitive websites are critical, as well as the proper use of social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

- Offer short, daily video blogs or podcasts on the day's readings, or topics of interest.
- Use available interactive, online catechetical lessons for all ages.¹

Take a Fresh Look

Each of these areas demand a fresh look from our parishes and this can be done by collaboration between parish staff and Parish Pastoral Council. Working together you can implement simple steps to look at what you are already doing and what works, then to take a deeper look into what is not being done and what can be developed. To help you get started in discussing these areas, please see pages 36-37 in the Appendix for a helpful worksheet.

Survey: Maintenance or Mission

Do simple surveys to assess pastoral needs, how parishioners view the parish, how the parish assists them in their spiritual journey, deepening their relationship with Christ, using their gifts and talents, and putting them in service to others. Surveys can be done at Mass, having parishioners fill out cards. An online survey using Survey Monkey, personal interviews or focus groups are other ways to gather feedback.

¹ Mogilka and Jewel, Open Wide the Doors to Christ: Executive Summary, FADICA, 2018, p. 4

In compiling the feedback, you can ask, do parishioners see us in maintenance or mission mode? Are we doing what we always have done, or are we responding to the times and the needs of today. These are excellent and essential questions and correspond to the WHY question asked above. When we can take “a long, loving look at the real,”² and be totally honest in what we see, we can move forward and take steps to renewal and vitality.

Following the compilation and analysis of the answers, a parish assembly might be held to engage parishioners in feedback and to assist in determining vision, priorities, and goals for the next few years. This is a process for developing a pastoral (strategic) plan for the parish.

The FADICA study found that many parishes are lively and full of vitality. That vitality, however, is not simply the result of doing more of what has worked in the past. Rather, parishes with vitality are open to listening and responding in new ways to the changing culture in which we live and the deep needs found there.³ These parishes depended upon engagement of all – pastor, leadership, and parishioners living out their baptismal call as disciples.

Parish leaders called forth the gifts of women and men, young adults, and all age groups, ethnicities, and cultures to join together, to assess needs, build on what went before and develop innovative thinking to create a sustainable and energetic parish. Building parish vitality takes intentionality, fortitude, and perseverance. The role of leadership is not maintenance but rather, MISSION; making the mission of Christ real and developing the roles of parishioners – the missionary disciples – in co-responsibility for the mission.

In summary, a quick guide to a successful parish through People, Mission, and Structure:⁴

Engage and Invite People

- Engage people
- Find out what they are thinking
- Include them in a dreaming process
- Make hospitality and welcome a priority
- Celebrate great Sunday liturgy
- Preach excellently
- Visit homes

Mission Reaching Out to All

- Develop a great website
- Reflect on the mission of Jesus
- Do a “dreaming process” with the parishioners
- Develop your vision and goals to advance the mission of Jesus

² Fr. Walter Burghardt, SJ on contemplation, <https://thejesuitpost.org/2012/01/where-is-the-love-or-prayer-a-long-loving-look-at-the-real/>

³ Mogilka and Jewel, Ibid. p. 7.

⁴ Murnion, Philip J., New York, National Pastoral Life Center, 1981.

- Make the parish a holistic place of formation
- Be a community of social justice: advocacy in addition to charity and direct service
- Develop Stewardship as a model of conversion and mission
- Create small faith groups in all of the parish ministries and organizations through theological reflection

Structure to Lead and Guide

- Develop leadership
- Collaborate with others and keep working at it
- Evaluate the effectiveness of parish leadership and ministries
- Be intentional in all you do



Executive Summary Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils



Church Structures

The Church

Jesus Christ entrusted His mission of salvation to the twelve apostles and through them to the bishops of the Church. The bishops are gathered in a spirit of collegiality around the Holy Father and share with him the responsibility for the governance of the universal Church.

The Archdiocese (Diocese)

A bishop is assigned to a diocese to lead it and assure that it flourishes with ministries that form and train disciples of Jesus. It is the role of the bishop to assure that the Gospel is proclaimed to all in that geographical area. The bishop in charge is known as the “Ordinary” and many larger dioceses also have auxiliary bishops.

Newark is an Archdiocese headed by an archbishop designated by the Pope. An archdiocese is a metropolitan see which convenes the other dioceses in the ecclesiastical province of New Jersey. The other dioceses are Camden, Trenton, Metuchen, and Paterson and they are led by their own bishop. All these bishops meet several times a year to discuss pastoral needs in the area, have a retreat, and generally communicate on a regular basis.

Regions

The Archdiocese of Newark comprises four regions designated by counties: Bergen, Essex, Union, Hudson. Each of the counties are entrusted to a Vicar who acts in the archbishop’s name in that respective area. The role is to meet with pastors in the area as well as priests, deacons, parish staffs, religious institutions, schools, and others in the deaneries and the vicariate. Regional bishops also have parish visitations in which they meet with parish pastoral and finance councils, parishioners and ministries of the parishes.

The Vicariate and Deaneries

Each diocese is further divided into geographical areas. In the Newark Archdiocese, there are four counties called vicariates, each vicariate headed by a regional (auxiliary) bishop. Each vicariate is organized with deaneries representing a group of parishes.

The Parish

Each vicariate is divided into communities called parishes. Because a parish derives its nature and function from the diocesan Church, the bishop commissions a pastor for each parish as his representative. Pastors and parishes in a deanery should work together for common projects and to maintain good communication among parishes.

A parish is a group of Christians called together by God through baptism to share in the mission of Jesus. This parish is, for most Catholics, the single most important part of the Church. The parish, as a community of communities, is the Eucharistic people gathered with the leadership of the pastor.

The Parish Pastoral Council

The concept of shared responsibility is that the whole parish community should actively share with the pastor the responsibility for carrying out the mission of the Church in the local area and supporting the faith growth of the community. This commission grows out of the sacrament of Baptism and the entire parish community has the responsibility for caring for and fostering a Christ-like commitment as disciples in each Catholic.

Planning within the parish and participation in the larger Church of the diocese requires organizational structures of collaboration. However, the entire parish community cannot meet regularly with the pastor, so a leadership team and ministry leaders help the pastor know the needs and progress of the parishioners. Thus, it is necessary to form an intermediary group, which is representative of and in contact with the total parish, to plan with the pastor for the mission and faith growth of the parish community. This intermediary group is the Parish Pastoral Council.

Because the pastor is commissioned by the bishop as his representative, and since the pastor has the central leadership role in the life and development of the parish, the pastor plays an essential role in the PPC and is to preside over it. (Canon 536) It follows that the PPC cannot formally meet without the participation of the pastor. The pastor must have active leadership and involvement in the work of the Council. *(When a parish life coordinator has been appointed by the bishop as provided for by Canon 517, the canonical pastor may delegate the responsibility of presiding over the Council to the parish life coordinator.)*

The first thing the members of the PPC must keep in mind is that they and the other parishioners have been called by God. The PPC is not gathered for its own purpose or simply to use its own resources.

The second thing to remember is that the members of a particular parish are not called to live in isolation either from their fellow parishioners, or from other Catholics in the diocese. The Church is a community which extends beyond the boundaries of any one parish. This sense of parish community and of diocesan-community is very important for an understanding of Church.



The Parish Pastoral Council

Purpose

The Parish Pastoral Council forms with the pastor a leadership group of the parish which is broadly representative of parish membership. Through the Parish Pastoral Council, the Catholic laity along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity. (Canon 536) It is an energizing, coordinating and unifying organism of parish life which enables the individual members of the parish to have access to the processes which guide and support the various aspects of parish life. As such, all other parish groups or bodies should relate to the Parish Pastoral Council either through one or another of the council commissions or through some other appropriate means.

It must be emphasized that the spiritual growth and mission of the parish community is the primary concern of the PPC. As a result, the PPC concerns itself with the material well-being of the parish only within the context of this primary focus. The PPC and Finance Committee should meet together periodically and review the ministry needs and funding and resources required to meet the goals.

Functions

The Parish Pastoral Council carries out its purpose through four interdependent functions:

1. Spiritual Formation
2. Parish Planning
3. Policy Development
4. Communications

1. Spiritual Formation

The primary concern for the Parish Pastoral Council is the mission and faith growth of the entire parish. In order to promote this formation of adult Christians in the parish community, it is essential that the members of the Council themselves join together in a process of spiritual growth, particularly through prayer and faith sharing and taking time for two longer meetings for retreat and formation. The Council should work to:

- A. Identify the spiritual growth needs of all parishioners.
- B. Assess the effectiveness of all present parish programs and organizations in deepening the spiritual life of the parish, assisting them in developing a sense of mission.
- C. Provide opportunities for the spiritual growth of parishioners through retreats, days of renewal, small faith communities, etc.

2. Parish Planning

Planning for the growth and direction of the parish community is the major work of the PPC especially through a three year strategic plan. The steps in a parish-planning process are:

- A. Writing a simple, direct statement of the parish's mission as a community within the diocesan Church.

- B. Identifying and reflecting upon the needs of the parish in light of this mission.
- C. Establishing goals, objectives and strategies (action plans) to respond to the top priority needs.
- D. Monitoring and evaluating the programs and activities designed to accomplish the goals and objectives.

3. Policy Development

The goals, objectives, and strategies (action plans) for implementation in a given time period constitutes the formulation of policy. A statement gives direction and is a guide to actions, showing what this 'group' wants to accomplish with the parish.

4. Communications

The importance of communications as a function of the PPC in its service to the parish and in its relationship to the larger Church and world community cannot be overestimated. Good communication helps to establish trust within the community.

- A. In its role of service to the parish, the Council should regularly communicate with the members and groups of the parish, seeking input from them on issues and concerns under consideration.

Listening sessions and regular consultation as in the Synod on Synodality process is an essential function of the PPC for discernment, ideas and inclusion of as many people as possible. This is the best way to listen to needs and create a way forward for the parish to best live out the mission of Christ that we are called to as disciples.

- B. The parish is an integral part of the diocesan community and the Universal Church. Through the Vicariate, deanery and council structures, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC) and other consultative groups, the Parish Pastoral Council develops regular channels of communication between itself and the bishop and the Universal Church.
- C. The PPC creates communication linkages with communities of other faiths and with appropriate groups/persons within the civic community. Listening sessions can also be valuable to hear how the parish community is perceived and the pastoral needs of the surrounding community and congregations.
- D. The PPC must continuously develop the quality of its own internal communications process among the members of the council itself.

Membership

The Parish Pastoral Council should be a microcosm of the total parish community. Therefore, the membership should be as representative of the parish community as is possible.

Representation is partly a matter of structure and partly a matter of attitude. From the standpoint of structure, the PPC should include a broad cross section of the parish community and at the same time, give evidence of a balance.

It is recommended that councils analyze their membership relative to the percentage of men and women, youth, young adults, and adults, etc. Also, from the structural standpoint, each member of the parish should have access to the members of the PPC.

From the standpoint of attitude, members of the PPC should have the common good of the entire parish in mind and not be representative of only one narrow point of view. Parish Pastoral Council members should endeavor to be bridge-builders between different points of view rather than being advocates for one point of view.

Qualifications

Each parish, in its Articles of Understanding, should develop clear criteria to determine eligibility for discerning candidates. (It should be noted that parish employees should not normally be eligible to be candidates.) In addition to being a registered member of the parish, persons called to the important work of furthering the faith growth and mission of the parish community should have:

- A willingness to acquaint themselves with the responsibilities of a Parish Pastoral Council member as outlined in the teachings of the Church and Archdiocesan Guidelines.
- A willingness to work with the pastor who is the leader of the parish community and with the other members of the Council in setting direction for the parish.
- A willingness to work for the whole parish community rather than advocating only one point of view.
- A willingness to be held accountable for active involvement and leadership in parish life and development.

Responsibilities

A Council member makes a commitment to the parish community, which places serious time pressures on the individual. It is not a duty lightly accepted but should be regarded as a primary commitment. This commitment involves:

- an active involvement in personal and communal spiritual growth.
- participation in the meetings of the council.
- active membership on at least one commission/council or service as a Council officer.
- study and preparation for each meeting.

Size of the Council

Because parishes differ greatly in size, each parish must determine the size of PPC most suitable for adequate representation of the parish membership. The range of optimum size is between 9-12 members – divisible by 3.

Term of Office

Greatest advantage is found in a **three-year term** of office for Parish Pastoral Council members, staggered to provide an even rotation year after year. In some cases, a PPC member is eligible for re-election for a second three-year term; then, however, the person is not eligible for re-election or reappointment to a third term until one year after the completion of the second term.

Membership

Ex-officio members

These include parochial vicars, deacons, and pastoral associates (parish staff members). (All ex officio members are non-voting members.) It is not encouraged to have multiple staff persons as members of the PPC. However, one person can be helpful for ongoing communication between PPC, parish staff, and finance council.

Finance Council Member

It is important to have a finance council member on the PPC and vice-versa. This is helpful for ongoing communication between PPC, parish staff, and finance council.

Nominated and Appointed members

Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

It is suggested that all persons be appointed to the council itself, not to head particular areas. The appointed PPC members will then discern from among themselves to serve as **chairperson** for a one-year term, one from among themselves to serve as a **vice-chairperson** for a one-year term.

Leadership in the Parish Pastoral Council and Respective Duties

Role of the Pastor

The pastor presides over the Parish Pastoral Council and must participate in all meetings of the Council. The pastor is the shepherd! Canonically, the pastor is the individual who bears the ultimate responsibility for the parish community. The pastor is to exercise pastoral care of the community (c. 519), see that the word of God is announced (c. 528.1), make Eucharist the center of parish life (c. 528.1), make provisions for the spiritual nourishment of the community (c. 528) and promote the parish communion and its sense of communion with the diocese and the universal church (c. 529.2). As the pastor seeks to know and understand his community, he must:

- Demonstrate spiritual leadership, supporting the parish's life in the Spirit
- Exhibit pastoral leadership, identifying areas of need and concern for the community
- Foster effective relationships within the community
- Motivate people toward a common vision
- Help people to recognize their gifts and encourages them to use those gifts in service to the entire community
- Empower others to grow in their leadership capacity within the parish community
- Encourage openness to change and growth

- Facilitate good communication among staffs, heads of ministries, councils, and the entire parish
- Express confidence in leadership's ability to create a vibrant community of disciples including all members

The lay faithful should accustom themselves to working in the parish in close union with their priests, bringing to the Church community their own and the world's problems, as well as questions concerning human salvation all of which need to be examined together and solved through general discussion.

Christifideles laici 25

The Pastor in Collaboration with Parish Pastoral Council (PPC)

While the pastor attends all meetings of the council, he is not the chair of the council. He participates in the discussions of the council, but he allows the chair to run the meeting according to the agenda which has been set. What then does a pastor do?

- Works with chair of Parish Pastoral Council on creating the meeting agenda
- When terms are up and/or new PPC members are needed, the pastor, reflecting on the diversity of the parish community, discerns with the PPC and others to invite new people to join the council
- Ensures that the discussions of the council are always centered on the mission and vision and not merely on tasks
- Maintains a focus on planning; the temptation is always to get into "the weeds" and focus on the day-to-day management of the parish (a particular task, or a crisis as it arises) rather than longer-term planning
- Ensures that the PPC continues synodality and collaboration by consulting parishioners through surveys or listening sessions
- Fosters good communication among staff, councils and the entire parish community and presents an annual "State of the Parish" message
- Meets regularly with staff or key leaders to keep implementation of the pastoral plan on track
- Engages a wide variety of people in evaluating all areas of parish life
- Periodically brings PPC and finance councils together to review parish plans and priorities to ensure to provide what is needed for robust ministry
- Holds staff, PPC and finance councils accountable for parish priorities
- Serves as a spiritual guide for staff and PPC to pray together and reflect on scripture as a regular part of the meeting
- Sees to the ongoing development, formation, and training of the council

Father Yves Congar was a great Dominican theologian whose reflections on the laity were to become so important to bishops at the Second Vatican council. They said that clergy and laity must work together for the same call and are co-responsible to see that the mission of Christ is accomplished. He wrote:

When a parish life coordinator has been appointed by the bishop as provided for in Canon 517, the priest supervisor may delegate the responsibility of presiding over the Council to the parish life coordinator.

History shows that the apostolate of the laity is only taken seriously when a real “world” exists to confront the Church and the Church is aware of it.
Then the tension is felt for what it is, a tension between the Church, seed and sacrament of the Kingdom of God and the world.
In these conditions, priests and laity feel themselves to be called and yoked to the same task; the laity are no longer mere passengers in a ship navigated by the clergy alone: they are, in their own place, part of the ship’s company.

Yves Congar, OP
Christians Active in the World
Herder and Herder, 1968 p. 8

Chairperson

The chairperson, who serves under the guidance of the pastor/presider, is key in the effectiveness of the Council organization. The chairperson's duties include:

- preparing the agenda with the pastor
- organizing and coordinating the activities and processes of the Council
- chairing the meetings of the Council
- motivating the various members/groups in the Council to fulfill their specific responsibilities

Vice-Chairperson

You may choose a vice-chairperson to work with the chairperson in various areas such as creating the agenda and running the meeting. In the absence of the chairperson, the vice-chairperson runs the meeting.

Secretary

For the smooth functioning of the Council, a secretary is to be chosen. This person may, or may not, be a member of the Council. It is important that councils keep on file careful records of their history and development, of their minutes and recommendations, of changes in leadership, etc.

Selection of Members

The Pastor invites individuals to serve on the Parish Pastoral Council. Those already serving on the Council make recommendations to the Pastor of possible candidates to fill vacancies. It is important that those recommended to serve represent the various ethnicities, cultures, genders, and age groups in the parish. There are two suggested ways that possible candidates might be chosen, namely through a discernment process or a nomination process.

1. Discernment Process

If the PPC is already functioning and requires new members, the current members should reflect on the needs of the parish and the needs of the PPC. This reflection can help them to surface the names of individuals who might meet those perceived needs. For example, if the PPC believes there is a need to better communicate the positive things happening in the parish, the members might surface the names of those involved in the field of marketing or communication.

The discernment process might operate like this: council members discuss needs, then propose the names of individuals who possess qualities to meet those needs. The names are listed and then prioritized by the members of the PPC. The pastor then calls those at the top of the list. If a person cannot join the PPC at this time, the next person on the list is contacted by the pastor.

2. Nomination Process

It is also possible to ask parishioners to surface names of people with skills and leadership ability whom they would like to suggest to be part of the PPC. The members of the PPC then discuss the suggested names and prioritize the list. Then the pastor or chairperson of the PPC calls and invites each person.

Frequency of Meetings

The Parish Pastoral Council should meet once each month. It is recommended that the agenda of the meeting be so planned that the meeting can be limited to a period of two hours. PPC members must commit to the schedule of meetings unless an emergency or particular situation comes up.

Leadership Role

Parish Pastoral Councils enable the members of the parish to join with their pastor in the policy-development process for the parish community.

The leadership role of the PPC must be understood within the context of the theology of shared responsibility and the collegial nature of the Church, and not within the context of American democracy or other political models. For this reason, the Parish Pastoral Council is consultative to the pastor and its "decisions" are to be considered as recommendations to the pastor.

The pastor and the Parish Pastoral Council confer on all important policy concerns of the parish community. They work together in a climate of good will and trust. Great care is to be taken to assure a complete and honest dialogue in which all points of view are considered. Resource persons of competence should be invited for the necessary input and variety of perspectives. All members of the Council seek to arrive at decisions which can be supported by the entire parish community rather than just a segment of the parish. The growth of maturity within a parish is often exemplified by the affirmation of legitimate diversity as a benefit to the parish community.

The nature of the church is both human and divine. Insofar as it is a human organization, there is much that the Church can adapt from the leadership procedures of other organizations. Church organizations must do more, however, than bring reason and information to bear on decisions. **Those who help make decisions for the life and growth of the Church must work to discern God's will in a prayerful atmosphere of faith.** Only then will the decisions be life giving.

Prayer

Prayer and faith sharing should be a regular part of the PPC Meeting. All parish meetings should gather with prayer. Prayer should be appropriate for the particular meeting and always include Scripture or something relevant to the meeting from a document of the church or guidelines for the particular ministry or seasonal feasts. A simple reflection question should be included. If the group is small, you may have all share their reflection together. If the group is over 6 or more people, they can share in twos or threes. Following a few minutes of sharing, call the group(s) back together and ask if anyone wants to share what they heard in their group. Close with a short prayer and move to your agenda.

Adapted from the Diocese of Salina, Kansas

Sample RCAN Meeting Agenda

Meetings will follow an agenda to be set by the pastor and the chairperson. Each meeting's agenda should include the following:

- **Icebreaker**
- **Gathering Prayer and Faith Sharing**
- **Review of the Minutes**
- **Ongoing Parish Planning:**
A substantial amount of time should be devoted to parish planning for the future. The future always gets here before we are ready.
- For example: Use an Appreciative Inquiry Model
 - What are we successful at?
 - What do we need to do to ensure greatness?
 - What does our parish need at this time to fulfill the mission of Christ?
e.g., Parish Needs Assessment, Welcome Ministry, other
- **Evaluations of Recent Activities**
- **Review of Current Projects, Programs**
- **Other Discussions**
- **Pastor's Comments**
- **Sending Prayer**

Articles of Understanding and Guidelines specific to the Archdiocese of Newark are available
Guidelines: [https://www.rcan.org/sites/default/files/files/PPC%20Guidelines%202021\(4\).pdf](https://www.rcan.org/sites/default/files/files/PPC%20Guidelines%202021(4).pdf)



Creating a Culture of Pastoral Planning in the Parish

Why Do Pastoral Planning?

It's simple! The Church has a mission to build up the reign of God. As a parish we should desire to create the best environment to be able to proclaim the Good News of Jesus. We should want to engage as many people as possible in the message. We should seek to provide the space for people to know Jesus in a personal way through their encounter with him in prayer, worship, community, and service to others. Let's be honest: as a parish you want to shine and develop a compelling distinction from others; the parish should be seen as a center for innovation and engagement in all ministry areas. Given the complexities of the world today, pastoral planning helps you to figure out how the parish community can be the best!

We plan in order to:

- Enhance the vibrancy of parish life throughout the Archdiocese of Newark
- Deepen our understanding of our responsibility for the mission of Christ today
- Promote our role as Missionary Disciples of Christ, called by God to use our time, talent, and treasure for the Gospel
- Assure that we are reaching the greatest number of people and inviting them to a closer relationship with Jesus through our Eucharistic liturgy, prayer opportunities, life-long faith formation, and community support
- Create a loving, welcoming community in service to all
- Foster an environment of synodality, collaboration, and sharing of ministries among parishes
- Be efficient in using the resources we have

Pastoral Planning helps us develop focus, discipline and intentionality. By determining goals, priorities, and action steps, parishes can chart a course to strengthen leadership, ministries, communications, protection of the vulnerable, and other key areas. Clear direction for the parish should be set and goals accomplished in a three year time period. Best practices from vibrant parishes always point to understanding your mission as a parish, seeing your strengths, knowing where improvement is necessary and intentionally keeping the vision before everyone. Following through on the plan and evaluating what you have accomplished are key elements as you continue to build a strong faith community.

I hope that all communities will devote the necessary effort to advancing along the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are.

'Mere administration' can no longer be enough.

Throughout the world, let us be 'permanently in a state of mission'.

Pope Francis

Evangelii Gaudium The Joy of the Gospel (25)

Planning Pointers

Create a three year plan to encourage ministry development in areas of Word, Worship, Community and Service. (Service includes parish leadership; Staff, Councils, ministry leaders as well as training leaders for ministry.)

Value Partnership (*Synodality and Collaboration*)

In order to create a culture of synodality and collaboration, parish leadership needs to be:

- Discovering the gifts of parishioners; their skills and how they would like to contribute to parish life
- Listening to what our community appreciates about parish life
- Discovering the needs in the community
- Dreaming about the possibilities for the community
- Recognizing the diversity in our community (gender, age, race, ethnicity, etc.)
- Offering opportunities for the greatest number of people to share their insights (for example, create focus groups with ministries, various age groups, sacramental and religious education parents, cultural groups, parishioners in general, etc.)

Be Inquisitive

Being inquisitive means that parish leadership and ministries effectively evaluate what they are doing, how a particular service or event draws people of all ages closer to Christ, and what engages people in parish life and ministry. It is good to keep the following questions in mind:

- What does this community look like now and what could it be in the future?
- How are people encountering Christ through this liturgy, ministry, activity, or event?
- How does this liturgy, ministry or activity help people participate in the mission of Christ?
- Is this liturgy, ministry, activity, or event, a maintenance or mission activity?
- What are our desired outcomes (goals) with this liturgy, ministry, activity, or event?
- In what way does this liturgy, ministry, activity, or event help to prepare for the future?

Evaluate and Measure Success

It is important to create ways to evaluate the effectiveness of liturgy, ministry, activity, or event. Do not be afraid of evaluating or measuring success or identifying what was not so successful. Listening to participants helps you sharpen your focus and gives people the opportunity to share what would be most helpful or edifying for their growth. Parishes that take time to listen and reflect with participants on activities, create an atmosphere of synodality and collaboration, and demonstrate that parishioners are a significant part of growing the parish.

- In what ways was this ministry, activity, group, council, etc., formative, helping participants grow in faith and knowledge?
- In what ways did this activity help people use their gifts?
- What was the engagement level of participants? (You might use a written or online feedback form)
- In what ways were people encouraged to reach out to others?

- In what ways were participants able to contribute ideas and suggestions?
- What worked well and what might need to be tweaked?

In all our discussions, meetings, and decisions, always ask about how this liturgy, ministry, activity, or event contributes to moving the mission of Christ forward. It is also critical to evaluate how participants have grown through the experience. A simple evaluation could be developed for all parish activities.

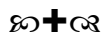
(See Appendix)

Good Communication

Good communication among staff, heads of ministries and councils is essential. In order to stay on track with planning, these groups should meet together periodically. An annual state of the parish message should also be given by the pastor so that all parishioners understand the parish mission, vision and plan and how each person can contribute in a meaningful way to the implementation of the plan.

Create a communication plan and make good use of all types of social media and other ways to get your message across, including summaries of council meetings and other pertinent parish plans.

This executive summary provides an overview of church structures and parish pastoral council roles and responsibilities. More specific information is contained in the next chapters.



Chapter One

The Parish Pastoral Council

ARTICLES OF UNDERSTANDING

The Articles of Understanding are meant to assist you in having excellent parish pastoral council (PPC) meetings. Rather than creating by-laws, this is a simple method to allow you to organize, reflect, and assess the mission and needs of your parish. Articles of Understanding may be reviewed periodically and amended as needed by the consensus of the members of the parish pastoral councils (PPC).

Why Parish Pastoral Councils?

Baptism and Confirmation

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 forth into the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all of creation.” (Mark 16:15)

Calling Forth Disciples of Christ

The essential work of a parish is to call forth disciples of Jesus; to form parishioners in the faith and to act as Jesus did. The parish provides parishioners the opportunity to encounter Christ, develop their spirituality and commit to living as Christ calls us to. The PPC assists pastor and staff in calling forth disciples of Christ, assessing needs and suggesting ways to support and accompany all parishioners on their spiritual journey. This includes present and future planning, evaluation of what is already in place, and enhancement of opportunities for disciples to discover their gifts and put them at the service of all.

Synodality

Synodality, a relatively new term in church, calls all members to contribute. Clergy, religious and laity are called to collaborate on furthering the mission of Christ and the church. Synodality creates the opportunity to listen to all and provide opportunities to listen to the Holy Spirit and the people of God, discuss, discern needs, and move forward. Pope Francis understands this as walking together and accompanying each other on the spiritual journey and living out our call by Christ as his disciples.

Synodality, as defined by the International Theological Commission in 2018, is “the action of the Spirit in the communion of the Body of Christ and in the missionary journey of the People of God.”

Pope Francis describes a synodal church as a “listening Church knowing that listening is more than feeling. It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. We must all listen

to the Holy Spirit, the spirit of Truth to know what the Spirit is saying to the Church.... This is what the Lord expects from the Church of the third millennium.”⁵

The PPC, finance council, and all other parish advisory groups, contribute to an attitude of synodality, openness, discernment and collaboration by finding ways to include as many members of the parish in listening sessions and other means to assess the needs and celebrate the accomplishments of the parish. Synodality allows all to express the impact the parish community, worship and ministry has on them and on their families.

Vocation of All the People of God

This vocation of all the People of God, the community of believers in Jesus Christ, to promote the Reign of God on earth permeates the teachings and spirit of the documents of Vatican Council II. All members of the Church, laity, religious and clergy according to their proper charisms and roles collaborate in the responsibility for fulfilling its mission. Vatican Council II urged active involvement in the life of the church by emphasizing the principles of collaborative responsibility, consultation and lay participation.

The laity have an active part to play in the life and activity of the church, their activity is so necessary within church communities that without it the apostolate of the pastors is generally unable to achieve its full effectiveness.

Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, 10

Pastors also know that they themselves were not meant by Christ to shoulder alone the entire saving mission of the Church toward the world. On the contrary they understand that it is their noble duty so to shepherd the faithful and recognize their service and charismatic gifts that all according to their proper roles may cooperate in this common undertaking with one heart.

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 30

The Pastor

The pastor needs to consult with the laity who in turn have the right to express their views and concerns to their pastor. An important structure initiated to foster this collaboration in the mission of the church by all its members is the parish pastoral council. The PPC assists pastors in achieving the cooperation of the parishioners and staff in the task of carrying out the mission of the church on the parish level.

While the parish pastoral council is not explicitly mentioned in the documents of Vatican Council II the theological principles which underlie it are clearly enunciated and a rationale for its development is given.

⁵ <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/43786/pope-francis-announces-a-2022-synod-on-synodality>

...by reason of the knowledge competence or pre-eminence which they have the laity are empowered indeed sometimes obliged to manifest their opinion in those things which pertain to the good of the Church. If the occasion should arise this should be done through the institutions established by the church for that purpose and always with truth, courage, prudence and with reverence and charity towards those who by reason of their office represent the person of Christ.

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 37

The Code of Canon Law

The 1983 Code of Canon Law gives juridic value to Vatican Council II's teaching on the vocation and mission of the People of God and provides structures to express and encourage collaborative responsibility at every level of ecclesial administration.

Canon 208 speaks of everyone's responsibility to work together in the building up of the Body of Christ.

In virtue of their rebirth in Christ there exists among all the Christian faithful a true equality with regard to dignity and the activity whereby all cooperate in the building up of the Body of Christ in accord with each one's own condition and function.

Code of Canon Law 208

Canon 519 calls for the pastor to develop structures which incorporate the principles of collaborative responsibility and of consultation with the staff and parishioners.

The pastor is the proper shepherd of the parish entrusted to him exercising pastoral care in the community entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan Bishop in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share; in accord with the norm of law he carries out for his community the duties of teaching, sanctifying and governing, with the cooperation of other presbyters or deacons and the assistance of lay members of the Christian faithful.

Code of Canon Law 519

This Canon emphasizes the role of the community which gives meaning to the office of pastor and it places him in the context of mutual collaboration with the staff and parishioners in promoting the mission of the Church. Canon 536 specifically deals with PPCs.

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 in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity; this pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by norms, determined by the diocesan bishop.

Code of Canon law 536

It is envisioned that the parish pastoral council is to be a major consultative body in the parish which advises the pastor who presides over the council. It is composed of lay parishioners, parochial vicars and representative parish staff members who carry about the pastoral functions of the parish. The purpose of the PPC is to foster full participation of the entire parish in the life and mission of the church which reflects the mission of Christ who was sent "...to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind and release to prisoners..." (Luke 4:18)

Our gratitude to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia for permission to use and add to this material.

Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines

The Parish Mission Statement

Every parish probably has (or should have) a mission statement. The purpose of a mission statement is to let the world know how your parish lives out its missionary call from Christ. The essential element often missing is how you engage with the mission statement in your ministerial and pastoral planning. The mission statement should be your main guide.

As the PPC looks at the needs and activities of the parish it is important to consult the mission statement and see if plans follow your ideal. Depending on when your mission statement was originally developed, the PPC may study it and discern if it is up to date with where the parish is spiritually and demographically, and what might need to be added or enhanced.

Also, the PPC, along with the parish staff and ministries, should set yearly goals for how they will intentionally live out the mission statement in the coming year or two.

The following parish mission statement was developed after a time of prayer and discernment, reflecting on the characteristics the PPC felt best described the parish and what they wanted to reflect to both parish and larger community. They kept it simple and to the point.

Sample Parish Mission Statement

As a family of faith, St. Joseph Parish welcomes everyone to encounter Jesus Christ
through Word, Worship, Community, and Service.
Guided by the Holy Spirit, we are changed for the better
and sent forth as disciples of Christ to continue his work in the world.

Purpose of PPC

The purpose of the PPC is to guide the mission of the parish. The PPC develops and recommends parish pastoral plans. The PPC does this by studying the present and future needs of the parish and by evaluating parish programs, organizations, and activities in light of the parish mission statement. The parish faith community participates in the universal mission of the Church through Word, Worship, Community and Service.

In addition, the PPC reflects on the Archdiocesan pastoral vision and priorities and recommends how they can be implemented in the parish. The PPC can suggest new programs, ministries and activities that may help the parish carry out its mission. The PPC shares responsibility with the Parish Finance Council for evaluating and enhancing financial health and providing for the ministerial needs of the parish. Through its wisdom and advice, the PPC assists the pastor in his leadership role.

Membership of PPC

The PPC consists of the pastor, parochial vicar, and possible staff members, and 9-15 parishioners who will represent the parish. Members should reflect the parish's demographic diversity. One of those members should also be a member of the Finance Council.

Selection of Members for PPC

The pastor invites individuals to serve on the PPC. Those already serving on the council make recommendations to the pastor of possible candidates to fill vacancies. It is important that a selection of people who represent the population of the parish be invited to serve on the PPC. This includes various cultures, genders, and age groups.

There are two suggested ways to recommend members: a discernment process and a nomination process.

3. Discernment Process

If the PPC is already formed and looking for new members, the current members should reflect on the needs of the parish and the PPC to see who could fulfill a role. For example, you may want to have a person who works in communications to "get the word out" regarding the good news about the parish.

To do a discernment process is simple. Discuss what you need and who would bring the gifts or skills to the parish and PPC. List the names and prioritize the list. Then the pastor or chairperson of the PPC calls and invites each person. If a person cannot join the council at this time, move down the list.

4. Nomination Process

It is also possible to ask various parishioners and those going to Mass to surface names of people with skills and leadership ability whom they suggest to be part of the PPC. Discuss the suggested names and prioritize the list. Then the pastor or chairperson of the PPC calls and invites each person.

Terms of Membership

The term of office is three years for members of the PPC. Members may be re-appointed after a one-year absence. One third (1/3) of the Council will be appointed each year. In the event a member cannot fulfill a full term, the new member will complete the originally established number of term years. New members will begin on July 1 (or the date you determine). The pastor, parochial vicar, and possibly a staff member, will serve as long as they are in their stated positions.

Special Committees

Special committees may be established and appointed on an as-needed basis to meet the goals of the parish mission statement. In the event a project needs volunteers, non-members of the PPC will be recruited to work on such projects. Again, the purpose of the PPC is for planning, not task oriented or running events unless specific to parish growth.

Meeting Leaders

A good idea is to have three “facilitators” at each meeting: a chairperson, a secretary, and a timekeeper. The timekeeper position can be rotated at each meeting. The purpose of the timekeeper is to ensure that the meeting ends on time.

Duties of Meeting Leaders

The chairperson meets with the pastor in advance to set the agenda and leads the meeting. If the chairperson is absent the secretary will act as chairperson and a member of the council will volunteer to fill in as secretary for the meeting.

The chairperson is responsible for sending out the agenda at least three days before the meeting and it is a good idea to ask council members if they have something to add to the agenda, describing if the item is an announcement or for discussion, and approximately how long discussion will take.

The secretary keeps the minutes of the meeting and sends copies to all members within ten days. The secretary is responsible for updating the Articles of Understanding for your parish and distributing them to all if there are changes.

The timekeeper announces when it is 8:30 PM (or a half hour before the end of the meeting) to let the members know they have 30 minutes to complete their agenda. The timekeeper may also be responsible for provided simple refreshments during the meeting if that is the choice of the group.

Selection of Leaders

The chairperson and secretary will be chosen at the June meeting. Each will serve a term of one year, beginning in July or the date you choose. Terms can be extended twice. The Council will decide the method of selection at its June meeting.

Choosing Timekeepers

Timekeepers may be rotated at each meeting in alphabetical order, excluding the chair and secretary.

PPC Meetings

A. Attendance. Members will meet regularly on a monthly basis on a designated day. In the event of an emergency a special meeting may be called at any time. Members are expected to attend all meetings. A member's failure to fulfill his/her responsibilities to the group will result in the group's discussion of the member's situation and his/her continuing on the council.

B. Duration/Time. 7:30 - 9:00 pm (or whatever times you determine). At the group's discretion the meeting may be extended a half hour. A timekeeper shall announce when it is 8:30 PM or a half hour before the meeting is supposed to end.

C. Structure. Meetings will follow a set agenda to be set by the pastor and the chairperson. Each meeting's agenda should include the following:

- Icebreaker
- Gathering Prayer, Scripture (or other pertinent readings) and Faith Reflection
- Review of the Minutes
- Ongoing Parish Planning:
For example: Appreciative Inquiry:
 - What are we successful at?
 - What do we need to do to ensure greatness?
 - How can we best engage parishioners in the life and mission of the parish?
 - What does our parish need at this time to fulfill the mission of Christ?
 - e.g., Parish Needs Assessment, Welcome Ministry, other
 - How will we determine what the needs are?
- Evaluations of Recent Activities
- Other Discussions
- Pastor's Comments
- Sending Prayer

An appropriate break will be taken if necessary. The meetings will remain flexible to accommodate the needs of the group.

D. Decision-making

Decisions are made by consensus and prayerful reflection.

*"Consensus is a group process for decision making in which all come to a common understanding and agree to support the decision of the whole."*⁶

⁶ Gubish, Jenny, McGannon, Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council, Mahwah, Paulist Press, 2001, p. 57.

Although the PPC is advisory, as a group, it is trying to discern the will of God for this parish at this particular time in history. The discernment process allows the members of the council to gather input for a matter, discuss the matter thoroughly, prayerfully reflect on the decision to be made, review all of the areas to be considered, and then come to a decision.
(See pages 27 --33 for more on consensus and decision-making)

E. Communication

The Parish Pastoral Council shall report with highlights of the meetings to the parish through the parish bulletin, website, Facebook or other methods the PPC may decide.

It is not necessary to post actual minutes. Rather a summary of discussions, decisions and plans would be helpful to parishioners.

Created by Rev. Thomas Iwanowski and Sr. Donna L. Ciangio, OP

Chapter Two

Leading Meetings Effectively

Ideas for Parish Staffs, Ministries, Parish Pastoral Councils, Finance Councils, Ministries and more...

Steps to Get Organized

1. Meeting Frequency: Set dates for regular monthly meetings

- Determine the best day to meet
- Determine the best time to meet; try to stick to 90 minutes
- Determine if you need extraordinary meetings, e.g., a 3-4 hour meet planning



2. Timing: Begin and end on time

- Begin meeting promptly at designated time: e.g., 7:30 PM even if everyone is not gathered yet. This will help the members know that their time and schedule is taken seriously
- Finish the meeting on time and save unfinished agenda items for the next meeting.
- The Facilitator (or Chairperson) may have to prioritize the agenda with the group to see what can be saved till the next meeting

3. Plan an agenda and stick to it

- Use the same format for all of your meetings
- Send out agenda ahead of time
- Begin with a welcome and any necessary introductions
- Follow with prayer and faith reflection (10-15 minutes)
- Go through agenda items putting a time limit on each
- Conclude the meeting with prayer

4. Environment

- Remember why you are meeting:
To furthering the mission of Christ through this Parish
Carrying out a particular task in this mission
- Prepare the meeting space (a committee could do this)
Make it business-like but inviting
Create an atmosphere for prayer: candle, Scripture, attractive cloth, plant or flowers or symbol
Prepare table and chairs
Create a welcoming atmosphere for your brothers and sisters
- Give people the opportunity to meet and greet each other
- Determine if you need refreshments before or after the meeting

5. Role of the Chairperson

Acts in the person of Christ

- Building unity
- Facilitating the meeting to move the agenda
- Balancing between efficiency and discussion
- Letting constructive discussion happen

- Determining if a committee should be formed to work out details and bring them back to the next meeting
- Bringing the discussion back to the point if it has strayed off topic
- Suggesting further action be taken for certain issues and adding to the next agenda until project is completed

6. Role of the Meeting Participants

- Participate fully
- Prepare your part of the meeting; e.g., report, proposal, etc.
- Stick to the agenda
- Observe meeting etiquette

7. Role of the Secretary

- Takes notes that are clear
- Prepares and distributes minutes to members before the next meeting
- Other general secretarial duties

8. Role of the Ministry Delegates (if ministry persons are invited to speak or represent a ministry)

- To be a liaison between the Parish Pastoral Council and the ministry/organization
- To support and promote the parish vision and the community building efforts of the parish through their particular ministry/organization

9. Concluding the Meeting

- Chairperson or other can summarize the main decisions and action plan
- Evaluate and debrief the meeting. E.g., How did it go? What do you feel we accomplished? Is there anything significant that we learned or did? Did we spend too much time on one area? Did we spend too little time on any area? etc.
- Set date for the next meeting and remind everyone of the date, time, & place
- Thank everyone for his/her contribution
- Sending Prayer

Preparing an Agenda

Sample Agenda

- Welcome 2 minutes
- Introductions and Ice Breaker 10 minutes
- Gathering Prayer and Faith Sharing 15 minutes
- Items for Discussion 20 minutes
- Items for Action 20 minutes
- Committee reports 15 minutes
- Announcements 5 minutes
- Evaluation and Conclusion 5 minutes
- Sending Prayer 1 minute

Meeting is approximately 90 minutes

Requesting Items for the Agenda

Items for Discussion

Time Needed

1. _____ minutes
2. _____ minutes
3. _____ minutes

Items for Action

Time Needed

1. _____ minutes
2. _____ minutes
3. _____ minutes

Announcements

Time Needed

1. _____ minutes
2. _____ minutes
3. _____ minutes

Name _____

Email _____

Mobile _____

Sample Meeting Format for Parish Staffs, Groups, Ministries or Boards

Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Matthew 18:20

Parish and church board meetings should never be just dry old boring meetings! We gather to meet in the name of Jesus – at least that’s what we should be doing – furthering His mission!

One of the principles of coming together is that we are GATHERED and SENT in the name of Jesus. Our agendas are embedded in the middle of prayer. This way prayer and reflection surround our efforts to make the Gospel integral to all we do. We should leave the meeting feeling like we shared and gained new insights. Try a new way of organizing your meetings.

Welcome by the Pastor and/or Chairperson

Ice Breaker

This is a “getting to know you” exercise and is meant to be light and seasonal.

For example:

- What has been one highlight of the summer for you?
- What is your favorite dessert?
- What is your favorite Christmas carol?

If you are meeting for the first time as a new group, you could do a one minute bio. For example:



Getting to Know You! “One Minute Bio”

Your name, something about yourself (married, family, etc.) your education, hobbies, ministry and how long you have been at the parish.

Gathering Prayer

All parish meeting should gather with prayer. Prayer should be appropriate for the particular meeting and always include Scripture or something relevant to the meeting from a document of the church or guidelines for the particular ministry or seasonal feasts. *See example* A simple reflection question should be included.

Method: If the group is small, you may have all share their reflection together. If the group is over 6 or more people, they can share in twos or threes.

Following a few minutes of sharing, call the group(s) back together and ask if anyone wants to share what they heard in their group. Close with a short prayer and move to your agenda

Meeting Agenda

What you determine for your agenda

Sending Prayer

At the end of the meeting, the prayer should reflect being sent out to further the mission of Christ through our particular ministry. A sign of peace may also be shared.

SAMPLE Agenda

Parish Mission Statement

*As a family of faith, St. Joseph Parish welcomes everyone
to encounter Jesus Christ through Word, Worship, Community, and Service.
Guided by the Holy Spirit, we are changed for the better
and sent forth as disciples of Christ to continue his work in the world.*

1. **Ice Breaker:** Who is someone you know whom you admire for their faith and fortitude?
2. **Prayer / Reflection:** Mission Statement Prayer with Faith sharing
3. **Guest Speaker:** (for info on a particular topic)
4. **Follow up / Feedback – example:** Revised Mass Schedule & Sunday Evening Mass Survey Results
5. **Update:** Welcoming Committee Development – Sub-Committee (Donna and Gerry)
6. **Forward in Faith: Our Road Ahead –** PPC Action Items
7. **Special PPC Meeting: Saturday June 5** – 9:00 to 12 Noon for planning
8. **Solicitation Request** from Boy Scouts
9. **Financial Update** from Finance Council Representative
10. **Next Regular Monthly Meeting** – Tuesday June 15 at 7 PM

Sample PPC Parish Planning Half Day Retreat

Agenda

8:30 – 9:00	Light Breakfast Welcome and Ice Breaker: Team building exercise	
9:00 – 9:20	Prayer / Reflection	
9:20 – 10:15	Discussion – How do we make St. Joseph Parish a place <i>“Where people are changed for the better!”</i>	
	+ What are the greatest needs of this parish as we look at the next three years? + What do we want to focus on to engage our parishioners and attract new people? + Ministries that we are looking to start/revive: What are our desired outcomes for each? How can these be achieved?	
	1. Welcome Ministry	Sr. Donna
	2. Website	Zach
	3. After Mass Coffee and Speaker Series	Phil
10:15	Break	
10:25	Updates	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Planning Days and Goals • Other reports/or discussion • Introduce updated Mission Statement to the Parish • Day of Service Plans 	Fr. Tom Phil Phil
11:15	Parish Pastoral Council Goals for the coming year	Phil
12:00 Noon	Sending Prayer	Fr. Tom

Mission Statement of St. Joseph Parish
 As a family of faith,
St. Joseph Parish welcomes everyone to encounter Jesus Christ through Word, Worship, Community, and Service.
Guided by the Holy Spirit, we are changed for the better and sent forth as disciples of Christ to continue his work in the world.

Sample Opening Prayer and Scripture Reflection

Good Seed – Good Ground



Focus: The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

Ice breaker: What kind of gardening do you do? Tomatoes, flowers, houseplants, other?
What are the special things that you do to get the plant matter to grow?

Gospel Mt 13:1-9 (Short form)

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew...

On that day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the sea.

Such large crowds gathered around him
that he got into a boat and sat down,
and the whole crowd stood along the shore.

And he spoke to them at length in parables, saying:
“A sower went out to sow.

And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path,
and birds came and ate it up.

Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil.
It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep,
and when the sun rose it was scorched,
and it withered for lack of roots.

Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it.
But some seed fell on rich soil and produced fruit,
a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold.
Whoever has ears ought to hear.”

The Gospel of the Lord



Reflection question:

As a parish pastoral council, what seeds have we sown, what more seeds do we need to sow, and what are our fertilizing methods?

Prayer

Loving Lord,
You proved yourself as a leader in your ministry.
As a council devoted to your people,
help us to be good listeners and visionaries,
seekers to find what your people of our parish need to grow
and to further your mission in our parish and beyond.

Do not let us get mired in petty details and things that distract and detract.
Rather, let us focus on nurturing the good seed
so that our parish may bear much fruit.
We ask this in your name. Amen



Chapter Three

Exploring a Consultative Model

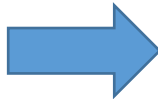
The PPC provides us with a model of collaboration. Working together, clergy, religious and lay leaders seek new and creative methods to live fully the Christian mission in the context of contemporary life. The PPC has a unique role to play in encouraging people in the parish on the journey of faith. In its leadership role, the members help translate the pastoral mission into the ongoing life of the parish.

The PPC is not administrative. Rather, its role is to assure that the people of God are formed in the faith and live their roles as disciples of Christ. The PPC has the responsibility to consult with parishioners, create collaboration among parish ministries and groups, and build consensus to assure that the mission of Christ is fulfilled in that particular parish. The model below explains the difference between administrative and consultative models.

Moving from a Model of Administration to Consultative Model

Administration

Coordinating ministries
Administrating
Committee reporting
Working in silos
Voting on issues
Operations and policies



Consultation

Articulating the mission
Visioning and being prophetic
Active listening
Collaborating
Building consensus
Focusing on prayer & discernment of a pastoral plan

★ **Discussion**

As a PPC, discuss the differences between the two models and how well you are following the consultative model.

Characteristics of a Parish Pastoral Council

The PPC is essential to the parish. Therefore, members need to understand their roles and take time to study and discuss what each characteristic means. As new members join the council, time should be devoted to new member orientation to assure that the work of the council is clear and that all understand purpose, goals, and work in progress.

Key Characteristics of a Parish Pastoral Council are:

1. A Parish Pastoral Council is Prayerful

The PPC strives to provide sufficient time to reflect on the Gospel (and other pertinent readings) so they more clearly understand Christ's ministry in order to bring his mission into the life of the parish. Prayer is critical to the work of the parish council and a considerable portion of each parish council meeting should be set aside for prayer and formation. The PPC must listen to the

active presence of the Holy Spirit in each person and the group. Communal prayer and faith sharing are the best way to foster a spiritual environment for the council.

Practical Suggestion: *The PPC spends time in prayer and faith sharing at the meeting. Prayer can take 15 minutes or so with ample time for reflecting on the Gospel or other pertinent resources. Prayer is essential to the work of the council and should frame the meeting: Ice Breaker, gathering prayer, Gospel reading, faith sharing and at the end of the meeting, prayer of intercession and sending Prayer. Twice a year, a longer meeting with prayer and community building are very helpful.*

2. A Parish Pastoral Council is Pastoral

Through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist all Christians are called to serve the people of God. The ministries of word, worship, community, and service are basic to the practice of being pastoral and defining ministry in the parish community. PPCs strive to find the best resources and methods to serve the people of the parish as they fulfill the mission of the church in this parish and particular time and place.

Practical Suggestion: *The PPC should meet with parish staff, catechists, heads of ministries, and other advisory groups to understand the scope of ministry, what each ministry does, their present goals, plans for the future and resources they might need.*

3. A Parish Pastoral Council is Representative

Each PPC member needs to listen to parishioners and then faithfully presents those expressed concerns, ideas and questions to the PPC, thus representing the tenor of the community. The group strives to understand all aspects of the parish so that the faith needs of parishioners are met.

Practical Suggestion: *PPCs need to identify the demographics of the parish and local community. Town planning boards are a good place to research numbers of people, cultural groups and movement in and out of the area.*

4. A Parish Pastoral Council is Discerning

The PPC makes decisions in an atmosphere of prayer and openness to the Holy Spirit. It is guided by a firm faith-oriented value system. The PPC works to determine how the mission of Jesus and the Church is accomplished in the parish community and how it models its actions to the parish, local community, and world in response to the mission.

Practical Suggestion: *PPCs can assess and determine needs of the local community and/or archdiocesan charitable works to contribute to projects that need support.*

5. A Parish Pastoral Council is Prophetic

The PPC needs to have the courage and foresight to set the direction of the parish community, challenging the parish to grow in response to the Gospel. This task will involve patience as the prophetic voice of the Holy Spirit calls for change and growth within the community. This

prophetic work is not predicting the future but interpreting the path that the parish is to follow on its current faith journey in response to the Gospel. Being prophetic is about envisioning the parish community which God desires for us.

Practical Suggestion: *PPCs can organize focus groups and a survey to engage parishioners in prayerful discernment and discussion on parish successes and needs.*

6. A Parish Pastoral Council is Empowering

The PPC solicits the contribution of the expertise and talents of the parish members to foster the faith growth of the individual, the parish, and the broader community. This growth in faith means learning more about people in the parish as well as calling and affirming them in living out the mission of the church in their daily lives, individually, in their families, and as a faith community.

Practical Suggestion: *PPCs can sponsor a gift discernment event to help parishioners discover the gifts and talents given to them by God and how they can use them in service as disciples of Christ.*

7. A Parish Pastoral Council is Collaborative

The PPC challenges itself as well as individual members, the staff, committees, organizations and other groups in the parish to work together. A clear, common understanding of the parish's mission fosters collaboration. The parish will strive to seek ways to collaborate with other parishes, community organizations and congregations to foster the common good of the broader community. In society and in the church the demands of the future will stretch limited resources. Collaboration is an effective way to meet those needs and to utilize the resources.

Practical Suggestion: *The pastor should be the leader in collaboration, working with PPC members to assess and strategize about the successes and needs of the parish. All work together in an Appreciative Inquiry style⁷, including all ethnic and cultural and age groups. As Jesuit strategic planner, George Wilson wrote: Inclusion = Ownership = Commitment.*

Our gratitude to the Archdiocese of Milwaukee for permission to use and add to this material.

⁷ "Appreciative Inquiry is about the coevolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them. In its broadest focus, it involves systematic discovery of what gives "life" to a living system when it is most alive, most effective, and most constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves, in a central way, the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential." (Cooperrider & Whitney 2005, p.3)
https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/appreciative_inquiry

Chapter Four

The Consensus Process

Dialogue for the Common Good

Consensus is a creative and dynamic way of reaching agreement in a group. A group committed to consensus aims to dismantle a sense of power and control derived from an absolute structure or hierarchy. A process of consensus values the common good, not simply the majority rule. At its heart consensus is based on listening and respectful dialogue among equals. Consensus means working with each other in partnership.

In order to be able to arrive at consensus, a group must first build a sense of community. Strong relationships are nurtured when all are open, honest, and willing to trust others. In order to trust someone, people need to spend time and get to know each other. Making sure that you pray together and read and reflect on scripture deepens the connections in the group. In this way, members find commonalities, understanding and grow together as a community of faith.

Why do we use consensus rather than majority rule?

Bishop Robert McElroy from San Diego reflected on the issues within the American Church in 2019. In a lecture at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, he stated that in the United States there is a

“a ‘culture of maintenance’ pervades our decision making. We are the inheritors of vast institutions, structures, buildings and financial commitments that were established in a prior age. We are also the inheritors of patterns of decision making that place enormous value on how decisions were made in the past as a guide as to how they should be made today. These two realities create in the church a powerful force of *inertia* that often makes *maintaining the status quo* a higher imperative than constantly renewing the priorities of the church in the light of the Gospel as applied to today's ecclesial and societal situation.”

★ Discussion

We often hear that parishes are in “maintenance mode rather than mission mode.”

- What does this phrase mean to you?
- In what ways does this apply or not apply to your parish?

As a PPC, Jesus calls us to listen to all the voices in our community. We are also called to be prophetic; to imagine an alternative way of participating in community life. Consensus is a radically different manner of organizing society or sharing power. It invites more people to the table where decisions are made. It unleashes creativity and encourages innovation. It also creates a sense of co-responsibility and accountability for strategies and actions. It's no longer just the “guy at the top” who owns the outcome, but rather everyone in the group is co-responsible.

Changing the way we make decisions is an initial step which can lead us to a more equitable, just society globally. In fact, the principles of Catholic Social Teaching call us to consider the common good and to create a more just society. We begin this transformation of society first within our own parish, calling people to understand the Gospel and the mission of Jesus through his words and actions.

Consensus is a collective opinion derived when everyone works together. True consensus is evident after a decision is made. Consensual decisions enjoy broad ownership and commitment for implementation. It seeks not only the agreement of most participants, but also the inclusion of objections as a way to ensure greatest accuracy. In this way consensual decisions foster unity of purpose. Groups that reached consensus can speak with unity despite disagreement. Consensual decisions take the most time but are optimal. Consensus is achieved when every member can say *“I have had an opportunity to express my views fully and they have been thoughtfully considered by the group. Even though this solution may not be the one that I believed was optimal, I think it will work and I support it.”*

When seeking consensus, differences of opinion are not only tolerated, they are encouraged. In consensual decision-making, differences of opinion are seen as ways of gathering all available information and options regarding an issue. Articulating the differences clarifies the issues and often forces the group to seek a better alternative. Consensual decisions are often the most successful decisions because they are well thought out and end up having the strongest support. In consensus, everyone accepts the decision, has ample chance to influence it, understands it and therefore, supports it.

Dealing with Debate

It can happen that while working on consensus, a group can generate two opposing options. Sometimes one person or a small group does not agree. This is evident when those with an objection restate their opposition repeatedly. With such an impasse invite the group to set both options aside and perhaps look for a third way. This third way is generated out of the rationale, values or benefits named for the two opposing positions. The group can then be engaged in creating the third option using this objective criterion in order to include the concerns or values identified by everyone. Remember to clarify objectives and to strive for understanding.

What if consensus is difficult to reach?

- If the discussion is “going around in circles,” drop the matter and continue the meeting. Return to it later.
- If there seems to be missing information, do further research and gather more data before trying to complete the consensus process. Postpone further discussion until all have had the opportunity for prayer and reflection.

What if I am the one who is outside the circle of agreement?

Think about this:

- Am I considering what is best for all?

- Do I understand all the data given? Have I carefully justified your reasons for disagreeing?
- Can I say, “Well, I don’t agree completely, but I see the validity of your position and I can live with that?”

These questions can help each person in the group reach “common good” conclusions and provide an exercise to think more deeply about needs and solutions.

What kind of attitudes can help or hinder the process?

Helps

- openness
- honesty
- respect for the truth in everyone
- patience
- enthusiastic support for the outcome
- spiritual outlook and reliance on the Holy Spirit

Hinders

- rigidity of opinions
- hostile or suspicious minds
- determination to win
- sabotaging the process: “Why do we have to do it this way?”

Six Steps for Arriving at Consensus

After an issue has been presented and necessary background information has been given, the facilitator does the following:

1. Invites clarifying questions.
2. Summarizes for the group what the clarifying issues are.
3. Invites someone to begin the discussion.
 - using “I” statements, when an individual introduces an idea or opinion as to how the issue may be approached
 - another individual responds to that statement (as a good listener would) and adds ideas or reactions of their own, using “I” statements.
 - a third individual develops ideas further, using “I” statements until all have offered their wisdom.
4. Keeps discussion on the topic and, if there is a need, rephrases complicated or confusing comments.
5. Summarizes points of agreement and points of difference.
6. After judging that consensus may be possible at a given time, tests for consensus by asking: Is there anything else of importance to be offered that has not been said? Also, if there are serious areas of disagreement, invite individuals to be ready to state their position

on the issue, give reasons for their position, and perhaps present alternate solutions.

The discussion continues until the areas of disagreement are reduced or eliminated. If the group cannot reach consensus because more information is needed, one or more persons are delegated to gather the information within a certain time frame, e.g., by the next meeting.

Consensus is achieved when all participants agree that they have been heard and their positions have been affirmed, thus allowing them to support the prevailing opinion.

Our gratitude to the Diocese of Buffalo for permission to use and enhance this material.
Diocesan Guidelines, 2019.

Chapter Five

Resolving Conflicts

Optimizing for the Common Good

Conflict is a fact of life. Conflict can be destructive or creative. The challenge for the PPC in the face of conflict is to commit to finding ways to resolve the conflict in a spirit of mutual charity and with interest in the common good above all else.

Working through differences requires an atmosphere of trust. Trust results when individuals operate from the human values of respect, honesty, courage and integrity. Real change can happen in a parish and its members when conflicts are resolved in an atmosphere of human trust.

For Catholics today, framing meetings in a spirit of prayer and gospel reflection, encourages members to assure that decisions are made in the light of faith and the example of Jesus. Prayer and honest reflection together, build trust and keep a group focused on what is essential for the community it serves. Praying with the Sunday, daily gospel, or other pertinent readings inspires the group to see needs and make decisions in the light of Scripture and Catholic teaching.

Resolving conflict is important for every individual or organization. As a Church, gospel values call us to stretch our understanding of that process. In addition, gospel values challenge us to love and to forgive one another - to heal, not just settle our differences. Real reconciliation can happen in a parish and its members when an atmosphere of trust exists.

Unresolved conflict drains life from the parish. Moving on without healing, love and forgiveness can result in permanent brokenness in the parish community. Resolving conflict by paying attention to both human values and gospel values strengthens relationships among people in the parish and community. It moves them closer to making their vision a reality.

Parish policies should enhance conflict resolution and should include three principles:

1. Deal with conflict as soon as possible
2. Brainstorm creative solutions
3. Follow the principle of subsidiarity which means that conflict should be dealt with at the most immediate level possible. The first effort should always be to resolve grievances and disputes between the two persons or groups who are in conflict.

All of this will make for a stronger PPC and parish as we seek to welcome and engage people as disciples of Jesus Christ and enjoy a deeper relationship with him.

Chapter Six

Decision Making: A Way Forward

Tools for A Successful Meeting

The heart and goal of the PPC is to create and sustain vibrant faith communities which are rooted in gospel values. The way forward for a parish may not always be clear. There may be several needs calling for parish discernment. Often the question might be “What shall we focus on first?”

As we seek to answer this question, the PPC should use a consensus process. While this is conceptually simple, there are two impediments that make it difficult to achieve. The first impediment is inexperience by some parish leaders with a non-confrontational decision-making model. Modern media bombards us with models of conflict: through talk-radio; investigative reporting, reality television programming, and sometimes even governments. There are few models of decision making today which do not revolve around someone protecting “their rights,” even to the point of belligerence.

Another impediment to wise decision making is time. It takes time to prayerfully and reflectively listen to others and consider options which are useful for the common good. Society often seems obsessed with instant gratification and “efficiency.” Deliberations which do not produce quick results may be judged unproductive. The following presents some information as PPCs strive to reach consensus on important issues.

Levels of Decision Making

In *Recreating the Parish*, authors Carol Holden, Thomas Sweetser, and Mary Beth Vogel present an outline of different ways of reaching decisions based upon the number of people involved, the emotional level, available time, available financial resources, and authority to make decisions.

1. Nitty-Gritty: Delegating

Useful when: Decision is about specific details, small issues, limited influence

How to use: Let those in charge take care of the decisions. Allow freedom of work and movement

2. Small Matters: Voting

Useful when: There are issues with little conflicting emotion; need vote of confidence

How to use: Voting is for confidence and support. Help people to take ownership of the decision. There is no need to hang up the meeting over these matters. (*Caution* - if strong emotions are displayed about an issue, potentially dividing the group, move to the next level of decision making.)

3. Larger Matters: Consensus

Useful when: There are one or more issues about which the group has strong emotions and when the issues have the potential to divide the group. These issues need thought and discussion.

Time must be available to consider options. Group members must be willing to listen to each other and be influenced by each other.

How to use: All must state their views on the issue - silence blocks openness. The only voting allowed is a straw vote (or a “leaning” to gage opinion, not a decision) to assess attitudes. Group members must seek out differences of opinion to explore all options. No group member should “give in” just to avoid conflict. The final decision must be acceptable to all, meaning that everyone can “live with it” and support it.

4. Big Matters: Discernment

In this case, if a member of the PPC, is skilled as a facilitator, he or she may lead the meeting process. However, this may be the time to engage an outside facilitator.

Useful when: One or more issues affect an entire community and many will have strong emotions over the outcome of the decision.

How to use:

State the problem or situation. Consult with those involved and develop a possible solution. Take time in prayer and reflection and list all the reasons *against* the solution. Take additional time in prayer and reflection and list all the reasons *for* the solution. Eventually the solution will arise from the group. If not, continue the process.

5. Problem Solving: Finding Creative Alternatives

Useful when: There are large issues that need a good group effort to come up with creative alternatives.

How to use: The group states the need (*not* the solution) and envisions what the ideal future can look like when the need is met. List what is already being done to reach the ideal. Think of all the ways of reaching the ideal. Brainstorm and be creative. Then select the best way(s). Be specific: what?; for whom?; when?; how often?; where?; by whom?; and how much?.

When should our PPC use a formal consensus process?

A formal consensus process should only be used when discerning major decisions that are intended to establish goals and objectives for the future. It should not be used for operational issues or day to day decisions. Most of those operational issues should not be brought to the council.

Our gratitude to Carol M. Holden, D. Min, Thomas P. Sweetser, S.J., and Mary Beth, Vogel, M.P.S. for permission to use this material. Taken from *Recreating the Parish: Reproducible Resources for Pastoral Ministers*. Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1996.

Appendix

SAMPLE Prayer Using the Mission Statement for Prayer and Reflection

Since the Mission Statement is integral to the parish and all ministries, it is essential to use it as part of prayer and reflection at meetings. Below is a sample to use. Reflection questions can be changed depending on the groups using it. Parishes have reported that it is highly successful to write prayer based on its mission statement and helps staff and parishioners be familiar with it and use it as a guide.

Notice that the Mission Statement derives from the mission statement of the Church, the great commission of Jesus to go forth to reach all.

St. Joseph Parish - *where people are changed for the better!*



The Great Commission of Jesus

All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit,
teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.
And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.

Matthew 28:19-20

Mission Statement of St. Joseph Parish

As a family of faith, St. Joseph Parish welcomes everyone
to encounter Jesus Christ through Word, Worship, Community, and Service.
Guided by the Holy Spirit, we are changed for the better
and sent forth as disciples of Christ to continue his work in the world.

Leader	Let us prayerfully pray the words of our Mission Statement...
All	As a family of faith, St. Joseph Parish welcomes everyone to encounter Jesus Christ through Word, Worship, Community, and Service. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we are changed for the better and sent forth as disciples of Christ to continue his work in the world.
Reflection	<i>Use a question or two that are appropriate for your group's meeting...</i> + What words of our mission statement are particularly meaningful to you at this moment. Why? + How is Jesus calling you to use your gifts to contribute to the building up of our parish?

- + How are you and the parish being called by God to be a force in the community to call people to Christ, spread the Gospel and help others with daily needs?

Leader Let us take a moment of silence,
asking God to inspire us as we seek to forward
the mission of Jesus as the community of St. Joseph Parish...

Pause to pray for specific needs of your ministry ...

Leader Loving God, give us the insight, wisdom and courage
to make our parish community a place
where all are welcome
and unity is primary.

All So that all may come to know and embrace the call
to truly be your disciples and carry out your mission.
We ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son. Amen



Come, Holy Spirit!



ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Parish Vitality Services

Parish Pastoral Council Workshop



Part One: Introduction

Recent Study by FADICA – Summer 2020

What gives a Parish Vitality?

Vital Parishes:	We Do	We need to do
Are innovative		
Live the faith in service		
Have excellent pastors		
Have leadership teams		
Have a holistic, compelling vision		
Place a priority on the Sunday experience		
Foster spiritual growth and maturity		
Utilize online communications tools		

- In General, I would rate the vitality of our parish as:

1
Lowest

3
Getting there

5
Full of Vitality

Why? _____

- Looking at the Vitality characteristics from the study, what do you need to concentrate on?

As a result of Part One: Introduction on Parish Vitality:

1. What are your key learnings?
2. What are the steps you need to take?
3. What resources do you need to move forward?



Acknowledgements and Resources

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Writers

- Sr. Donna L. Ciangio, OP
- Rev. Thomas Iwanowski
- Milissa Else

Diocesan Guidelines

- The Archdiocese of Philadelphia
- The Diocese of Salina, Kansas
- The Archdiocese of Milwaukee: *Parish Council Manual; Living Spirit; Leading with Grace, Wisdom, Vision*, 2000.
- The Diocese of Buffalo: *Diocesan Guidelines*, 2019.

PPC Manuals

- Carol M. Holden, D.Min, Thomas P. Sweetser, SJ, and Mary Beth, Vogel, MPS: *Recreating the Parish: Reproducible Resources for Pastoral Ministers*. Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1996.
- Gubish, Mary Ann, and Susan Jenny, SC, with Arlene McGannon. *Revisoning the Parish Pastoral Council: A Workbook*. New York and Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2001.

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Archdiocesan Office of Research and Planning

For those seeking to learn more about the community in which their parish is centered, our Archdiocesan Office of Research and Planning can help you dissect some of the census data for your local area. The data is not religion specific, but it can help you know the population trends happening around your parish.

Contact - Mark Howard: Mark.Howard@rcan.org

