

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PORTLAND



PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL POLICIES & NORMS



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DIOCESE OF PORTLAND
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

November 2022

My dear priests and faithful of the Diocese:

With this letter I am happy to convey to you updated policies and norms governing Parish Pastoral Councils. In our diocese these Councils were mandated for each parish by Bishop O'Leary in 1981. Guidelines were issued to assist parishes in implementing this mandate. In 2005 the diocese undertook a major reorganization in which parishes were grouped together in clusters. The guidelines were updated to reflect this new reality. The mandate for having a parish pastoral council continued.

The diocesan reorganization has now been in place for almost a decade. Two years ago the Diocesan Pastoral Council recommended that it review the norms and guidelines for these councils. With my endorsement the work began. The document you now see before you had many iterations as it was edited, reviewed and approved by the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the Presbyteral Council and my immediate staff. The present document will serve as an aid to each parish as it looks at its pastoral council or forms a new one. What has not changed, and what I affirm clearly is that every parish must have a parish pastoral council. Pope Francis' call to synodality is a strong reminder that we walk together, clergy and people alike, in the mission of the Church.

In that light, I call your attention to some additions in this updated policy. First of all, it is consistent with Pope Francis' emphasis on the notion of synodality as central to the life of the Church. The Guidelines clearly indicate that the council is the parish group responsible for ongoing parish strategic planning. We have also included a reporting mechanism to assure accountability. Through our work with the Christian Leadership Institute we have learned the importance of strategic planning. To keep us on track in this endeavor we will be helped by accountability. Reporting annually on the membership, meetings and workings of the parish pastoral council will assist us all to recall its importance to the life of the parish and help each parish to have a well-functioning pastoral council.

I want to thank the Diocesan Pastoral Council members and all who have contributed to the revision of these guidelines. We pray together that engaging more parishioners in the life of the parish will aid us to advance in living communion, increasing participation, and in moving forward the mission to which the Gospel calls us.

With an assurance of my prayers, I am

Sincerely in the Lord, our Hope,

Most Reverend Robert P. Deeley, JCD
Bishop of Portland

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THE FOUNDATION FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS

The roots of councils are found in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. In addition, they have their understanding in the nature of the Church. In *Lumen Gentium* (The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) and *Gaudium et Spes* (The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), the Church has received clear guidance and a powerful description of how it should understand itself. In particular, these documents, and others, bring to life the principles of *communion*, *collegiality*, and *subsidiarity* explained below:

The purpose of such a Council “should not be ecclesiastical organization but rather the missionary aspiration of reaching everyone.”

Evangelii Gaudium, n. 31

Communion

Communion speaks of unity within parish life and the Church. This unity is the basis for equality of all believers and is rooted in baptism, which can be understood as our common vocation to the ministry of the Church. Each of us received such a call no matter what our position in the Church. We are all called to be disciples of Christ and to help bring about the kingdom of God. This sense of discipleship also calls us to participate in the life and ministry of the Church. Parish pastoral and finance councils give us a structure and a means to exercise our communion with one another.

Collegiality

If there is to be true communion among the baptized, then there has to be collegiality between clergy and laity. Just as the pope collaborates with the bishops and bishops collaborate with priests and deacons, so must pastors collaborate with parishioners. This working together to build up the kingdom of God is spoken of in paragraphs 33 and 37 in *Lumen Gentium*. Not only does the laity have the *right* to offer their judgment on the working of the church, but there is often a *duty* to do so. Pastoral and finance councils offer parishioners the opportunity to exercise their collegiality to further the mission of Christ and the church, in union with those in holy orders.

Subsidiarity

Subsidiarity is a fundamental principle of Catholic social teaching. It assumes that problems are best defined and resolved by those most closely affected by them. Subsidiarity holds that diversity and good order can only be maintained when each group/commission or person is deemed vital for the good of the Church.

Synodality

Synodality is a term introduced by Pope Francis describing a structured conversation among all of the relevant ecclesial players – bishops, priest, and laity – for the sake of hearing the voice of the Spirit. It is the way the entire Church – all of the baptized – seek to discern together where the Holy Spirit is leading us right now.

Adding more light to the need for and role of pastoral councils is the 1983 Code of Canon Law, canons 511-514 speak about a Diocesan Pastoral Council and the role it plays offering counsel to the bishop. Canon 511 states:

In each diocese...a pastoral council is to be established whose responsibility it is to investigate under the authority of the bishop all those things which pertain to pastoral works, to ponder them and to propose practical conclusions about them.

It follows, then, that a parish pastoral council would provide a similar service to the pastor of that particular parish: to investigate pastoral matters, ponder them, and propose recommendations.

Canon 536 speaks directly of parish pastoral councils. It states:

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.

In the Diocese of Portland, parish pastoral councils have been mandated since 1981 and the mandate has never been revoked.

WHY HAVE A PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL?

A parish pastoral council (hereinafter referred to as “council”) is one means by which the people of God can participate in discerning the mission of Jesus and how, in a particular time and place, this mission may be carried out.

The council is a means of achieving the full participation of parishioners in the parish and its mission by giving them a voice in supporting, guiding, and making recommendations about various aspects of parish life. The council engages in pastoral planning through ongoing dialogue with the various ministries and the parish at-large.

The council’s purpose and function are to assist the pastor in pastoral planning by investigating pastoral matters through a variety of means, pondering them in a prayerful discernment process, and proposing recommendations. The focus of the investigation is the parish’s strengths and challenges related to evangelization since the primary mission of the church is to “Go and make disciples.” [Mt 28:19]

The council is a consultative body to the pastor, *not* a parish governing body and, as such, gathers together the visions, hopes, and needs of the community, reflecting on them in a purposeful process until a consensus is reached. The council translates this consensus into the establishment of short- and long-term goals and objectives. With the pastor’s approval and by his direction, the pastoral plan is implemented by the parish staff and various committees. The council then monitors and evaluates the implementation of plan recommendations so that modifications and periodic updates can be made.

“How needed pastoral council are!

A bishop cannot guide a diocese without pastoral councils.

A pastor cannot guide the parish without the parish council.

This is fundamental!”

Address of Pope Francis, October 4, 2013, Cathedral of San Rufino, Assisi

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Parishioners serving on the council are responding to their baptismal call to be “priest, prophet and king,” using their collective talents, experiences, and interests to provide counsel to the pastor.

The council is a group of 5-12 parishioners that consults with the pastor by reason of their knowledge of the church community, competence, experience, talent, and/or interest in the parish. Members must be baptized, practicing Catholics who are members of the parish (ideally for at least five years). They should demonstrate involvement in the parish in some capacity. The council members, overall, should represent the parish’s demographics, include both males and females, and in multi-church parishes have representatives from each parish church. Parishes with schools should have representatives from the school board and/or school community.

Selection of the Parish Pastoral Council Members

Pastors may use several means to achieve a balanced council of members who he knows will be willing and able to carry out council responsibilities. The preferred approach is by selection since membership on the council should not be based on popularity. No matter the means of choosing pastoral council members, all members are appointed by the pastor.

SELECTION - The pastor chooses members who he knows are willing and able to take on council responsibilities, keeping in mind the necessary balance of age, gender, and church representation, as well as the talents, interests, and/or experience that potential members would bring to council work.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION - A nominating commission of parish pastoral council members may nominate a person to serve. If that person is willing, and with the pastor’s approval, the slate of possible candidates for an opening on the council may be voted upon by parishioners.

COMBINATION - A percentage of members may be elected and others selected.

THE ROLE OF A PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL IN PLANNING

The council develops and oversees the implementation of a parish pastoral plan and regularly assesses progress toward completion of the goals contained in the plan. A planning process is described in Appendix 5.

The mission of the Pastoral Council is to
“examine and consider all that relates to pastoral work
and to offer practical conclusions on these matters,
so that the life and activity of the People of God
be brought into greater conformity with the Gospel.”

Pope Paul VI

NORMS FOR THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Each parish in the diocese is required to have a parish pastoral council. Each parish has one council, regardless of the number of churches in the parish. A pastor with responsibility for more than one parish may have their parish pastoral councils meet jointly or separately, with the latter option being available when an issue unique to one of the parishes is being discussed.

The council is a consultative body; its recommendations, therefore, are directed to the pastor and become effective only after he acts upon them.

The council goes out of existence upon the transfer, retirement, resignation, or death of the pastor. A new pastor must constitute a parish pastoral council within six months after becoming pastor. A newly appointed pastor may want to consider retaining the former council to assist him in becoming acclimated to the parish.

Pastoral Council Membership and Structure

There is no requirement to have equal representation from each church in the parish. However, when a parish consists of more than one church, if practical, it is desirable to have at least one member from each church community on the council. The pastor must ensure that there is balanced representation of laymen, women, religious, and individuals with varying interests, ages, and from varying geographic areas within the parish as well as from the parish school, if there is one.

Parochial vicar(s) and deacon(s) assigned to the parish are *ex officio*, non-voting members. Other *ex officio*, non-voting members include the school principal (if the parish has a school), business coordinator, and pastoral life coordinator.

It is recommended that the parish pastoral life coordinator (PLC) or other staff person designated in the absence of a PLC, be staff for the council, assisting with tasks such as, but not limited to, arranging for meetings, preparing the meeting agenda with the pastor and chairperson, keeping the records of the meetings, and facilitating the communication to and with council members. Parish paid staff are not members of the council and generally do not attend meetings unless invited for their expertise. Immediate family members of paid staff are ineligible for appointment to the council.

In parishes with a school, besides the principal (ex officio), one member of the parish school board should be presented to the pastor as a representative of the school to serve as a member of the parish pastoral council. This individual will regularly report the activities of the school to the pastoral council and bring back to the school board any relevant observations, comments, or recommendations discussed at the pastoral council.

Council members should designate a member to serve as chairperson, another as vice-chairperson, and a third to serve as secretary (all with the approval of the pastor). Terms for these positions are for one year and renewable. In situations where one pastor oversees two parishes, co-chairpersons, one from each parish, may be selected at the pastor's discretion.

There may be commissions of the council, either one for each commission or a commission for each of the various churches in the parish. These commissions may include (but can vary with the needs of the parish):

Evangelization and Faith Formation
Liturgy, Worship and Spirituality
Family Life
Social Justice and Peace or Social Justice
Stewardship
Parish Life

The purpose and scope of responsibilities for ad hoc or stable commissions should be clearly spelled out. Reports of these commissions should not form the greater part of the agenda of council meetings. Reports received should be succinct and contain only important information that the council should know, particularly if the information is relative to progress on achieving the parish's goals.

Council Member Terms

A term is three years, with the possibility of reappointment or re-election. Members may serve only two consecutive terms. Ideally, only one third of the council seats are to be open for election or selection at a time. In a newly formed council, one third of the membership serves a three-year, a two-year, and a one-year term, respectively. Those serving a one-year term in a newly formed council may serve for two additional (three-year) terms.

In the event of a council being formed anew with a change of pastor, members would begin with terms of one, two, or three years so that all council members do not "term out" at the same time.

Council Meetings

All meetings shall start and end with prayer, led either by the pastor or someone he delegates, asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit on the council's deliberations and decisions.

Regular meetings are called by the chairperson in consultation with the pastor. Generally, the council does not meet in the absence of the pastor, except in an emergency. In those cases, the pastor designates one of the parish priest(s) or deacon(s) or another staff person to serve as his delegate. Work sessions and committee meetings do not require the presence of the pastor, although he is to be informed of the meeting.

The council meets in regular session a minimum of four times a year.

Most meetings are open to parishioners, but there can be times when sensitive topics require the pastor to call an executive session. Non-council attendees are observers rather than participants and do not participate in the discussion unless called upon by the chairperson. Any matter brought to the council for consideration must be pre-approved by the pastor and appear on the agenda.

The council discusses pastoral matters relating to the life of the people in the parish and to the activities underway to accomplish the pastoral goals. At no time should any session include discussions of individuals or employees.

The parish pastoral council and finance council collaborate on the development of the parish budget to ensure that adequate resources are devoted to the accomplishment of the parish's pastoral goals. (The finance council recommends the budget to the pastor for his approval.)

Communication to Parishioners

Parishioners should have the following information readily available in a timely way by such means as determined by the parish, for example on parish bulletin boards, the parish's website, social media, or weekly bulletins:

- the council members' name (without identifying information) and, if appropriate, their primary church of worship,
- standing meeting dates,
- meeting agenda and minutes, and
- the parish pastoral plan or strategic plan.

The council chairperson prepares the agenda in consultation with the pastor, and it is sent to members by the secretary or a staff member designated by the pastor. The agenda should be published at least a week in advance of a meeting and the meeting minutes generally no more than a week after the meeting.

Council Norms

The council should create meeting norms, that is, agreed-upon standards for conducting productive meetings, which should be periodically reviewed by the council to ensure that norms are being upheld. It is strongly recommended that the meeting norms are posted for easy consultation. (A few common examples are: Members arrive ready to discuss items on the agenda; We respect everyone's time by starting and ending on time; We stay focused on the item being discussed.)

Council Bylaws

Each council must have bylaws approved by the pastor that specify local matters such as meeting time, location, the composition of commissions, and the method of selecting members. The bylaws cannot contradict these norms. (See the sample bylaws in Appendix 1 which can be modified to meet the parish's unique circumstances.)

The pastor will submit an annual report to the chancellor on the parish pastoral goals and membership of the council. (See the form in Appendix 2.)

APPENDIX 1

Sample Parish Pastoral Council Bylaws

BYLAWS

ST. XAVIER PARISH IN NOWHERE ME PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Approved June 30, 2222

ARTICLE I – FORMALITIES

SECTION I: The name of this body shall be St. Xavier Parish Pastoral Council, hereinafter “council.”

SECTION II: The membership of the council and updated parish pastoral goals shall be submitted annually to the chancellor of the diocese.

SECTION III: The council is dissolved upon the transfer, retirement, resignation, or death of the pastor/administrator, hereinafter “pastor.” A new pastor must constitute a new council or may elect to reinstate the dissolved council as soon as possible but within a maximum of six months after taking office.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

SECTION I: The council’s purpose and function are to assist the pastor in pastoral planning by investigating pastoral matters, pondering them, and proposing recommendations.

SECTION II: The council prepares the parish pastoral plan with goals and objectives that are evaluated annually and updated as needed.

SECTION II: The council works collaboratively with the Finance Council to ensure that the budget is sufficient to implement the parish pastoral plan and other parish needs.

SECTION III: At the will of the pastor, the council shall discuss any pastoral matter relating to the life of the members of the parish. It shall not, however, discuss matters pertaining to individuals or employees.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

SECTION I: Ex-officio, non-voting members — The parochial vicar, the deacon, the school principal, the parish life coordinator, and the parish business coordinator.

SECTION II: Council members are active, participating members of the parish.

Section III: All members are appointed by the pastor.

SECTION IV: Terms of membership are for three years and may be renewed once, after which point an individual needs to be off the council for a year before being eligible for reappointment. Terms run from July 1 of a given year to June 30 of the following year.

SECTION V: Vacancies occur upon a resignation, a death, completion of one's term or if a member has had three unexcused absences in a year. Vacancies are filled in the same manner as members are selected.

SECTION V: Membership on the council requires attendance at all meetings of the council.

SECTION VI: All newly selected members of the council will be invited to participate in an orientation program conducted by the chair of the council.

ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS

SECTION I: The officers shall be the pastor, chairperson, and vice-chairperson. The chairperson and vice-chairperson shall be elected annually at the June meeting by a plurality vote of the council members. The candidates for chairperson and vice-chairperson shall have served for a minimum of one year on the council and shall be nominated to these offices by the membership commission at the May meeting. The secretary is named by the pastor in consultation with the council.

SECTION II: The newly elected officers shall take possession of their offices at the first meeting after July 1st. Officers so elected shall serve until their successors are duly elected and qualified.

SECTION III: In case of a vacancy in any office for any cause, the members of the council may elect a successor to fulfill the unexpired term by the election procedure generally provided for in Section I of this Article IV.

SECTION IV: The duties of the officers shall be:

PASTOR: Inasmuch as the council is a consultative body to the pastor, no meetings are held in his absence, unless explicitly requested by the pastor. All recommendations of the council become final only with the pastor's assent.

CHAIRPERSON: The chairperson presides at all meetings, and in conjunction with the pastor and parish pastoral life coordinator, develops the agenda for all council meetings and performs all other duties usually associated with this office. The chairperson assigns council members to a commission and appoints the commission's chairperson. The chairperson also establishes ad hoc commissions as needed after consultation with the pastor.

VICE-CHAIRPERSON: Presides at all meetings in the absence of the chairperson and performs such duties as the chair shall designate when the chairperson desires to speak for or against an agenda item.

SECRETARY: The secretary's responsibility is to prepare and maintain accurate minutes of the council meetings as well as all records of the council. The secretary (or a staff member appointed by the pastor) shall ensure that meeting agendas, minutes, priority plans, and member names are posted for easy access by parishioners.

ARTICLE V – COUNCIL COMMISSIONS

NOTE: The pastor is an *ex officio* member of all commissions although he does not have to be present at every commission meeting.

SECTION I: The commissions of this council shall be:

- Membership
- Liturgy, Worship, and Spirituality
- Evangelization and Faith Formation
- Parish and Family Life
- Parish Planning
- Social Justice

SECTION II: The chairperson of each commission is a member of the council and appointed by the chairperson. Besides the members of the council assigned to the commission, each commission is encouraged to invite other members of the parish to serve on the commission.

SECTION III: Each commission should meet at least once between the meetings of the council. A parish staff member is an *ex officio* member of each commission. Each commission determines its own manner of operating.

SECTION IV: Membership Commission. The deacon is an ex officio member of this commission. This commission has two responsibilities: a) to solicit and vet parishioners for possible membership on the council and b) to prepare a slate of council officers to be voted upon at the June meeting of the council.

SECTION V: Evangelization and Faith Formation Commission. The parish faith formation leader is an ex officio, non-voting member of this commission. The commission supports the faith formation ministry of the parish addressing the needs of all ages. It also keeps the evangelizing mission of the parish in the forefront.

SECTION VI: Liturgy, Worship, and Spirituality Commission. The parochial vicar is an ex officio member of this commission. This commission concerns itself with the spiritual life of the parish. It looks to the environment for worship, the liturgical ministers, planning special liturgical celebrations, etc.

SECTION VII: Parish And Family Life Commission. The parish pastoral life coordinator is an ex officio member of this commission. The commission plans ways to enhance the live of the parish, build community, and support family life.

SECTION VIII: Pastoral Planning Commission. The parochial vicar is an ex officio member of this commission. This commission pulls together the work of all the other commissions into a cohesive parish pastoral plan with goals and objectives. It prepares the annual review and submission of annual report to the chancellor.

SECTION IX: Social Justice Commission. The pastor assigns a staff person to this commission. This commission seeks ways for the parish to embody the social teachings of the Church.

SECTION X: All commissions are accountable to the council, and each chairperson reports at each meeting, identifying those items that require discussion by the council.

ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS

SECTION I: St. Xavier Parish Council meets on the first Tuesday of the months of September, November, January, March, and June, at the parish hall from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

SECTION II: Special meetings may be called by the chairperson after consultation with the pastor.

SECTION III: Council members shall be provided with an agenda and supporting materials a week before each meeting.

SECTION IV: Each meeting shall open and close with a prayer.

SECTION V: All decisions of the council are, in effect, recommendations made to the pastor. Such recommendations are ordinarily arrived at by consensus, although a vote is taken to be retained in the minutes.

SECTION VI: The regular meetings of the council shall be publicized and are open to all members of the parish, except when the pastor calls for an executive session.

ARTICLE VII - **QUORUM**

The majority of members of the council present at any meeting shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE VIII – **AMENDING THE BYLAWS**

These bylaws may be amended, altered, or replaced by a two-thirds vote of the council membership, provided that the proposed amendments, alteration, or repeal appears on the agenda of the regular council meeting following the meeting at which it is proposed. Amendments become effective only if approved by the pastor.

APPENDIX 2

Form to be Submitted Annually to the Chancellor

Date: *[insert submission date here]*

Dear Bishop:

The *[insert name of parish]* Parish Pastoral Council met *[number of times]* during the fiscal year ended June 30, 20XX. The meeting dates were:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

[Add to the number as needed.]

The parish's pastoral plan was reviewed on *[insert date of meeting]*, and the following goals were added, completed, or the timeline extended for implementation:

New Goal(s):

Completed Goal(s):

Continuation Goal(s):

Besides the review of the parish's pastoral plan, the following items were the major topics of discussion during this year's Parish Pastoral Council meetings:

The Parish Pastoral Council chairperson's name and contact information:

Name: _____ Email: _____

Telephone: _____ By signing, we, the members of *[insert name of parish]* Parish Pastoral Council, attest to the above statements.

PPC Member's Signature

Print Name

This form should be completed and signed at the last meeting of the year and submitted to the chancellor.

Sincerely,

Signature of the Pastor/Administrator

APPENDIX 3

Key Words for Understanding Council Ministry

- Accountability:** The obligation to carry out responsibility and to exercise authority in terms of established standards or assigned tasks.
- Administrator:** A priest assigned by the bishop, on a temporary basis, to serve a parish in the absence of a pastor.
- Clergy:** Those who are ordained to the orders of deacon, priest, or bishop, including ordained members of congregations of religious men.
- Collaboration:** Working together as a joint effort.
- Commission:** A subgroup of the parish pastoral council that develops recommendations concerning such areas of parish life as worship, faith formation, and liturgy. Commissions address parish vision/goals within the context of a specialized area of ministry. A commission typically recommends actions to the parish pastoral council.
- Committee:** A group involved in a parish ministry, project, or program that flows from parish priorities and parish strategic planning. Committees are sometimes stable – buildings and grounds, for example – or temporary – a parish supper, for example, and act on recommendations from the parish pastoral council or parish finance council.
- Deacon (permanent):** A man who is ordained to the order of deacon and who will remain such.
- Deacon (transitional):** A man who has been ordained to the diaconate but who, ultimately, will be ordained to the priesthood.
- Discernment:** The process that promotes a community's ability to seek God's will in the life of the community.
- Ex officio:** Member as a result of one's status or position
- Goal:** A clear statement of a desired direction or end expressed in broad, general terms.
- Immediate Family Members:** Spouse, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, in-laws or anyone living in the employee's household.
- Laity (Layperson):** Baptized members of the Roman Catholic Church who are not ordained.

Lay Ecclesial Minister[1]

- A fully initiated lay member of the Christian faithful (including vowed religious) who is responding to the empowerment and gifts of the Holy Spirit received in baptism and confirmation, which enable one to share in some form of ministry
- One who responds to a call or invitation to participate in ministry and who has prepared through a process of prayerful discernment
- One who has received the necessary formation, education, and training to function competently within the given area of ministry
- One who intentionally brings personal competencies and gifts to serve the Church's mission through a specific ministry of ecclesial leadership and who does so with community recognition and support
- One to whom a formal and public role in ministry has been entrusted or upon whom an office has been conferred by competent ecclesiastical authority
- One who has been installed in a ministry through the authority of the bishop or his representative, perhaps using a public ritual
- One who commits to performing the duties of a ministry in a stable manner
- A paid staff person (full- or part-time) or a volunteer who has responsibility and the necessary authority for institutional leadership in a particular area of ministry

Mission of The Roman Catholic Church [2]

The Vatican II Council, in *Lumen Gentium - The Dogmatic Constitution on The Church*, declared the mission of the Roman Catholic Church to be to:

1. proclaim the Gospel;
2. celebrate the sacraments;
3. witness to the Gospel;
4. serve all in need.

Mission Statement: Statement of a group's reason for being, its purpose clearly and succinctly expressed. Every activity is tested against the mission statement and evaluated as to its effectiveness in furthering the purpose for existence.

Objective: A specific, time-oriented and realistic statement of what the group or individual is going to do, who will do it, for whom, when, and how.

Parish: A definite community of believers, established on a stable basis by the bishop of a diocese within his diocesan Church. Care of a parish is entrusted to a pastor or administrator appointed by and responsible to the bishop. The community of Christian faithful carries out the mission of the Church in a given locale by forming and educating its members in the faith, proclaiming the Gospel, and serving those in need. Parish structures promote the mission of the parish, diocese, and universal Church.

- Parochial Vicar:** A priest assigned by the bishop to minister in a parish or Cluster as the pastor's coworker and under the pastor's authority. Parochial vicars at one time were known as "assistant" or "associate" pastors.
- Pastor:** A priest designated by the bishop to assume pastoral responsibility for a parish community.
- Pastoral Staff:** Those responsible for collaborating with the pastor in implementing goals/programs/policies of the parish. These may be paid or volunteer staff.
- Policy:** A directive or mandate for action. Answers the question, "In what direction do we want to go?"
- Religious Women and Men:** Women and men (i.e., brothers, nuns, priests, sisters) who have chosen to live a vowed life in the context of a particular religious community. Each serves the Church according to the charisms and ministries particular to her/his congregation. If a member of the community is ordained, he belongs to the clergy. All other religious are members of the laity.
- Subsidiarity:** A time-honored Catholic social principle that holds that nothing is to be done or decided by a higher group, agency, or level of authority that can be done or decided more appropriately by a lower group, agency, or level of authority.
- Synodality:** A term introduced by Pope Francis describing a structured conversation among all of the relevant ecclesial players – bishops, priest, and laity – for the sake of hearing the voice of the Spirit. It is the way the entire Church – all of the baptized – seek to discern together where the Holy Spirit is leading us right now.
- Vision:** A statement that sums up desired outcomes, written in the present tense, and which aligns with the mission.

[1] See USCCB Subcommittee on Lay Ministry, *Lay Ecclesial Ministry: The State of the Questions* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1999).

[2] See *Lumen Gentium* (*Dogmatic Constitution on The Church*), http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html , (1964).

APPENDIX 4

Code of Canon Law and other Church Document References for Pastoral Councils

Parish

A parish is a certain community of the Christian faithful stably constituted in a particular church, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor (parochus) as its proper pastor under the authority of the diocesan bishop. - Code of Canon Law, c. 515.

The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. - Pope Francis – *Evangelii Gaudium* 2013

“A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church; the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop.” It is the place where all the faithful can be gathered together for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. The parish initiates the Christian people into the ordinary expression of the liturgical life: it gathers them together in this celebration; it teaches Christ's saving doctrine; it practices the charity of the Lord in good works and brotherly (and sisterly) love. - *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2179

Parish Pastoral Council

If the diocesan bishop judges it opportune after he has heard the Presbyteral Council, a parish council is to be established in each parish, over which the pastor presides and in which the Christian faithful, together with those who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish, assist in fostering pastoral activity. A parish council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by the norms established by the diocesan bishop. - Code of Canon Law, c. 536.

Parish Finance Council

In each parish, there is to be a finance council which is governed, in addition to universal law, by norms issued by the diocesan bishop and in which the Christian faithful, selected according to these same norms, are to assist the pastor in the administration of the goods of the parish, without prejudice to the prescript of Canon 532. - Code of Canon Law, c. 537

Pastor Responsibilities

In all juridic affairs, the pastor represents the parish according to the norm of law. He is to take care that the goods of the parish are administered according to the norm of Canon 1281-1288. - Code of Canon Law, c. 532.

Pastoral Leader

If, because of a lack of priests, the diocesan bishop has decided that participation in the exercise of the pastoral care of a parish is to be entrusted to a deacon, to another person who is not a priest, or to a community of persons, he is to appoint some priest who, provided with the powers and faculties of a pastor, is to direct the pastoral care. - Code of Canon Law, c. 517, par. 2.

APPENDIX 5

Pastoral Planning Process

The first step is for each parish to articulate its values, vision, and mission, and then to create goals and recommend actions for reaching them, keeping in mind the universal call of the Church to holiness and evangelization. The values define the enduring beliefs that guide the behaviors, decisions, and actions of the parish. The vision should articulate the preferred future of the parish, and the mission articulates what the parish is setting out to do.

Once the values, vision, and mission are articulated, every recommendation of the council should flow from the mission with a goal of achieving the vision, all the while being guided by the agreed-upon values. (At this time, with the help of Catholic Leadership Institute, every parish in the diocese has been led through a process to articulate their values, vision, and mission.)

The council then creates a three-year parish pastoral plan using these steps:

- Identify the pastoral needs of the parish using a variety of means, including surveys, interviews, document reviews, etc. in order to examine areas of church life including sacraments and worship, faith formation, governance and finance, social justice, outreach, and vocations and evangelization.
- Prioritize so as not to include more than three prioritized needs in the plan. These become the parish pastoral goals. Each priority should meet these criteria:
 - ❖ It requires cross-functional support, that is, support from all parish entities such as commissions, committees, parish schools, and other groups in the parish.
 - ❖ It is important enough to be on the pastor's daily list.
 - ❖ It is complex enough that it can't be delegated to one person or ministry.
 - ❖ It will require at least three years to complete.
- Study and pray about how the needs are best met, given parish strengths as well as limitations.
- Write these priorities as SMART goals, that is, goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound, and include action steps, time frames, and designation of the person(s) and/or group(s) responsible for carrying out the action steps.
- The goals should be only one sentence long and easily understandable.
- Develop a method of tracking SMART goal progress, and make reporting progress part of each council meeting.

- Carefully address any unforeseen, unsolvable difficulties that impact the attainment of a goal by revising it, and communicate the change to the parishioners along with the reasons for the change.

Because one of the council's responsibilities is to evaluate how well action steps are being implemented, the council must stay informed of parish activities and developments. This is accomplished through frequent and ongoing communication with the groups and committees responsible for implementation of the pastoral plan but may also include data gathering via surveys, interviews, or document review. Each commission should submit a brief update to the council prior to its meeting, either in writing or in person, depending on the pastor's preference.

Once the plan is approved, the pastor works with the parish's finance council to ensure that appropriate resources in the annual budget are devoted to any goals requiring financial support.

It is important to note that it is not part of the council's work to implement the recommendations. Implementation is the responsibility of the pastor, staff members, the commissions, and/or any other organizations in the parish. It is the council's responsibility, on the other hand, to continuously assess progress toward achieving the goals.

The parish pastoral plan is evaluated and the goals updated such that the parish mentality is of assessing its needs and planning to address them.

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