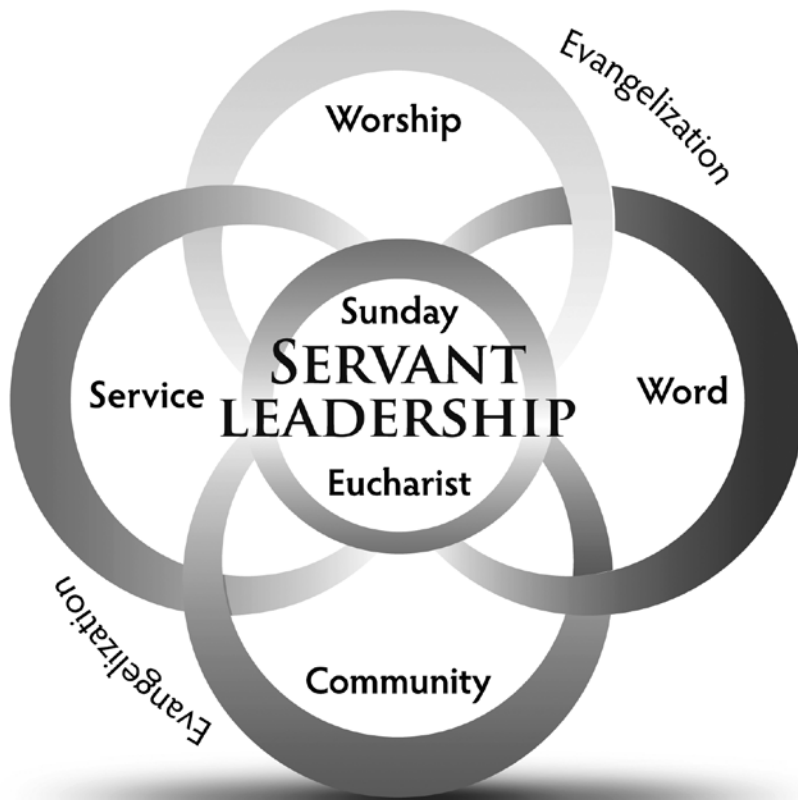




**DIOCESE OF SCRANTON
SERVANT LEADERSHIP
PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL GUIDELINES
AND RESOURCES**

August 2011



We, the Catholic community of the Diocese of Scranton, are called through Baptism to imitate the servant leadership of Jesus Christ. In union with Our Holy Father, the Pope, we proclaim the Gospel faithfully, celebrate the sacraments joyfully, and boldly promote life, justice and peace in northeastern and north central Pennsylvania

(Mission Statement-Diocese of Scranton)



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August 2011

Dear Pastors and Parish Pastoral Council Members,

I am very grateful to you for agreeing to be members of your Parish Pastoral Council. As I stated in *“Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered”*, I believe that we are called to Servant Leadership here in the Diocese of Scranton. More precisely, we are called to a Servant Leadership that helps us to transform our hurting world through compassion, solidarity, justice and love.

Your generosity in assuming an important role of Servant Leadership in your parish will truly enable you to make a significant difference in four pivotal areas of pastoral life: Word, Worship, Community and Service.

I hope you will have evangelization at the heart of your pastoral agenda to truly reflect your own living of the faith, sharing it with others and helping to transform the world in Christ. Evangelization—spreading the Good News of Christ—is the essential mission of the Church.

The Eucharist, the source and summit of Christian life, continually nurtures us to further the Reign of God. Encouraging quality liturgy and supporting efforts for maximum participation of parishioners is paramount to vibrant parishes.

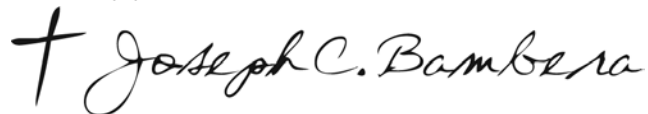
Building community among parishioners and those in the larger community helps us to be effective witnesses to the Gospel. In the relationships we build with one another we find support to be followers of Christ and make a difference in the world.

Service and social justice are embedded in the concept of Servant Leadership. Being good stewards of our gifts and resources to build a more just world is a significant part of living the Gospel.

I encourage you to take seriously your role in pastoral planning. We have done a lot of work to restructure parishes, now we must refocus on quality ministry which can lead to profound parish renewal. As servant leaders, I support the fullest possible collaboration of clergy, religious and laity, men and women in the common mission of the Church. Reflecting on the Church as a communion in heart and mind in a common mission and in sharing the common life of God, I call us to be co-responsible for the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ as we continue planning for the present and for our common future in the Diocese of Scranton.

I will do all I can to provide diocesan staff to help you develop reinvigorated Parish Pastoral Councils which I hope will feed into a Diocesan Pastoral Council in the near future.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph C. Bambera". The signature is written in a cursive style and is preceded by a large, stylized cross symbol.

Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera D.D., J.C.L.
Bishop of Scranton



SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND...Introduction

This section contains:

- A. Acknowledgements
- B. Foundations of Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines in the Church
- C. The Development of Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines in the Diocese of Scranton

Purpose of this Section:

- To set the Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines in an historical context
- To provide background material to orient Parish Pastoral Council Members



A. Acknowledgements

These Guidelines are built upon the “Directives for Parish Pastoral Councils” issued by Bishop Martino in 2007. They are amplified by Bishop Bambera’s pastoral letter, *“Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered”* which calls for reinvigorated Parish Pastoral Councils to support ongoing profound spiritual renewal needed in parishes.

Gratitude is also expressed to the Diocese of Greensburg, the Diocese of Pittsburgh and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee for permission to incorporate some of their material into these Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines.

B. Foundations of Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines in the Church Origins

While Parish Pastoral Councils are relatively new organizations in today’s Church, they have their roots in the early Church, where it was common for groups to share their leadership and their resources with the whole community. We read a description of this leadership in the early Church:

“The community of believers were of one heart and one mind. None of them ever claimed anything as his or her own: rather everything was held in common. Nor was there anyone needy among them, for all who owned property or houses sold them and donated the proceeds. They used to lay them at the feet of the apostles to be distributed to everyone according to need.” (Acts 4:32-35)

“As generous distributors of God’s manifold grace, put your gifts at the service of one another, each in the measure you have received. The one who speaks is to deliver God’s message. The one who serves is to do it with the strength provided by God. Thus, in all of you God is to be glorified through Jesus Christ.” (I Peter 4:10-11)

At the heart of the parish is the formation of community which goes back to the roots of who we are and who we are called to be—people who share their gifts, talents and resources in order to build the Reign of God and people who lead by serving the community.

Vatican II

The Second Vatican Council noted a vision of Church where clergy and laity worked together.

“...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)

In the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church the Second Vatican Council also noted the need for collaboration and cooperation between the pastors and parishioners. “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 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.” (#30)



Parish Pastoral Councils were envisioned by the Second Vatican Council to be advisory bodies to the pastors and to exercise the role of Servant Leadership. The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity called for Councils and noted:

“In dioceses, as far as possible, councils should be set up to assist the Church’s apostolic work, whether in the field of evangelization and sanctification or in the fields of charity, social relations and the rest... Such councils should be found too, if possible at parochial, inter-parochial, inter-diocesan level and also on the national and international plane.” (#26)

The Parish Pastoral Councils provide a vehicle for parishioners to share their gifts and talents with the pastor and the community. In many instances the gifts and talents of members of the Council complement the gifts of the pastor. The community is well served by the variety of gifts which build up the Body of Christ.

Code of Canon Law

The *Code of Canon Law* defines a parish as “a certain community of the Christian faithful stably constituted in a particular church, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor as its proper pastor under the authority of the diocesan bishop.” The parish is in relationship to the diocese and to other parishes. Communion and subsidiarity are ways to name the relationship. Communion occurs within the parish, with the bishop and the universal church, and between parishes. When this is taking place because members of the Church, in accord with their roles and abilities are fully engaged in serving the Church, subsidiarity is happening.

C. Brief History of Parish Pastoral Councils in The Diocese of Scranton

Parish Pastoral Councils were recommended in the Diocese of Scranton with the promulgation of the Acts of Scranton Diocesan Synod II, August 15, 1986. It stated (D244) that the Bishop be encouraged to implement Canon 536 of the Code of Canon Law as it related to the establishment of advisory parish councils and assist parishes in that implementation. Parish councils, later to be called “Parish Pastoral Councils,” were formed in limited number at that time.

In 1990, the Pastoral Vision statement for the Diocese of Scranton, “The Welcoming Church,” called for some very practical considerations regarding parish leadership. It encouraged the formation of Parish Pastoral Councils, noting that “The pastoral council will guarantee its effectiveness if it accepts the role of being a prayerful, discerning community of the people.”

From the lived experience of Diocesan Synod II, RENEW, “The Welcoming Church,” and special listening sessions across the Diocese, guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils were formulated in the former Office of Parish Ministries. Those guidelines became the starting point for pastoral council development in many parishes following the Episcopal Visitation Self-Study process.

In his July 2004 pastoral letter, Bishop Martino wrote, that he wanted to see spiritual and pastoral renewal begin and beautifully reinvigorate our grassroots, our parishes. He mandated a uniform Parish Pastoral Council in every parish. He saw the Parish Pastoral Council as the pastor’s chief advisory group in planning for the parish’s renewed vigor in evangelizing all the people in the parish’s area. He also wanted to ensure that every parish had a Finance Council



as mandated by Canon Law. The Finance Council was to assist the pastor in drawing up the parish's annual budget and the parish's budgetary projections for coming years.

Bishop Martino envisioned that once Parish Pastoral Councils and Finance Councils were in place, all parishes should begin a period of Parish Self-Study. The Bishop saw this as a carefully disciplined process, in which each parish would create a snapshot of how well it is fulfilling – or not fulfilling – sufficiently its mission to announce the Good News in Word, Sacrament and through a serving Community. He envisioned each parish examining its strengths and weaknesses, its proud accomplishments and its inevitable deficiencies, so that it could plan with nearby parishes to see if there is a better way to serve ‘the neighborhood of parishes.’ He asked the important question: “Are joint efforts possible, for example, instead of overlapping separate efforts? Are our current deanery boundaries the most helpful ones for our evangelization efforts?”

Once the pastoral planning was accomplished at the various grassroots levels, Bishop Martino imagined that there would be in place the contours of a diocesan pastoral plan. He saw that the plan would take into consideration the rich diversity of our Diocese throughout its entire 11 counties: the areas of population growth and decline, the economic realities faced by our people, and the new immigrants who deserve a generous Scranton diocesan welcome.

Bishop Martino also foresaw a Diocesan Pastoral Council of clergy, religious and laity as a means by which he would receive good advice from the grassroots. In addition, a Diocesan Pastoral Council will enable all in the diocese to see that the Catholic Church to which we belong is not just in our parish or neighborhood, but is vibrantly present in 11 Pennsylvania counties.

In his Parish Pastoral Council Directives, Bishop Martino emphasized that pastoral and spiritual renewal must be centered on the Eucharist and Evangelization. He was concerned that pastoral planning be grounded in the mission of the Church and the parish. Bishop Martino challenged all to accept the necessity of prayer and the importance of ongoing faith formation for an effective contribution by the Parish Pastoral Council. His directives were grounded in Church teaching and in a wealth of pastoral wisdom and experience. They offered to parishes which had many emerging needs a structure that embraced consultation, collegiality and prayerful discernment.

Shortly after issuing directives for the new Parish Pastoral Councils, Bishop Martino began a Diocesan Planning Process named, *Called to Holiness and Mission*, which in many ways accomplished much of what he envisioned Parish Pastoral Councils would do. While some parishes began to form Parish Pastoral Councils, many did not because they were very involved in *Called to Holiness and Mission*, and the process of consolidating, linking or forming partnerships in their clusters.

Bishop Bambera became the pastoral leader of the Diocese of Scranton in April of 2010. At that time the parishes had been implementing of Bishop Martino’s Directives for about a year. As the *Called to Holiness and Mission* implementation process unfolded, it became apparent that there was an emerging need to see how the planning process could both continue and be



streamlined. The challenge was to incorporate planning as the rightful prerogative of the Parish Pastoral Councils, while at the same time supporting the planning work that needed to be done at the cluster level. This provided an occasion to review the earlier Parish Pastoral Council Directives issued by Bishop Martino and build upon them with up-dates that would simplify the on-going parish and cluster planning process and lead to a significant goal of *Called to Mission and Holiness*, profound parish renewal.

Bishop Bambera in dialogue with priests and parishioners promulgated his pastoral, *“Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered”* on June 12, 2011, the Feast of Pentecost. In the pastoral he held up the model of Servant Leadership as a way of leading in the diocese. Parish Pastoral Councils exercise Servant Leadership by their understanding of and their responding to the ministry dimension of their roles, by acting out of a commitment to serve the community, by having a working knowledge of the Diocesan Mission, by focusing on the mission of the parish in light of the larger mission and by being signs of hope to the parish and beyond.



NOTES—*SIGNIFICANT DISCUSSIONS, IDEAS AND STRATEGIES*

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SECTION TWO: VISION...Servant Leadership, Mission and Ministry

This section contains:

- A. Introduction
- B. Mission and Ministry of Jesus Christ
- C. Mission and Ministry of the Church
- D. Mission and Ministry of the Parish
- E. Reflection on Bishop Bambera's pastoral, "*Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered*"
- F. Parish Pastoral Council as Servant Leader
- G. Servant Leadership Benchmarks

Purpose of this Section:

- To provide formational materials for the Parish Pastoral Council.

These materials can be used in selected segments throughout the year as part of the spiritual and pastoral growth of the Council.



SERVANT LEADERSHIP, MISSION AND MINISTRY

A. Introduction

The responsibility of assisting the pastor in guiding the parish, to “shepherd” the mission, requires a Parish Council made up of faith-filled women and men who wish to contribute to the spiritual development of the parish. Spiritual leadership means that the Council members realize that the work they do is not their own. Rather, spiritual leaders work in partnership with God, the community, and with the Church.

While helping with practical things in the parish, such as getting bids for new carpeting or being sure the parking lot has clear entrance and exit markings are important services to the parish, they are not at the heart of what a Parish Pastoral Council is. The materials in this section are designed to help the Council understand and be engaged in the spiritual dimension of its work.

The Parish Pastoral Council is a prayerful group that discerns the will of God by being open to the power of the Holy Spirit. For this openness to happen individual opinions and prejudices must be set aside. Council members must openly listen to one another and to other parishioners when making “prayerful decisions.”

Communal prayer at parish pastoral council meetings is vital. It sets the tone for the meeting and places people in the proper frame of mind. Many come to the meeting after a long day of work which often has its own challenges. Prayer encourages people to adjust to the “servant leader” attitude needed to discern what is best for the parish community. Prayer helps clear minds and hearts for the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual leadership involves:

1. Developing a habit of praying together
2. Ensuring that the parish mission is carried out in light of the vision established for the diocese
3. Learning more about the mission of the Church
4. Developing Servant Leadership skills

What follows are processes and descriptions of the vision for the Diocese and the mission of the Church. They are offered as one way to help the Council understand and be engaged in the spiritual dimension of its work.

B. Resources on the Mission and Ministry of Jesus Christ

Volumes have been written on the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. As members of a leadership group we along with the rest of the Church are called to continue his mission and ministry. In summary form, some of the significant things which were hallmarks of Jesus’ mission, ministry and Servant Leadership, include:

1) Jesus Proclaimed the Good News by Preaching and Teaching.

Direct Approach:



Sometimes Jesus took the direct approach in teaching—he taught the Beatitudes (MT 5; Luke 4:18); he preached in Nazareth (LK 4:16ff); the Great Discourse (LK 6:17ff) and the Greatest Commandment (MT 22:34-40). The theme which ran through all his teaching was one of service, of caring for others, of honesty and integrity.

Parable Approach:

Jesus was a great storyteller. He found storytelling engaging. One could not just “listen, one needed to be involved.” Jesus believed in people. He believed given the right questions and in the right context and with the right preparation, and the power of the Spirit, people could get insights from stories and make decisions to live the life he was living and about which he was preaching.

2) Jesus Prayed to God and Worshipped God

Jesus was a person of prayer who practiced all the prayer and worship rituals of his time and went beyond them. He had a very comprehensive idea of prayer. You could pray alone, in quiet, in your heart, at meals, in the synagogue, on the streets, when you are worried, when you are grateful. His practices of prayer often went beyond the customs of the day. He encouraged people to pray in their inner-most selves, (MT 6: 5-6). Jesus often got up early and went out alone to pray before starting his day (MK 1:35). He taught people how to pray (MT 6:9-14). He praised God as part of his daily routine (MT 11:25). He went up the mountain to pray with Peter, James and John and was transfigured before them (LK 9: 28-36). Jesus tells us to be persistent in prayer. (LK 11: 9-10) He observed the Sabbath and the Passover (LK: 22:7-20). Jesus asked us to pray with others, especially in difficult circumstances (LK 22:39-46). He used ritual as part of prayer, and he modeled quality prayer and taught others to pray.

3) Jesus Served Others

The story of the “washing of the feet” (JN 13:1-17) is a wonderful narrative of one of Jesus’ primary values—Servant Leadership. Jesus used everything in his power to serve others, to help them become whole. His service included curing a man with an unclean spirit (LK 4:33ff); curing people of illness and paralysis (LK5:12ff); calming the sea to save the lives of others (MT 8:23-27; forgiving the sinful woman (LK 7:36-50). Being a Servant Leader was the only way Jesus led, which does not mean Jesus was a passive leader or a leader who only responded to needs. On a “macro level” Jesus was responding to needs—the needs of humanity to be saved from selfishness and despair and given new life and new hope. On that level Jesus set up new standards, gave new guidelines; he presented new vision. On a micro level Jesus reached out to whomever he came across, or to whomever sought him out to serve them in whatever way he could.

4) Jesus Celebrated Life with Family, Friends, Strangers and the Community

Jesus celebrated weddings (JN 2:1-11); he fed hungry people in collaboration with others (MT 14:13-21); he celebrated the Passover, the great religious ritual of his day (LK 22:19ff); he shared stories and a meal with the strangers on the road to Emmaus (LK 24:13ff). Jesus was very much an involved and engaged member of the culture in which he grew up. He did the ordinary things that his peers were doing, while often adding a new insight, a new responsibility, new meaning. He loved working with people and they seemed attracted to him.



He realized that we need each other and he helped people to break down stereotypes and build sustaining relationships.

5) Jesus Built a Strong Community

It was God's plan that Jesus would not accomplish his work alone. He chose people to help him (MT 4:18-22, LK 5:27; LK 10:1-20). He formed them to see things differently, to see the great possibilities in the new Reign of God he was ushering in. Both the apostles and the disciples were very important to his mission. The women at the empty tomb were the first to spread the good news that he was alive. His friendship with Lazarus and Mary Magdalene and Martha and Mary were indications that he knew people well, was liked by them, had fine relationships with them, and was patient with their imperfections. He saw the best in them and counted on them to not only assist him as he walked the earth, but to carry on his mission and ministry when he no longer had human life as we know it. We are here today because the early disciples "got it" and did carry out his mission and ministry.

6) Jesus saved us through his suffering, death and resurrection

The greatest gift Jesus gave us was his life, death and resurrection. Dying so that we might have new life is what empowered the new and young community to carry on his mission. The Paschal Mystery continues to unfold in our lives today. We walk often through the valley of darkness as we experience the sorrows of losing loved ones, losing jobs, being disappointed in children or friends, experiencing sickness, feeling debilitated, and being helpless to assist and make "things better."

7) Jesus entrusted his mission to the apostles and disciples

The risen Jesus commissioned the disciples: "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." (MT 28:12-20)

These seven aspects of Jesus' life point to a framework from which to understand the broad scope of Jesus' ministry and mission and ultimately the scope of Parish Pastoral Council work related to Ministry of the Word, Worship, Community and Service.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. Review the 7 aspects of Jesus' leadership style noted above. Where do you find a connection between Bishop Bambera's call to embrace the ministry of the Word, Worship, Community and Service and Jesus' approach to ministry?
2. What insights did you get from reviewing the brief descriptions above about Jesus' leadership style and our call to be a Parish Pastoral Council that reflects Jesus' mission, values and servant approach to leadership?



C. Resources on the Mission and Ministry of the Church

The mission of the Church is to carry on the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. Through Baptism and Confirmation all are called to exercise both their rights and responsibilities to participate fully in the life and mission of the Church. This mission of the Church is rooted in the mission of Christ who commanded everyone —clergy, religious and laity to “go into the world and proclaim the good news to all of creation.” (Mark 16:15).

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 the spirit of the documents of Vatican Council II. All members of the Church, laity, religious and clergy, according to their charisms and roles, collaborate in the responsibility for fulfilling the mission of the Church.

Two insights from the Second Vatican Council are important for members of Parish Pastoral Councils to understand. First, we are reminded in the second chapter of the Constitution on the Church that God did not make people holy or save them merely as individuals without bond or relationship to one another. Rather, God was pleased to call people together as a people, a people who acknowledged him and served him in holiness (LG#9-29). This points to the need for leaders to look at the community as a place where the presence of God is found and to promote community as a way to experience the saving power of God.

Secondly, building on the chapter describing the People of God, the fifth chapter of *Lumen Gentium*, describes the “universal call to holiness:”

Thus it is evident to everyone, that all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity; by this holiness as such a more human manner of living is promoted in this earthly society. In order that the faithful may reach this perfection, they must use their strength accordingly as they have received it, as a gift from Christ. (LG #40).

If all are called to holiness, then the leaders of the community, clergy and laity together, need to work together to unpack the rich traditions of the Church that foster growth in holiness.

The Second Vatican Council sought to increase apostolic activity by tapping into the rich gifts of the baptized laity. It noted that the laity has an active part of their own in the life and action of the Church based on participating through baptism with Christ as priest, prophet and king. As noted earlier without an active laity, the ministry of the pastor is greatly diminished or ineffectual. (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity #777) With the encouragement and support of the clergy the laity can truly “accomplish the Church’s mission in the world principally by that blending of conduct and faith which makes them the light of the world.” (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity #781)

Bishop Bambera builds on this concept in his pastoral when he says, “In a time and era in which so many of the Baptized are searching for ways to discover deeper meaning in their lives through faith and service to God’s people, ironically, many in roles of leadership positions in the Church feel overwhelmed and burdened. How appropriate it is that we call forth the Baptized to assume positions of leadership and service provided for them by the Church



herself. I encourage our priests, in turn, to renew their call to service in light of these diocesan priorities and to work to revitalize parish life less from a position of presbyteral authority and more in terms of sacramental servant-leadership."

Bishop Bambera reminds us that Jesus offers us an appropriate way to be his disciples. He says, "We are called to lead lives deeply rooted in service—service to our God, neighbor, self, and creation. This is certainly not an easy path, though it is one that will bring us together as God's people who are on mission together, living hope-filled lives."

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. What is emerging for you in terms of what the Church is asking of you in relationship to leadership at this point in history?
2. What are the challenges facing us as leaders in the Church? In what ways does the model of Servant Leadership help us face these challenges?
3. What new insights did I get from reading and reflecting on the above passages?

D. Resources on Mission and Ministry of the Parish

Bishop Bambera reminds us that "the parish is, first, a people. It is a people called together by God. It is a people empowered by the Spirit to make increasingly true and obvious their response to God through Christ." The parish has only one purpose—to continue the mission of Jesus Christ. According to Bishop Bambera, "Our task is to make our parish life new by discovering together how to proclaim the gospel and live Eucharistic communion in a way that our brothers and sisters in the region of our diocese can comprehend and be inspired."

Through Baptism and Confirmation all are called to exercise both their rights and responsibilities to participate fully in the life and mission of the Church. The mission of the Church is rooted in the mission of Christ who commanded everyone—clergy, religious and laity—"go into the world and proclaim the good news to all of creation" (MK 16:15). For most Catholics, the parish has provided the parameters within which Christian faith has grown and flourished, serving as the essential component of their experience of the Church and the place where the mission of Christ continues. We understand what we are called to do. However, the question is how are we proclaiming the gospel and living communion in a way that others understand and are inspired?

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. Bishop Bambera calls this co-responsibility.



“The parish is where the Church lives,” according to the American Bishops. “Parishes are communities of faith, of action and of hope. They are where the gospel is proclaimed and celebrated, where believers are formed and sent to renew the earth.” (Communities of Salt and Light: Reflections on the Social Mission of the Parish)

Bishop Bambera recalls that “Catholic life begins and ends in the parish, or local Church. Some parish communities still hurt from the painful events of abused trust, closed church buildings and schools, the decline of religious and priests, and a diminishing youth population. The future of the diocese lies in the renewal of parish life, and our hope lies in the generous Servant Leadership of priests, religious and laity who, wounded but loved, freely give themselves to Christ’s good news mission of gathering those scattered from the love of God and the Church.”

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. What gets you excited about your leadership role in the parish?
2. What are fresh ways to spread the Good News so that others may be inspired by it?
3. What new insights are coming to you as you study these reflections? What new connections are you making?

E. Resources for Reflection on Bishop Bambera’s Pastoral, *“Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered”*

Bishop Bambera’s letter is “A Pastoral Vision for the Church of Scranton.” It lays the foundation for the work of Parish Pastoral Councils. After reading and studying the Pastoral individually, it is highly recommended that the Parish Pastoral Council study and reflect on it throughout the year, perhaps using a section of it at each Council meeting.

Starter questions for discussion follow. Please adapt them or design new ones to meet your needs. It should be noted that these questions are general in nature designed for the Council as a whole. It is assumed that the commissions or committees of the Council will spend a great deal more time to study, plan and act upon the parts of the pastoral which address their specific areas of ministry.

Introduction and “Tell These Secrets: Tales of Generosity from Around the World” p. 2-3

- a. What is at the heart of Bishop Bambera’s introduction to the pastoral?
- b. What insights did you get after reading the story of the boy who wanted a drum?
- c. What can we take from the introduction and the tale to inspire us as members of the parish pastoral council?

“Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered” p. 4-5

- a. Recall a time when you or the parish has been “wounded” in some way.
What are some of the feelings associated with being wounded or being broken?



- b. In what ways has knowing you are loved helped to heal the wounds?
- c. What are some issues you as a pastoral council may need to deal with as you help to heal wounds and to “regather the scattered?”

The Church of Scranton: Servant Leaders p. 6-7

- a. How do you see service to God and neighbor as an act of leadership “that differs in kind and orientation from what normally counts as leadership?”
- b. What connections do you see between what the Bishop envisioned in his Advent Letter, what he heard as a response to it and what your own thoughts are about the future life of the Church in the Diocese?
- c. What would need to change for your Pastoral Council to envision itself and truly be a living example of Servant Leadership?

The Pastoral Plan and the Call to be People of the Word p. 8-9

- a. The Bishop reminds us that the parish exists not only for personal holiness and salvation but Christ’s mission of salvation for the whole world. Given this, what do you see as the scope of Servant Leadership in the Council? How can the Council keep the “big picture” in mind when it is tempted to focus on small issues?
- b. What gets you excited about the mission of the diocese and the intertwining graphic that helps illustrate it? What concerns you?
- c. As you look at the practical considerations for ministry of the Word which the Bishop offers, which ones are strong in your parish? Which ones would you like to explore further?

The Call to Worship and Community p. 10-11

- a. In what way do our liturgies “challenge and celebrate our relationship with God, one another, and the world?”
- b. The Bishop calls us to be Servant Leaders who build Community through hospitality, respect, inclusion and holiness. What are some ways we do this? Where are we challenged to build greater community?
- c. In reviewing the practical suggestions for ministry of Worship and Community where are your strengths? What needs further consideration before leading to action?

The Call to Service, Social Justice and Stewardship to Hasten the Reign of God p. 11-12

- a. How can we create greater awareness that it is in the marketplace that we participate in the social mission of the Church—within the context of everyday life in the home and work place that men and women of faith live out their call to work for a just society?
- b. The Bishop challenges parishes to have communal, planned and group directed social ministry beyond individual responses and involve all parishioners. What issues do we need to deal with to make this happen?
- c. Examine the ways the Bishop suggests parishes be involved in social justice. What are some next steps to take to plan for greater participation in social justice and stewardship?

Leadership and Closing Thoughts p. 13-14

- a. What insights did you get from reading the Pastoral about Bishop Bambera’s own leadership style and the style of leadership which he is promoting?



- b. What affinity do you feel toward Servant Leadership? Where might you need to change or become more aware of, if you are to live into Servant Leadership?
- c. What is something significant that you would you like to lift up from the Bishop's closing thoughts? Why is this important to you?

F. Resources for Parish Pastoral Council as Servant Leader

The foundations of Parish Pastoral Councils rest in the Church's official documents and in the teachings from Christian antiquity about communion, participation and consultation. All (clergy, religious and laity) are called to build up the Body of Christ. The mission of Parish Pastoral Councils is to be a consultative body to the pastor in assisting him to empower the parish to fulfill the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ.

Bishop Bambera made Servant Leadership and Sunday Eucharist the center of our Pastoral Plan. "Servant Leadership begins with the natural feeling, really the love of Christ within, which summons one to want to bring others to know, love, and serve God. Parish Pastoral Councils are called to exemplify and inspire others by the quality of their Servant Leadership.

Effective Parish Pastoral Councils require shared Servant Leadership between the pastor and the Council. The pastor has the ultimate responsibility for the parish and within this accountability is the assumption and the need that the gifts of the laity will be respected and used for the good of the parish. The Servant Leadership model of the Gospels is the form of leadership that is most appropriate for Parish Pastoral Councils:

"You know how those who exercise authority among the gentiles lord it over them; their great ones make their importance felt. It cannot be like that with you. Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest and whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all." (MT 20:25-27)

In successful Parish Pastoral Councils pastors and Parish Pastoral Council members work together to serve the community in an effort to continually build the Reign of God.

The image of Servant Leadership, rooted in Jesus' washing of the feet, offers a "spirit" and effective model for use by pastors and Parish Pastoral Councils.

How do pastors and Parish Pastoral Councils exercise Servant Leadership?

1) Self-awareness and Prayer

If we want to be Servant Leaders we need to know how we impact others. Our biases, our skills, our personalities all affect how we are perceived as leaders. By rooting ourselves in scripture, reflecting on the passages, thinking about how we can effectively serve the community helps us to integrate the values of Servant Leadership. Prayerful reflection and faith sharing empowers us to be Servant Leaders in communion with the Spirit of God as we try to bring about God's reign on earth. Prayer is essential to the life of any Christian. It is the touch point with the divine and gracious God. Through prayer we praise and thank God and petition God for our needs and the needs of the world. Through prayer we are in communion with the risen Christ as we contemplate his life, his words and deeds. As a Parish Pastoral



Council we need to be people of prayer and faith sharing. (See Appendix A for Prayer Resources.)

2) Listening and Empathy

Servant leaders listen in as many ways as possible: one on one conversation, focus groups, surveys, thinking with people; listening well at council meetings. Listening for words, feelings and connections is very important. Listening with the heart is essential in good parish leadership. Listening for loss, disappointment, excitement, listening with gratitude and appreciation all are powerful ways servant leaders, serve first. Listening helps identify needs and it also helps people bond together. Listening with the heart leads to empathy, the ability to stand in the shoes of another and truly understand the person's thoughts, feelings, dilemmas, etc. It assumes good intentions of fellow Council members and parishioners. Great Servant Leaders are skilled empathetic listeners.

3) Healing

Learning to heal is a powerful force for transformation and integration. One of the great strengths of servant-leadership is the potential for healing one's self and others. Many people have suffered emotional hurts in the parish reorganization process. It is part of the human condition to experience loss, to be wounded. However, Parish Pastoral Councils have a unique opportunity to contribute to making people whole who are suffering or feel alienated. Bishop Bambera's pastoral, *"Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered,"* speaks of how God's love for us can heal our woundedness. God's love is experienced through the love we have for each other. Servant Leaders lead with a love and compassion that can heal.

4) Team leaders

Servant Leaders know they can't do it alone. They need others. Pastors need people to confer with, to share and work with to accomplish the mission of the parish. Lay leaders need one another and the clergy to work together to find the best ways to help the community grow in holiness and mission. Bishop Bambera notes in the pastoral that pastors and the laity are called to be co-responsible for the mission of the Church, each working out of their gifts and roles. Servant Leaders are not "stand alone" leaders. In a Council situation the Pastor and Council work as a Servant Leadership team. The Council works with commissions or committees to help further their work.

5) Being on a Journey Together and Building Community On the Way

Part of Servant Leadership deals with growing in insight, knowledge and appreciation for others. It involves finding meaningful ministry or making ministry meaningful. It involves building community. As Bishop Bambera says, our task is to help others be inspired by what we do to proclaim the gospel and live Eucharistic communion. It involves providing the community with opportunities to learn and develop, to search and "find" together. Continuing formation is an essential part of the journey. Learning more about our faith, praying more, sharing the joys and sorrows of life are all part of learning to be good servant leaders. Annual Council Retreats and ongoing education are at the heart of servant leader councils.

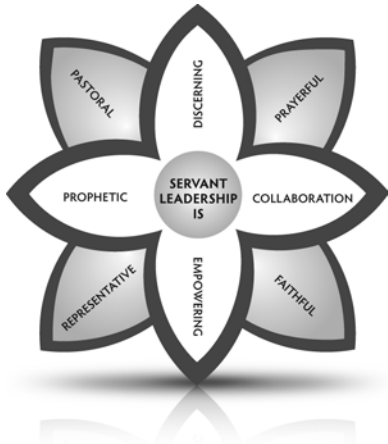


6) Stewardship

Stewardship assumes first and foremost a recognition that all good gifts, including the gift of faith, the gift of church and the gift of leadership skills, come from God. As grateful recipients, we commit to using them in service of others. This involves issues of sustainability of the earth's and parish's resources, sharing gifts, talents and resources wherever there is need.

G. Servant Leader Benchmarks

Some important benchmarks for Parish Pastoral Councils modeling Servant Leadership include the following:



1) A Parish Pastoral Council is Prayerful.

The Council's agenda provides sufficient time to reflect on the Gospel and on their call to be Servant Leaders. Many Councils use prayer as "bookends" to begin and end their meetings. Other Councils "salt" their meetings with prayer. They begin with a seasonal hymn or the parish mission statement. After approval of minutes and a report from the pastor, they read the Gospel for the following Sunday, and share insights or connections with the work and life of the parish. Before they adjourn, the members share prayer needs and parish concerns, pray the Lord's Prayer and leave with a blessing and sign of peace. These Councils realize that the work entrusted to their care is an extension of the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ and the larger Church. (For Resources on Prayer see Appendix A.)

2) A Parish Pastoral Council is Faithful

Council members believe that the Holy Spirit is guiding the Church and their parish deliberations. If a matter comes before it for consultation about which the members feel unqualified or lack sufficient knowledge, the Council is humble enough to take initiative to find out, become informed about issues, procedures, and its rightful role or responsibility in the matter. As Servant Leaders, Parish Pastoral Councils are faithful in promoting parish unity and the mission of the parish and the larger Church.

3) A Parish Pastoral Council is Representative

To truly be a Servant Leader the Council needs to be a representative body rather than a body of representatives. Because they are not one-issue people, Council members listen with openness to parishioners and faithfully present their expressed concerns, ideas and questions at the Council meeting. In this way council members bring a fuller picture of the community to the Council table, representing all facets of the parish and serving the parish well.

4) A Parish Pastoral Council is Pastoral

Through Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, all are called to serve the people of God. The ministries of Word, Worship, Community and Service are basic to best pastoral practices at the service of the community. Parish Pastoral Councils strive to find the most effective resources and methods to serve the people of the parish as they fulfill the mission of the Church in this time and place.



5) A Parish Pastoral Council is Discerning

Parish Pastoral Councils represent faith communities, not public businesses. Rather than Robert's Rules of Order, the Parish Pastoral Council makes recommendations in an atmosphere of prayer, respectful discussion and openness to the Holy Spirit. Guided by a firm, faith-oriented value system, the Council works to determine how the mission of the Church is best accomplished in its own community, molding its actions and decisions in response to that mission. The Council makes decisions not from an authority stance, but from one of service. (See appendix E and Appendix F for resources on discernment.)

6) A Parish Pastoral Council is Prophetic

The Council needs 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, watchfulness, imagination and a desire to hear the prophetic voice of the Holy Spirit calling for 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 and the needs of the Church.

7) A Parish Pastoral Council is Empowering

Every parish member has a contribution to make for the good of all. The Parish Pastoral Council makes every effort to get to know parishioners' hopes and talents. Councils serve the parish by inviting parishioners to share their expertise both to deepen the faith of the individual, and to strengthen the parish and the broader community. Connecting parishioners' talents with community needs enables them to live out the mission of the Church in their daily lives.

8) A Parish Pastoral Council is Collaborative

The Parish Pastoral Council 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 present and future will stretch limited resources. Collaboration is an effective way to be good stewards of available human and financial resources.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- 1) What aspect of Servant Leadership do you think will have the greatest impact on the parish and help it realize more fully that it exists to spread the Good News of the Gospel?
- 2) How can we support each other to be Servant Leaders?
- 3) On our journey into Servant Leadership what challenges might come our way? How might we deal with them? Review the benchmarks of Parish Pastoral Councils who live out Servant Leadership. Which of the characteristics are most alive in your Council at this point in time?
- 4) Name one characteristic that you think you might want to strengthen as a Council. How might you go about doing that?



NOTES—SIGNIFICANT DISCUSSIONS, IDEAS AND STRATEGIES

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SECTION THREE: FRAMEWORK...Pastoral and Canonical Perspective

This section contains:

- A. Introduction
- B. A description of the Parish Council Guidelines which are normative for the Diocese of Scranton and may be adjusted according to local needs

Purpose of this Section:

- To provide the basic framework for Parish Pastoral Councils in the Diocese from both a pastoral and canonical perspective.
- To assist pastors, Council members and parishioners to understand the general purpose, parameters and characteristics of a Parish Pastoral Council.



GUIDELINES FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS

A. Introduction

Every diocese develops its own guidelines or norms for Parish Pastoral Councils in line with Church teaching, Canon Law and the vision the bishop has for sharing his “shepherding” role with his pastors, clergy, religious and lay leaders.

Bishop Bambera in exercising a collaborative Servant Leadership style has called for reinvigorated Parish Pastoral Councils, ones which reflect the Servant Leadership of Jesus Christ. The Bishop states that, “the future of the diocese lies in the renewal of parish life, and our hope lies in the generous Servant Leadership of priests, religious, and laity who, wounded but loved, freely give themselves to Christ’s good news mission of gathering those scattered from the love of God and the Church.” The Bishop goes on to remind us that “the mystery of parish life lies in generous self-giving, or Servant Leadership, in the way of Jesus.”

The following material describes in a nutshell the Servant Leadership work of Parish Pastoral Councils. It outlines the parameters of the Council and its responsibilities. The other sections of the book provide resources for Councils to use as effective spiritual leadership bodies.

B. What are The Parish Pastoral Councils Guidelines?

The *Code of Canon Law* calls for Parish Pastoral Councils in a particular diocese to be “governed by norms established by the diocesan bishop” (c536.2). The Guidelines Bishop Bambera has established regarding Parish Pastoral Councils call for the Councils to be prime examples of Servant Leadership.

As the Bishop states in his pastoral, *“Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered,”* “I want to commend a framework of Servant Leadership to guide our diocesan administration and parishes. It (Servant Leadership) begins with a basic distinction between a leader who serves and a servant who leads. We must be *servants who lead*. Servant Leadership begins with the natural feeling, really the love of Christ within, which summons one to want to bring others to know, love, and serve God. Serving, one comes to realize that service to God and neighbor is also an act of leadership that differs in kind and orientation from what normally counts as leadership. Christian disciples lead as a result of faith, not because of personal success or institutional commitment. Christian disciples make sure that the neighbor’s needs - someone poor and marginalized, a family member, a friend, a stranger, an immigrant, an enemy - are being served. The Servant Leader, as Pope Benedict XVI said in *Deus Caritas Est*, ‘seeing with the eyes of Christ ... can give to others much more than their outward necessities: I can give them the look of love which they crave.’” (#18)



It is in light of the Servant Leadership model and the pastoral that these eight Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines are presented. They describe what is normative for Parish Pastoral Councils in the Diocese of Scranton and may be adapted to local parish needs.

1) In the Diocese of Scranton, a Parish Pastoral Council is to be established and operative in every parish to serve and unite laity, religious and clergy in community prayer, Servant Leadership, service and pastoral action.



2) The Parish Pastoral Council, a body of parishioner-representatives serves in a consultative role to the pastor. As such, it exists as a wisdom group commissioned to discern, proclaim, and manifest the presence and action of the Spirit within the parish community. (c536.1,2)

3) In the Second Vatican Council's spirit of shared responsibility, the Parish Pastoral Council examines and considers all that relates to pastoral work, and proposes practical ideas to the pastor concerning the on-going life and mission of the parish. The Parish Pastoral Council is to be in communication with and sensitive to the needs and concerns of parish

members and parish staff. In so doing, it exercises Servant Leadership.

4) The Parish Pastoral Council:

- Develops and focuses on a mission that embraces the total scope of parish life: Ministry of the Word, Worship, Community and Service encompassed by evangelization and interconnected by Sunday Eucharist and Servant Leadership.
- Engages in continuous pastoral planning that takes into consideration the needs of the parish, cluster, community, diocese and the world. The Parish Pastoral Council is "called to Servant Leadership that helps to transform our hurting world through compassion, solidarity, justice and love."
- Formulates policy after prayerful study and dialogue with the pastor concerning parish pastoral matters. The pastor's presence and active participation in the dialogue is a necessary element in the process of policy formation. The Parish Pastoral Council's policy decisions are to be consistent with faith and morals, civil and church law, and diocesan policy. In this way, the Parish Pastoral Council reflects the solidarity of the parish with both the diocesan and the universal church.
- Embodies the following characteristics as it exercises Servant Leadership: prayerfulness, faithfulness, broad representation, good pastoral practice, discernment, prophetic courage and imagination, empowerment and collaboration.

5) The pastor of the parish, as its spiritual leader and as representative of the bishop in the parish, is the *ex-officio* member of the Parish Pastoral Council and participates fully with



all other members in the deliberations of the Parish Pastoral Council including parochial vicars and permanent deacons. All council members work together to discern what is best for the parish in light of the Gospel and the Church's teaching, as they listen to what the Spirit is saying to them as the People of God.

- 6) The *Code of Canon Law* says that the pastor is to preside at the Parish Pastoral Council. In the Diocese of Scranton, the pastor presides by:
- a.) being in attendance at all Parish Pastoral Council meetings;
 - b.) making certain that the scope of the Council's concerns reflects the entire mission of the Church and is seen in light of the model of Servant Leadership;
 - c.) enabling the Parish Pastoral Council to build a community of faith and an atmosphere of trust among council members;
 - d.) making sure the Parish Pastoral Council has adequate training;
 - e.) assisting in formulating the Parish Pastoral Council agenda;
 - f.) sharing in the dialogue that leads to the formulation of suggested policy;
 - g.) serving as chief servant leader and administrative officer of the parish;
 - h.) supporting policies formulated by the Parish Pastoral Council.

In the most unlikely situation, where reconsideration has failed to resolve an impasse between the Council and Pastor, an appeal to the Office of the Bishop or one appointed by him for clarification or arbitration can be made. Any decision resulting from such an appeal shall be final. In the meantime, the effect of the action shall remain suspended.

- 7) All Parish Pastoral Council members are to be in full communion with the Catholic Church as outlined in the *Code of Canon Law* (c.205), namely, "those who are joined with Christ in its visible structure, by the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments, and ecclesial governance."
- 8) Parish Pastoral Councils will be assisted by the Office for Parish Life and Evangelization to develop their own Parish Pastoral Council constitution and bylaws. This will help the Council function well by providing guidance on such things as the selection of officers, role descriptions, selection and the rotation of members, etc. To help the Council establish and meet its goals four committees are recommended: Ministry of the Word, Ministry of Worship, Ministry of Community and Ministry of Service.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. After reviewing the eight Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines which three do you think are most significant? Why
2. Which ones do you think might be challenging to implement? Why?
3. What is the greatest hope you have for your Council?



NOTES—*SIGNIFICANT DISCUSSIONS, IDEAS AND STRATEGIES*

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SECTION FOUR: MINISTRY...Membership and Structure

This section contains:

- A. Introduction

- B. Roles and responsibilities of:
 1. Pastor
 2. General Members
 - a. How are General Members selected?
 3. Chair and Secretary
 - a. How do we select Officers for Parish Pastoral Council?
 4. Commissions/ Committees
 - a. Ministry of Word
 - b. Ministry of Worship
 - c. Ministry of Community
 - d. Ministry of Service
 5. Finance Council for each Parish

- C. Relationships
 1. Forming a New Parish Pastoral Council—Consolidation of Parishes
 2. Council Collaboration in Linkages
 3. Council Collaboration in the Region/Deanery
 4. Parish Pastoral Council and Diocesan Pastoral Council

Purpose of this Section

- To provide resources for Parish Pastoral Councils regarding function, roles and responsibilities
- To describe the function of four possible commissions/committees of the council in light of the pastoral, *“Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered.”*



A. Introduction

A parish is defined as “a certain community of the Christian faithful, stably constituted in a particular church whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor as its own proper pastor under the authority of the diocesan bishop.” (*Canon Law 515.1*)

The parish as a community is identifiable by the members who compose it. That is, there should not be so much fluidity in membership that the parish community cannot be identified. The Christian faithful, incorporated in Christ through Baptism, are the “People of God.” Each parish community has its own unique identity since it is composed of the people who constitute it.

The parish is *stably constituted* means that the parish communities are not formed and then quickly dissolved. The community’s stability is one of its hallmarks as parish. Only the diocesan bishop has the authority to establish, dissolve, or notably alter parishes, and he does so only after consulting with the presbyteral council (*c. 515 §2*). This provision further guarantees that parishes will retain a sense of identity and stability. They are not merely self-forming and self-dissolving groups.

Membership in a parish guarantees an individual that the community, through the ministry of the pastor and others, will attend to his/her pastoral needs.

The parish is part of the larger Church through its connection with a particular Church known as a diocese and its bishop. Hence, the description of the parish includes the fact that the parish exists within a diocese “in which the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church of Christ is truly present and operative” (*c. 369*). Parishioners are to be conscious not only of their parish communion, but also of the fact that they are members of both the diocese and the universal Church (*c. 529*).

The pastoral care of the parish community is “entrusted” to a pastor who acts as its shepherd and servant leader. The diocesan bishop is authorized to name a pastor.

Within the parish community the pastor carries out the duties of teaching, sanctifying, and governing as a servant leader in cooperation with other priests and/or deacons assigned to the parish and with the assistance of lay members of the community (*c. 519*). The pastoral care of the parish includes preaching and teaching the Word of God, catechetical formation and Catholic education, promoting social justice and evangelization. Pastoral care also includes visiting and caring for parish members, especially the sick, dying and those in special need (*cc. 528-529*).

The Parish Pastoral Council is a ministry to the parish and beyond. It models Servant Leadership. Pastoral Councils work well when there is a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all the members. Many Parish Pastoral Councils will find it helpful to share some of their responsibilities with commissions or committees who assist in accomplishing many of the goals set by the Council.

It is also important to note that Councils while structured to serve a particular parish do not do this in isolation from other Pastoral Councils. In newly consolidated parishes the new Council



needs to be truly representative of all the parishes which consolidated to form the new parish. Models of how Councils from linked parishes can work together are described below. It is helpful for Councils or appropriate committees from partnership parishes or in deaneries or regions to undertake some joint planning efforts, if the results lead to a better conservation of resources and/or enhanced ministry.

A Diocesan Pastoral Council and or regional Pastoral Council meetings which are planned for the future will further engage parish leadership to enhance parish life and spiritual growth beyond an individual parish.

(Please note a sample Constitution and Bylaws can be found in Appendix C)

B. Roles and Responsibilities

1) The Pastors

As noted above the pastor of the parish, as its spiritual leader and as representative of the bishop in the parish, is an *ex-officio* member of the Parish Pastoral Council and participates fully with all other members in the deliberations of the Parish Pastoral Council including parochial vicars and permanent deacons.

2) General Members

A Parish Pastoral Council is a consultative body made up of a group of people, usually 10 or 12 persons, chosen from and by the parish community, who together with the parish pastor guide and determine the direction of the parish. The Council oversees its parish's pastoral activity and temporal affairs as the community attempts to fulfill the mission of the Church. The Parish Pastoral Council exists as a wisdom Servant Leadership group commissioned to discern, proclaim, and make visible the presence and action of the Spirit within the community. By its very nature it is to provide counsel. Parochial Vicars and parish Permanent Deacons are *ex-officio* members and participate fully with all other general members.

The *Code of Canon Law* states that a Parish Pastoral Council is governed by the norms determined by the diocesan bishop. The Guidelines established by Bishop Bambera are found in Section II.

In summary the Parish Pastoral Council in collaboration with the pastor:

- a. acts as a servant leader in developing and maintaining the parish mission and by continuously examining the various aspects of the life of the parish in light of the mission and *"Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered."*
- b. engages in a continuous process of pastoral planning, including assessing parish/cluster needs, determining priorities and options to meet those needs with available resources, and evaluating programs and services designed to meet needs
- c. dialogues with Parish Pastoral Councils within the cluster to discern how to be good stewards of human and financial resources
- d. and after prayerful study and discussion suggests policy to carry out the parish mission



a) How are General Members selected to be on the Council?

Nomination Process

Many parishes have a nomination process where parishioners may self nominate or be nominated by other parishioners. Generally the terms are three years. If you are starting a new Council, then the terms need to be staggered so the whole Council does not turn over at the same time. Normally the eligibility requirements are that the nominee be a baptized Catholic, at least 18 years old, an active member of the parish and not an employee of the parish. Some parishes choose to have a youth representative who may be under 18 years old. See the Appendix for a sample nomination form.

Selection Processes

Option one Election Process: the parish is given a profile of each candidate and the reason each person was nominated. The parish votes and the candidates with the most votes are elected to the Council.

Option two Discernment Process: nominations are called for similar to what is described above or an information meeting is held for those interested in being candidates or those who are being asked to considered being on the Parish Pastoral Council. At the initial meeting the pastor and some current Council members describe what the Council does and what qualities are needed to be a servant leader Council member. Candidates are invited to pray about their “fit,” gifts and talents for the positions, etc. If they feel that this is a Servant Leadership position they are called to, they are invited to a discernment meeting. At that meeting in the context of prayer, the needs of the parish as well as the gifts and talents, hopes and dreams, fears and concerns of all candidates are shared among all present. In the discernment process, the selection of new Council members takes place.

Discernment is the recommended process as it builds upon consciously relying on the prayerful presence of the Spirit, the sharing of candidates’ gifts and talents and the affirmation of everyone’s generosity with their gifts, whether they are chosen or not. This method tends to diminish the “winner-loser” syndrome as all are recognized for their generosity as well their skills and abilities. Often those not discerned to be on the Council, are invited to serve on committees or to volunteer to use their skills to help the parish in other ways. It is helpful to have an outside facilitator trained in the discernment process to oversee this method of selection. (See Appendix F for more information on discerning Parish Pastoral Council members.)

3) Parish Pastoral Council Chair and Secretary

The **Chair** of the Parish Pastoral Council performs the following role:

- a. has a good understanding of the role of the Council as a spiritual Servant Leadership body that with the pastor guides the parish to fulfill its mission
- b. chairs all meetings of the Council
- c. prepares agendas in consultation with the pastor and secretary
- d. ensures that on-going formation is provided to the Council and committees
- e. ensures that a chair person and a secretary is in place for all the major committees and subcommittees which are accountable to the Council.



- f. provides opportunities on a regular basis for the council to assess its function and service to the parish
- g. Calendars meetings for the year and times when the major committees of the parish will be in dialogue with the Council and share the results of their work *

The **Secretary** of the Parish Pastoral Council performs the following role

- a. oversees the accurate recording of the minutes of each meeting and ensures that the agendas and minutes are distributed to the Council in a timely fashion.
- b. provides a condensed report of the meeting for publication in the parish bulletin
- c. keeps accurate contact information on each Council member and distributes it to all Council members.
- d. reports to the Council all communication it has received and handles communication in the name of the Council.

*It should be noted that if there is a vice-chair, that person's major job is to take over the responsibilities of the chair, if the chair is absent. The vice chair also contributes to setting the agenda along with the pastor, chair and secretary.

a) How do we select officers for the Parish Pastoral Council?

As noted above two common methods are used to select the chair* and the secretary of the Council—voting and discernment. Voting has merits, but tends to create winners and losers. The second method is a prayerful discernment process which begins with gifts and talents and what God is calling people to and tries to match those with the needed Council roles.

*Some parishes also may decide to have a vice-chair of the Council

4) Commissions/Committees

Commissions or committees (either term can be used) of the Parish Pastoral Council carry out a wide variety of tasks. They study, pray and act as Servant Leaders to make the parish a center through which its members carry out its mission. Committees develop strategies to implement parish policies and goals in their area of mission and provide continuous opportunities for people to grow spiritually through active participation in parish life.

The word "committee" comes from the French word, comité meaning "to entrust." Although the Parish Pastoral Council sets direction and develop/approves an overall plan for the parish, the actual work of carrying out those plans is often entrusted to committees and staff. In other words, committees are working bodies of the Pastoral Council. Committees along with staff implement plans and develop procedures for their specific area of responsibility according to the priorities and goals of the Parish Pastoral Council.

The Parish Pastoral Council holds each committee accountable not only for accomplishing its objectives, but also for doing so in the context of the parish mission, in light of *"Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered,"* and within the boundaries defined by parish policy. Normally, at least one Parish Pastoral Council member is appointed to act as a liaison between the committee and the Parish Pastoral Council. The committee structure provides great



opportunities for the laity in the parish to use their gifts and talents to further the parish and diocesan mission.

The material which follows suggests the formation of commissions or committees based on the mission of the Diocese as articulated well by Bishop Bambera in *“Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered.”* Both Pastoral Councils and committees are to assist in “making our parish life new by discovering together how to proclaim the gospel and live Eucharistic communion in a way that our brothers and sisters in the region of our diocese can comprehend and be inspired.” When the Bishop issues his call to Servant Leadership around the ministries of Word, Worship, Community and Service, he puts it in the context of urgency—“to seize this moment to make the gospel new.”



Based on the Bishop’s pastoral, *“Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered,”* the ministries of the parish can be structured around **Word, Worship, Community and Service** and implemented by Servant Leadership.

The ministry of the **Word** includes education, formation and lifelong catechesis. It encompasses evangelization, Catholic School ministry, youth and young adult ministry, as well as forms of religious education for all ages.

The ministry of **Worship** focuses on the liturgy, the source and summit of Christian life, and the devotional life of the parish.

Community reflects the mission of Evangelization and our relationships with each other and those beyond our parish and local area. Building community in a culture that is very individualistic is challenging. Recalling that God continually identifies us to be the “People of God,” reminds us of the need to work together, to get to know one another, to “be” for each other, to truly be a community of God’s people.

Service is central to living out the Gospel. Jesus’ example of Servant Leadership is the model of leadership for all Parish Pastoral Councils. Assuring that the marginalized are cared for and empowered to live holistic lives is part of the oversight of the council. Stewardship is a part of service. It is a way of life where we give of our time, talent and treasure for the good of others. Stewardship calls us to use the resources of the world wisely. It calls for planning and challenges us to use only what we need and to create a sustainable future.

The ministry of **Evangelization** is at the heart of who we are as Catholics. It is embedded in Word, Worship, Community and Service. Evangelization is about spreading the Good News of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ “into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new: ‘Now I am making the whole of creation new’” (Rev. 21:5).” (EV #18) The Church exists to spread the Good News of Jesus



Christ. Evangelization is the lens by which we view all ministries—spreading the Gospel message.

The role of the Parish Pastoral Council is to plan for and oversee the apostolic works of the parish which fulfill the mission and ministry of the larger Church and are rooted in the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. Ongoing formation of the Council is essential. Given the rotation of members on and off the Council, orientation and continuing formation provides for ongoing growth of individual members and the Council as a whole.

The Council holds the committees accountable by:

- 1) Reviewing the regular committee reports to ensure that specific committee and group plans are integrated with long-range and short range plans for the parish.
- 2) Meets with each committee for an annual comprehensive report of goals and accomplishments, policy and resource needs, including their collaborative efforts with cluster parishes.
- 3) Suggests policy that supports the ministry of the committees.
- 4) Provides people serving on committees with regular opportunities for leadership development and training.

Committees are encouraged to relate to the Parish Pastoral Council by:

- 1) Bringing proposals and recommendations to the Council
- 2) Participating in long-range planning and evaluation of plans and programs, including cluster implementation
- 3) Following the lead of the Council by contributing to vision, mission, goal and policy statements for their own committee or group that respect the scope and limits of their area of influence.



Generally many parishes will have four committees of the Parish Pastoral Council: Committees of Ministry of the Word, Ministry of Worship, Ministry of Community and Ministry of Service. These names are the ones used in *“Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered,”* though they may not be the current names used in parishes with active commissions or committees.

The four committees dedicated to the ministries described below will serve most parishes well. However, there is flexibility regarding Council committees. Each parish may decide on a commission or committee structure that will best serve its needs. Small parishes may combine the work of the Word and Worship, for

instance, into the function of one committee. Or they may combine Service and Community into the work of one committee. Some committees while accountable to the Parish Pastoral



Council may work with similar committees in their cluster to do collaborative planning and joint programs.

- a) The **Ministry of the Word** encompasses specific evangelization efforts, catechetical processes and programming. It should be noted that while evangelization—the proclamation of the Good News to all humanity—is the work of all ministry, there are times when special efforts need to be placed on reenergizing the community so that it focuses on spreading the Gospel message. In some cases parishes may have a subcommittee in this area that focuses on evangelization.

Ministries which come under the Ministry of the Word include Catholic schools, family and life-long catechetics, youth and young adult ministry. The Role of the Ministry of the Word committee is to oversee the ministry area to ensure that the needs of the parishioners are being met in terms of various aspects of faith formation and that there is adequate training for those who minister in this area. This parish committee may also do some planning and implementation of programs with other parish cluster committees.

It is very important that the Ministry of the Word committee studies the pastoral, *“Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered,”* and takes seriously the practical considerations in the Bishop’s letter. They need to discern which ideas would be appropriate for their parish? Which could be adapted? What are some new ideas to strengthen the Ministry of the Word? What ideas can be incorporated into our pastoral plan?

- b) The **Ministry of Worship** focuses on the prayer and worship life of the parish. The Ministry of Worship committee oversees the practice and activities related to celebrating the mysteries of our faith in community prayer and worship. The committee ensures that devotional practices are available and expedited with dignity and reverence. The committee ensures that adequate on-going training is available for all liturgical ministers. This may be done in collaboration with Worship Committees in the cluster.

It is very important that the Worship committee study the pastoral, *“Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered,”* and take seriously the practical considerations in the Bishop’s letter. It needs to discern which ideas would be appropriate for their parish? Which could be adapted? What are some new ideas to strengthen the Ministry of the Worship? What ideas can be incorporated into their pastoral plan?

- c) The **Ministry of Community** committee may work with all the other committees to build up or enhance the community of the parish through special evangelization efforts. Community is the human dynamic upon which the mission and ministry of the parish happens. It is in community that the mission takes on life and becomes real. The Committee may take on specific community enhancing activities such as “donut Sunday” or provide meals after funerals or meals as part of family catechetical programs. The group may oversee the parish festival or picnic, or work on cluster social activities. The committee may also work with various groups to provide social activities in the parish and between parishes. Having permanent name cards for all parishioners is another simple activity that helps strengthen



community. Another important activity of the Community Committee is communication between all aspects of the parish. For instance, if the youth are going on a mission trip, this committee makes sure the parish knows about it, supports the young people with prayer and perhaps helps them “sell shares” to finance their trip.

It is very important that the Community committee study the pastoral, “*Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered*,” and take seriously the practical considerations in the Bishop’s letter. It needs to discern which ideas would be appropriate for their parish? Which could be adapted? What are some new ideas to strengthen their parish community? What ideas can be incorporated into their pastoral plan?

- d) The **Ministry of Service** committee assists in coordinating the practices and activities related to serving those in need, making justice a lived value in the parish. The committee may collaborate with other Ministry of Service committees in the cluster, to make a greater impact and maximize its human and financial resources. For instance, one parish could “house” a food pantry that the others contribute to and help staff it, etc.

The Service area often has subcommittees related to specific social justice issues and stewardship. One common one is “Buildings and Grounds.” This subcommittee assists the pastor in overseeing the plant, both buildings and grounds, in the light of good stewardship of resources and both long and short term maintenance or enhancement issues.

Another typical subcommittee is “Planning.” While it is the function of the whole Council to plan, given both the need for parish planning and planning within the cluster, it is helpful to have a small subcommittee that oversees all aspects of planning and coordinates the planning efforts of the other committees, if desired.

Another subcommittee some parishes may choose to have is one that deals with stewardship. This subcommittee supports stewardship as a way of life and takes the initiative to ensure formation in a comprehensive understanding of and action toward living out the principles of good stewardship for all parishioners. This is another way the Community Committee interacts with all the other committees.

The Bishop’s Pastoral “*Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered*” highlights the connection between Servant Leadership, social justice, stewardship and service. It highlights how one parish is using former school buildings to do remarkable work serving health care needs. It is very important that the Service committee study the pastoral, and take seriously the practical considerations in it. It needs to discern which ideas would be appropriate for the parish, given its uniqueness. Which could be adapted? What are some new ideas to strengthen the Ministry of the Service? What ideas can be incorporated into their pastoral plan?

Ad hoc Committees are temporary committees formed to complete a specific task within an established time frame. They disband when the task is finished. For instance, the Council may form an *ad hoc* committee to plan for the 100th anniversary of the parish, or the renovation of the Church or a capital campaign.



The above descriptions are meant to broadly outline some possibilities for committees and subcommittees. They are not meant to say that every parish needs to have all these committees or subcommittees. The purpose of the committees and subcommittees are to help the Parish Pastoral Council oversee the mission and accomplish the goals of the parish. Committees and subcommittees are also opportunities for the gifts and talents of parishioners to be called forward as they live out their baptismal commitment. The number of committees or subcommittees is totally dictated by the needs and human resources of the parish. It is also possible that some committees and subcommittees could be joint efforts within deaneries or clusters.

(For more resources on Committees see Appendix D.)

5) Role and Responsibilities of Finance Council

The Parish Finance Committee serves as an advisory body to the pastor and the Parish Pastoral Council in the administration and stewardship of parish finances, budget, parish facilities and long-range financial development. Mandated by Canon Law Parish Finance Councils are consultative bodies.

Members of the Finance Council are appointed by the pastor on the basis of their expertise in matters related to accounting and finance, investment management, fundraising/development, budget, etc.

While the Parish Finance Council and the Parish Pastoral Council function interdependently, it is essential, however, that they communicate well with each other. In some parishes a member of the Finance Council attends Parish Pastoral Council meetings to insure continual sharing of information.

C. Relationships

1) Forming A New Parish Pastoral Council -- Consolidation Of Parishes

A new parish council represents a newly formed parish. This does not mean that former council members cannot be part of the new council. The following suggestions are offered as a way to begin a new Parish Pastoral Council.

- a.) Have representatives from each parish. If three parishes consolidate, it is wise to have three or four members of each parish. If two parishes consolidate, consider five from each parish.
- b.) Have terms staggered so that members are gradually rotated off the council and new members are rotated on to the Council.
- c.) Spend time helping the council members get to know each other for at least the first six months, so that they can function more effectively.
- d.) Study "*Wounded and Loved, Gathering the Scattered*" as a basis for developing the new parish's mission statement.

Try to get good participation of the parishioners in the process of developing the mission statement. Once you have a mission statement, you might want to begin a parish pastoral plan



with the articulation of values espoused by the new parish and a vision for the future as well as goals and objectives. All this will take time and the more parishioner participation the better. Within the first year a subgroup of the Council should begin to work on the Constitution and By-laws for the Parish Pastoral Council of the new parish.

2) Council Collaboration in Linkages

In Linkages it is acceptable for each parish to have its own Parish Pastoral Council. However, pastors entrusted with more than one parish may want to have a common Parish Pastoral Council or they may choose to conduct joint meetings of the Councils or they may choose to have the Councils meet at the same time and place, but separately. These various options both respect the individual nature of the parishes as well as attempt to conserve the pastor's time and energy and bring about more collaboration.

It needs to be noted that in a Linkage where one pastor is the pastoral leader in more than one parish, each parish must have its own Finance Council.

3) Council Collaboration in the Regional/Deanery Partnerships

It is recommended in Partnership Parishes that Parish Pastoral Councils meet jointly once or twice a year to pray and share faith, be involved in formation, evaluate collaborative projects and continue to plan for the future. Often Partnership Parishes share an annual retreat together. Committees of the Parish Pastoral Councils that are planning joint projects meet as often as needed to accomplish their goals.

4) Parish Pastoral Council and Diocesan Pastoral Council

Once a year each Parish Pastoral Council will select representatives to attend a regional meeting (North, South, East and West). At that meeting the representatives of the region will prioritize the strengths of the region in terms of mission effectiveness and express three areas which need attention for the mission of the diocese and their own parish missions to be more effective. These will be presented to the bishop (and ultimately the Diocesan Pastoral Council). From those regional gatherings several people from each area will be discerned to represent the region as members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.



NOTES—SIGNIFICANT DISCUSSIONS, IDEAS AND STRATEGIES



SECTION FIVE: PROCESS...Pastoral Planning and Policy Development

This section contains:

Planning and Policy Development
Introduction

- A. Individual Parish Planning Based on the Mission of the Parish
 1. Direction Setting
 - a. Overseeing the Mission
 - b. Articulating Values
 - c. Envisioning the Future
 2. Strategic Planning around Issues and Goals
 3. Operational Planning with Objectives and Action Plans
 4. Administrative Planning
 5. Celebrating Accomplishments

- B. Cluster, Deanery or Regional Planning and Implementation
 1. Introduction
 2. What are the Criteria for Collaborative Planning?
 3. With Whom Do We Collaborate?
 4. What Might Collaborative Projects Look Like?
 5. How Do We Do Collaborative Planning Now as a Council?

- C. Policy Formation Process
 - 1) Introduction
 - 2) Process for Policy Development
 - a. Identifying the Issue
 - b. Consultation
 - c. Formulation of Drafts for Consideration by the Parish Pastoral Council
 - d. Discussion and Recommendation by the Parish Pastoral Council
 - e. Decision by Pastor
 - f. Implementation of the Policy
 - g. Evaluation

Purpose of this Section:

- To provide a road map for Parish and Collaborative Planning
- To present a procedure for Policy Formation



Introduction

This section provides resources for Parish Pastoral Councils in three areas 1) a framework for parish planning; 2) processes related to collaborative planning; 3) an adaptable policy making process.

A. Individual Parish Planning Based on the Parish Mission

The major function of the Parish Pastoral Council is pastoral planning. The goal of pastoral planning is to structure ways the parish can contribute to the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ and the Church. Pastoral Planning calls for data about the parish and parishioners and is formed by prayer and reflection. The Council needs to connect with the risen Spirit of Christ throughout the planning process. Prayer and faith sharing helps the Council begin to discern the will of God for the parish as the members come together to be about continuing the work and ministry of Jesus Christ. Imbued with prayer, faith sharing and reflection Pastoral Planning can be an effective community building process. The following outlines a five step planning process.

- 1) The first is **Directional Planning** which includes articulating the mission, values and vision of the parish.
 - a) **Mission Statements** describe why the parish exists. What is its identity and purpose? What makes the parish unique or distinctive? Mission statements are brief and “to the point.” They are easily memorized and about 30 words long.
 - b) **Value Statements** are important in the planning process because they provide guiding principles of conduct and name what the parish stands for. These statements reflect the core values or key beliefs of the parish. They are often implicit within organizations, but are most helpful when made explicit. Values help measure the correctness of a given plan. Will living out these values help us live out our mission and live into our vision?
 - c) **A Vision Statement** describes what the parish will look like once its mission is fully realized. This is a longer statement, usually more poetic, and written in the present tense as if the vision has been accomplished. The statement expresses the hoped for results of living out a Mission.
- 2) The second step in planning is called **Strategic Planning** and deals with issues, both external and internal that effect the parish’s accomplishing its mission. It calls for setting of **goals**. Goals are specific points that the parish seeks to accomplish to live out its mission and live into its vision. Goals are stepping stones to the vision and long term in nature. They usually do not change over a five-year period.
- 3) The **third** step in the process is **Operational Planning**. It deals with **objectives** and **action steps**. Objectives help specify goals. They name steps that need to be taken to accomplish the goals. Action steps break objectives down further and point to who will do what by when and how much will it cost. Action Steps give specific, measurable, achievable responsibilities. Objectives and Action Steps and the follow up accountability help guarantee that the Pastoral Plan will not “stay on the shelf” but truly help shape the parish in its mission and ministry.



- 4) The **fourth** part of planning is the **Administrative**. It is the day to day monitoring of the activities related to the plan. In the best of all worlds paid staff's performance goals and the Council's would be related to the plan. Evaluation of the plan is on-going with particular attention being given to an annual assessment of the plan. At the end of every year objectives and action plans need to be reviewed and up-dated based on the local situation.
- 5) The **fifth** part of good pastoral planning is to **Celebrate the Accomplishments**. Recognizing and appreciating the good work and efforts of all who put the plan into action is extremely important. Public acknowledgements in the parish bulletins or newsletters as well as blessings to inaugurate new programs or processes and dinners that include both staff and volunteers are motivational and help sustain the work needed to be a vibrant parish. At the end of every year, the planning begins anew.

B. Cluster or Deanery Planning

1) Introduction

As part of the Bishop Martino's Directives flowing from *Called to Holiness and Mission* every parish was part of a cluster and in all cases the cluster was involved in consolidation, linkage or partnerships with other parishes. Both the General and Particular Directives entailed doing collaborative planning. Implementation Teams were formed and presented their collaborative plans and the evaluation of their progress to the Diocesan Implementation Commission for review. The Commission found many outstanding examples of collaborative planning. This was an important step in the implementation of *Called to Holiness and Mission*.

As the consolidations happened and the parishes became more comfortable in their linkages and partnerships Bishop Bambara felt it was time to focus on the reinvigoration of Parish Pastoral Councils and their role in parish planning, as well as collaborative planning with other parishes. What follows is meant to help clarify the Parish Pastoral Council's role, especially during this transition period.

2) What are the Criteria for Collaborative Planning?

There are two very significant criteria for collaborative planning:

- a) collaborating will strengthen and enhance the quality of our ministerial programs
- b) collaborating will avoid unnecessary duplication of services, serve unmet needs and model good stewardship of human and financial resources

In examining the Directives and moving forward with both implementation and evaluation of collaborative efforts these two criteria can be applied. The purpose of collaboration is never "just to work together." Programs need to be stronger because "we are working together" or new groups are being served and resources are being used in light of good stewardship.

3) With whom do we collaborate?

The Directives name certain parishes to be linked or in partnership. This is a good starting point, but it does not prevent collaboration happening beyond the partnership or linkage. Sometimes it is wise to collaborate at a Deanery or even a regional level in focusing on certain ministry areas. Sometimes there is wisdom to work on joint projects beyond a geographic area



or even beyond the diocese, if needs or opportunities present themselves that are within the mission of the parish. It needs to be pointed out that collaboration is not limited to Catholic parishes. Some excellent programs happen in collaboration with other Christian or religious groups. Others happen with other community agencies, such as health or social service agencies. What is important is that the collaboration is related to the living out the mission of the parish and in so doing it enriches service and reflects good use of resources.

It also needs to be recognized that some ministries are much more effective done by the parish and not in collaboration with anyone. These might include infant baptismal preparation programs or First Communion programs, visiting the elderly, etc.

4) What might collaborative projects look like?

Some examples of collaborative projects include hiring a youth minister or a parish nurse to work in a cluster of parishes; bringing youth groups together to go on a mission trip; training catechists or liturgical ministers across the cluster; developing common service projects such as food pantries, health care services, respect life activities, advocacy for the underrepresented; designing and implementing a wide variety of adult formation activities. A regional collaborative effort might include working on a project of welcoming inactive Catholics back to full participation in the Church.

5) How do we do collaborative planning now as a Council?

With the appropriate support of pastors, the individual Parish Pastoral Councils should come together to assess the needs of a given partnership, linkage and or region, to address common issues, or to plan together for future pastoral initiatives. Care should be taken to cultivate a spirit of common purpose, mutuality and shared responsibility in the parish involved while maintain each parish's identity. Because working towards collaboration with other parishes is such an important part of pastoral planning, a process with additional support and resources will be made available in the near future.

During the transition from Implementation Teams being responsible for cluster planning to Parish Pastoral Councils having the oversight of planning, we encourage representatives from each parish to continue the dialogue. Their role is to see that collaborative planning happens where and when it meets the criteria set above—enhanced ministry and good stewardship of resources. They do not do the planning themselves. They see that it gets done and support it in any way they can.

As Councils mature in their understanding of themselves and their role in planning, they might ask each committee of the parish as it plans to ask the question for each project or program: **Based on the criteria is it better to do this program or project in collaboration with another parish or community agency rather than alone?** If it is looks like it is better because of enhanced programming or the conservation of resources to work together on a program, then the Council supports this as a way to live out their mission.

One important thing to remember is the criteria is not self-serving. In other words a large parish with many resources may be in a cluster with a much smaller parish with fewer resources. The larger parish initially may not appreciate the fact that its programs can be



enhanced by working with the smaller parish. However, given a spirit of cooperation and sharing and good stewardship, by collaborating they will soon learn and see the benefits of meeting new people, getting new ideas and being enriched by collaboration.

The method of collaborative planning is very similar to the steps outlined above in part B where parish pastoral planning is outlined. A summary follows here.

- 1) Examine the project or program in light of each parish's mission statement to discern a good fit.
- 2) Articulate the values which are bringing the group together on this particular venture
- 3) Have the end in mind—a vision—of the project might look like and what the results might be
- 4) Express goals and objectives—in other words what needs to happen to achieve the vision
- 5) Develop Action Steps—who will do what by when—to achieve the goals and objectives
- 6) Celebrate progress along the way!

The Diocese will provide new planning forms for the annual review of parish life including collaborative efforts among parishes in a specific area, region and or deanery.

C. Policy Formation Process

1) Introduction

A parish policy is a statement of direction, a guide for action that ensures that the acts of people in a particular parish are consistent with the Gospel values, the teachings of the Church, the policies of the diocese and the values of the parish. In its Servant Leadership role, Councils establish wise policies to help the parish achieve its mission.

A policy is not a rule, a regulation, or a statement of procedure. It is a directive about the scope and limits of the parish's actions. Policies are narrow enough to give clear guidance but broad enough to leave room for the discretionary action of those who must carry the policy out. In the implementation of a policy, guidelines and procedures often need to be established. However, the role of the Council is the formation of policy, not the designing of rules and procedures on how it will be implemented. Generally that is the prerogative of the pastor and staff.

Policies can assist parishes in the following ways:

- help parishes reach their goals
- state what will be done without stating how it is to be accomplished
- ensure that parish groups, committees and staff will have the resources and tools they need to accomplish the work of the parish
- often make the difference between just talking about what "we're going to do" and actually doing it consistently and well

Policies need to be written or an old policy may need to be revised when:

- there are questions about accountability



- people seem confused about a parish issue, practice or decision
- people seem to be using the current policies as permission to do things that are no longer consistent with the mission or diocesan policy

For example: A Parish Pastoral Council sees a need for being a more welcoming faith community in a changing neighborhood or in a newly consolidated parish may recommend policies that:

- require the annual budget to include funds for “welcoming” programs and projects
- require committees to actively recruit new members each year
- require regularly inviting non-member neighbors to parish events
- encourage collaboration with other parishes or community groups for projects or programs

EXAMPLES OF PARISH POLICIES	
PARISH POLICIES DEVELOPED BY THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL	PARISH MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES
Funds are set aside annually for “welcoming” programs and projects	In the 2012 budget \$2,000 is available to support “welcoming: events Four events are planned for 2012. (Finance Council and Evangelization Committee)
Parish youth athletic programs are open to all youth with a parent who is a registered member of the parish (This is an important policy for a parish that has a Catholic School and leagues attached to the school)	Public school student who are members of the parish will be actively recruited to be part of the parish teams in August each year. Teams composed of students ages 5-12 will be assigned practice times ending before 9:00 p.m. (Athletic committee)
Parish budget will designate 5% of the annual income for donation to people in need.	During a calendar year monies will be donated to agencies that meet the following criteria: A, B, C
Couples who expect to be married in the parish must be members of the parish at least six months before the wedding and complete marriage preparation processes.	Couples must complete the pre-marriage inventory and meet with sponsoring couples as part of the preparation. Couples must meet with the pastor at least 3 months before the scheduled wedding to be interviewed and complete the necessary preparation.



2) Process for Policy Development

a) Identifying the Issue

Someone sees a need for a policy and brings it to the attention of the Parish Pastoral Council. Council refers the policy development task to an appropriate committee, group or staff. Example: Parish facilities used by non-parish groups

b) Consultation

The appropriate committee or group or staff gathers information about the issue or need and its impact on the parish. Insurance issues, maintenance issues and “non-profit, for profit” groups are considered as well as use by other parishes, the Catholic High School and the local Catholic hospital.

c) Formulation of Drafts for Consideration by the Parish Pastoral Council

Example:

Parish facilities may be reserved for use by groups whose mission is consistent with the mission of our parish. Non-parish groups will be assigned space that has not been previously assigned to parish groups. Parish groups are given priority.

Non-parish groups must show a “certificate of insurance” before a reservation is accepted and confirmed. Fees for use of the space will be assessed on a sliding scale based on the ability to pay as determined by the parish business administrator. Groups using parish facilities are responsible for any damages incurred.

d) Discussion and Recommendation by the Parish Pastoral Council

After prayer and discussion, and if needed, more information, the Council deliberates about the pros and cons of the policy. After thorough discernment and thorough consensus the Parish Pastoral Council ultimately makes a recommendation to the Pastor. The recommendation could be not to do a policy at this time.

e) Decision by Pastor

It is assumed that the pastor has been part of the process and contributed to the discussion. Because of his involvement he knows the thinking and wisdom of the Council. After his own reflection and any further consultation he feels that is necessary he accepts the recommendation, amends it or rejects it. If he amends or rejects it, he discusses his reasons with the Council.

f) Implement the policy

Once the policy has been approved by the pastor it is implemented by parish staff or committees, depending on the nature of the policy.

Council, committees, staff and parish groups are responsible for supporting the policy, communicating it to others and ensuring that the policy is lived out.

g) Evaluation

The Council monitors the effectiveness of the policy and its impact.



SECTION SIX: BASICS...Necessary Tools and Spirituality

This section contains:

Introduction

- A. Leading through Effective Practices
 - 1. Well Run Meetings
 - 2. Effective Communication

- B. Decision Making Processes
 - 1. Introduction
 - 2. Discernment
 - 3. Consensus Decision Making

- C. Prayer

Purpose of this Section:

- To outline a way to run an effective meeting and be in good communication with parishioners and the community
- To give frameworks for making decisions in light of servant leadership
- To provide a model for prayer and faith sharing



A. Leading Through Effective Practices

While many Councils are eager to get into their responsibilities of enabling the mission of the parish through planning and policy making, one of the first things that will help them do that is to have effective well organized meetings. If Councils waste a lot of time because their meetings are not well executed, it is hard to get energized to be servant leaders. The chair of the Council serves the group well by facilitating well organized meetings rooted in prayer. The secretary contributes to the Council work by taking and distributing focused minutes.

Decision making sometimes presents a quandary for Parish Pastoral Councils. It is easy to vote on things. Often that tends to create “winners and losers,” and sometimes decisions are made without the depth of knowledge or discussion needed to make wise choices. Two other ways to make decisions, which are related, discernment and consensus building, are processes which allow for in-depth choices to be made. Discernment is rooted in prayer, especially prayer to the Holy Spirit for guidance. If the decisions needed are very significant, such as creating a pastoral plan, the discernment begins with involving parishioners. When decisions are important, but have less of an impact, the Council enters into a discernment process where the issue is looked at from many angles, where implications are explored, where the impact of the decision on certain groups is analyzed, etc. and in the midst of prayer discerns what God is calling the parish to. Consensus comes at the end of discernment and is related to getting buy in from everyone at the minimum level of “I can live with whatever the resolution of an issue is.” As noted throughout this guide prayer and a prayer-filled life empower the Council to be effective servant Leaders. It is through prayer that God speaks to us and the Spirit guides us.

1) Well run meetings

Unlike business or civic groups, when the Parish Pastoral Council meets, they gather as representatives of a faith community. The focus of the Council’s work is the mission of the parish. The manner with which the Council goes about its task serves to model unity in Christ. Every Council meeting, in light of its call to Servant Leadership, becomes an opportunity to proclaim the Word, promote and enhance Worship, build and strengthen Community, and Serve those in need through effective stewardship. The Council exercises its authority as a consultative and policy-making body when it is in session with the pastor present. During the meeting councilors offer the pastor their practical insights, collective wisdom and apply gospel values as it plans and proposes policy to address current issues of pastoral importance.

Council meetings are effective when...

1. There is a well-thought-out agenda, clarity about what topics are slated for information sharing, for discussion or for decision-making; and which items relate to planning, or policy-development.
Who: Pastor and council officers
When: 10-7 days before the meeting
2. Prayer and faith-sharing set the tone and help the group to focus on key values.
What: See Appendix for sample agenda, sample prayer service and sample planning calendar.



3. Members come to the meeting prepared to share their faith, insights and wisdom; open to the ideas of others; ready to explore a variety of options, when needed, and find a solution or response that will support the common good and further the parish mission.

Who: Secretary

When: Seven days before meeting

What: Send agenda and other material to councilors

Who: Chairperson

When: Before the meeting has taken time to thoroughly go over the agenda; has invited someone to lead prayer; ensures that the room is properly set up and that refreshments are available; has reflected on issues that may be difficult to deal with and has strategies to use as needed.

Who: Members

When: Before the meeting

What: Review the agenda; prepare for prayer; read pertinent materials; consider ideas to share regarding issues for discussion, decision, policy. Bring pertinent available information to the table. Pray for guidance of the Spirit.

4. Discussions are carried out in a respectful, inclusive, prayerful manner.
5. Decisions made through consensus are not assumed but reaffirmed by each member present, including the pastor.
6. Members follow-up on commitments between meetings.

Running effective Parish Pastoral Council meetings enables the Council to focus on the important issues involved in Servant Leadership. See Appendix B for more ideas about running a successful meeting and taking minutes.

2) Effective Communication

One hallmark of an excellent Parish Pastoral Council is its ability to provide comprehensive and on-going communication.

The steps to healthy and effective communication include the following:

1. Ensure that an executive summary of the minutes (or the full minutes) are widely distributed ideally in the parish bulletin and on the parish website.
2. Personally contact committee chairs when issues come up which may affect them or when requests are made of them.
3. Follow up the personal contacts with a written notification or request. If there is a request, the "due date" is noted as well as the person(s) to contact with questions or issues.
4. Ensure that staff is aware of issues which impact them.
5. Promote the mission of the parish as part of the parish logo, on the website and/or on banners for all to see.
6. Look ahead at issues people or committees need to be made aware.
7. Create a yearly calendar and promulgate it.
8. Make sure committees know when they are to report to the Council and what the Council's expectations are for that report and meeting.



9. When issues affecting the entire parish come up plan town hall meetings for both “listening” and sharing information.
10. Plan for and implement an annual meeting where the parish at large can be aware of the fine things that are happening related to how the parish is fulfilling its mission, as well as issues the parish is currently facing or is anticipated to face in the future.

B. Decision Making Processes

1) Introduction

Two skills related to decision making contribute greatly to the success and effectiveness of Parish Pastoral Councils, discernment and consensus. Many non-profit groups use Robert's Rules of Order and voting as ways to come to decisions. Making decisions by voting often creates tensions in the group, “winners and losers” and a lack of an experience of Community. Effective Parish Pastoral Councils strive to come to agreement in the context of prayer, reflection, discussion, information and scenarios in trying to assess what the will of God is for the parish.

2) Discernment

The work of the Parish Pastoral Council begins with and is sustained by a process of discernment and assessment. Through prayer, study and listening, the pastor and the council begin to identify and prioritize the ways in which the Spirit is calling the parish is to live out its specific mission.

Discernment as a form of decision making is based on our belief that God is with us, that God completely understands us and our present issues and wants us to make free choices in the best interest of furthering the mission of the parish.

As noted above in Section IV, discernment can be used in the selection of Parish Pastoral Council members, and in making choices about officers of the Council. It can also be used in major decisions affecting the parish.

When focusing on parish issues discernment looks at pros and cons of an issue. It examines the implications of various options for the decisions. It cannot be overemphasized how important it is to root the entire process in prayer and reflection. Discernment may be supported by the use of Sacred Scripture as well as the major Church documents which helps to assure fidelity to the teachings of Christ and the Church.

In **“Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered”** Bishop Bambera has given us a good model for discerning a plan for the Diocese. In Section III he describes how he sought input for “Our Pastoral Plan.” He discerned “Our” plan by asking advice and seeking input. The voice of the people of the Diocese contributed to the Diocesan Plan based on Servant Leadership.

When looking at significant issues facing the parish it is important as part of the discernment process to obtain ideas from as many people as possible. For instance, if the Council is working on creating a new plan for the parish or refreshing one already in place, the council would be wise to engage the parishioners in this process as part of its discernment. This could occur through a series of requests for input, such as parish assemblies, focus groups or various forms



of listening sessions or town hall meetings. Surveys distributed at weekend liturgies or by mail are another means of eliciting parishioners' expressions of their hopes and dreams as well as issues which need to be addressed for the future. Online surveys have a certain appeal especially to younger people.

Given the input from parishioners the Council in its Servant Leader capacity crafts the first draft of the plan and distributes it for further review and critique from parishioners. Based on that and their own reflection they revise the plan. If appropriate, they may seek input on the revised plan. After getting as much feedback as is possible or practical, the Council discerns if this is the best plan for the parish to live out its mission. The Council is open to prophetic voices and "last minute" insights into the plan before approving it for implementation.

Discernment on smaller issues such as program thrusts can be part of the Council's regular agenda. For instance, in "**Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered**" the Bishop gives practical ideas for living out Word, Worship, Community and Service. Using these, in one ministry area at a time, to discern which of these ideas might be used or adapted for the parish or in the cluster can be an effective use of the discernment process. The creation of new ministry ideas for the parish will also emerge in the discernment process.

In summary discernment involves:

- a. Praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and openness throughout the process
- b. Consulting parishioners and/or other experts, listening to them in a sincere effort to understand their insights or points of view.
- c. Sharing conclusions at the Council table, listening to all options, analyzing them with a sincere desire to know God's will or wisdom in a particular instance.
- d. Working to achieve consensus. The goal of discernment is consensus, which, when achieved enables the Council to speak with "one voice."

(Please note there are more resources about discernment in Parish Pastoral Council in Appendix E.)

3) Consensus Decision Making

Building consensus to arrive at decisions can be used in relationship to a full discernment process as noted above or after a good discussion about a topic where there seems to be common thinking. In other words consensus building also can also be used both for weighty matters as well as matters of less importance. It is important when using consensus not to assume everyone agrees with something, but to ask individuals if they agree with what seems to be emerging.

Consensus is the decision making process that is most in harmony with the values of ministry. Consensus is not reached by majority vote and is not a win/lose situation. Rather it is a method of decision making through which a group strives to reach a level of substantial agreement on matters of overall direction and policy which can be supported by all. This shared ownership of the council's determinations is essential, if the council and parish are to be effective in the fulfillment of the mission. Decision making by consensus gives witness to



shared leadership and the building of community which are the most basic parts of parish and mission.

C. Prayer

Effective council meetings begin and end with prayer and often call upon the Holy Spirit during the meeting especially when the Council is making decisions. Preparing for prayer is essential for the Council to have a rich experience of reflection and faith sharing. There are many methods of prayer and there is no one way for Councils to pray. Many Councils prefer to pray using Scripture, reflecting on it and sharing insights. Often the Councils will use a reading from the previous Sunday or the up-coming Sunday as their basis for prayer. In Appendix A you will find sample prayer services. These can be used or adapted to suit your purposes. The following is a framework which may be helpful in preparing prayer for your Council Meetings. Adapt to meet your needs.

Consider using the following template to create your own prayer services.

1. PREPARE THE ENVIRONMENT WITH A BIBLE AND A LIGHTED CANDLE
2. HAVE COPIES OF MUSIC TO BE SUNG BY ALL
3. OPENING PRAYER
4. CHOOSE A READING FROM THE SUNDAY LECTIONARY (see below)

5. REFLECTION AND FAITH SHARING
Sample questions:

What words spoke to you especially today in these readings?

What actions flow from the readings for you?

How were you changed by the readings? New insights? Motivations to change something in your life?

6. GENERAL INTERCESSIONS
7. LORD'S PRAYER
8. SIGN OF PEACE

Selected Sunday Liturgical readings for September-November 2011



DATE	SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	FIRST READING	SECOND READING	GOSPEL
Sept. 4	23rd	Ezekiel 33:7-9	Romans 13:8-10	Matt 18:1-15-20
Sept 11	24	Sirach 27:30-28:7	Romans 14:7-9	Matt 18:21-35
Sept 18	25	Isaiah 55:6-9	Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a	Matt 20:1-16a
Date	Sunday in Ordinary Time	First Reading	Second Reading	Gospel
Sept 26	26	Ezekiel 18:25-28	Philippians 2:1-11	Matt 21:28-32
Oct 2	27	Isaiah 5:1-7	Philippians 4:6-9	Matt 21:33-43
Oct 9	28	Isaiah 25:6-10a	Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20	Matt 22: 1-14
Oct 16	29	Isaiah 45:1, 4-66	I Thessalonians 1:1-5b	Matt 22:15-21
Oct 23	30st	Exodus 22:20-26	1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10	Matt 22:34-40
Oct 31	31 st	Malachi 1:14b-2:2b, 8-10	1 Thessalonians 2:7b-9:13	Matt 23:1-12
Nov 1	All Saints	Rev 7:2-4, 9-14	1 John 3:1-3	Matt 5:1-12a
Nov 6	32nd	Wisdom 6:12-10	1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	Matt 25:1-13
Nov 13	33 rd	Proverbs 31:10-13; 19-20; 30-31	1 Thessalonians 5:1-6	Matt 25:14-30
Nov 20	Christ the King	Ezekiel 34:11-12; 15-17	I Corinthians 15:20-26, 28	Matt 25: 31-46



SECTION SEVEN: OUR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

This section contains space for:

- A. Names, Addresses, Phone numbers and Emails
 - 1. Council Member
 - 2. Committee Members / Chairs
- B. Parish Pastoral Council Agendas
- C. Parish Pastoral Council Minutes
- D. Committee Agendas
- E. Committee Minutes
- F. Yearly Calendar
- G. Other

Purpose of this Section

- 1. To help members of Parish Pastoral Councils organize their individual parish information.



Committee Members And Chairs

NAME OF COMMITTEE _____

CHAIR OF COMMITTEE _____

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	EMAIL



Parish Pastoral Council Agendas



Parish Pastoral Council Minutes



Committee Agendas



Committee Minutes



Yearly Calendar



Other Relevant Documents



SECTION EIGHT: APPENDICES

This section contains:

- A. Resources for Prayer and Faith Sharing
- B. Ideas for Running Successful Meetings and Taking Minutes
- C. Sample Constitution and By-Laws
- D. Committee Guidelines
- E. What does Discernment Require?
- F. Nominating and Discerning Parish Council Members
- G. Sample Annual Calendar
- H. Glossary



APPENDIX A - SAMPLES OF FAITH SHARING SERVICES

Sample One

"I have given you a model to follow so that as I have done you should also do."

Opening Hymn: "The Servant Song" Richard Gillard *Breaking Bread*

Leader: Let us begin our prayer by placing yourselves within the mystery of the Triune God.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Opening Prayer

Leader: God, creator of all that is good; you are the beginning and end of all that we have. Jesus, Teacher, our way to the Father, you are the model for all that we do. Holy Spirit, Sanctifier and Comforter, you are the inspiration for all that we hope to accomplish.

Reading John 13:1-5; 13,:12-16

As the celebration of Passover approached, Jesus knew that the time had come at last for him to leave the world. He loved his followers and would until the very end. Jesus and his friends sat down to supper. Even Judas who would betray him was there. Jesus knowing that he came from God and would soon be returning, rose from the meal, stripped off his outer garments and, wrapping a towel around his waist, poured water in a basin. Then he washed the disciples' feet, and dried them with the towel.

Having washed their feet and dressed again, Jesus sat back down at the table. He asked them again, "Can you comprehend what I have done for you? You proclaim me Lord, and that I am. Now, if I am Lord and have washed your feet, you should wash each others' feet, too. I provided this example so that you can imitate me. Disciples are not more important than their leaders. Messengers are not greater than those who send them."

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection and Sharing

Pause for a moment of silent reflection to allow God's Word to speak to you. Now let us share with one another those inspirations that God has placed before us.

- **Leader:** Jesus you have given us the ultimate example of service. You inspire within us the plan we need to follow. What particular passage in this gospel spoke to you?



- Leader: Jesus you are the source of our parish life and you guide us as a parish council to be servant to our brothers and sisters. In what specific way can I serve our parish, modeling my actions on yours? In what ways can I “wash the feet” of another?
- Leader: Jesus you challenge us to be your disciples. How do I see my role as a member of our Parish Pastoral Council in imitation of Jesus, servant-leader.

Intercessory Prayer -- Please respond: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader:

That we may imitate the Lord’s example of loving service to our brothers and sisters in a spirit of generosity and unselfishness...we pray to the Lord.

That we may be effective communicators of God’s word and realize that we need to be listeners and learners ourselves because those who lead must also be the first to follow...we pray to the Lord.

That we may be people who encourage the potential in others as we empower them to share their talents and gifts for the good of our parish community...we pray to the Lord.

That in our servant-leadership roles, we may recognize the importance of working together, as we form relationships, inspire trust, and live as compassionate members of the Body of Christ in our parish...we pray to the Lord

Please add your own intentions.

Closing Prayer

Leader: May God the Father, bless what we have begun...

And may God the Holy Spirit, sanctify our dreams and hopes for the future.

Let us pray together the Our Father...

May we no extend to each other the peace of the Lord.

Closing Hymn

“The Spirit Sends us Forth” *Breaking Bread*



Sample Two

LEADER: As we gather for this meeting, let us ask God to send us His Spirit of enlightenment that we may discern His will for us, our parish and diocese at this time of profound spiritual renewal and transformation.

OPENING HYMN: "SPIRIT COME" Gregory Norbet

OPENING PRAYER:

Lord, pour out on us the spirit of understanding, truth and peace. Help us to strive with all our hearts to know what is pleasing to you and when we know your will make us determined to do it. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

READING: Romans 12: 1-2, 6-8, 11.

I urge you therefore, brothers (and sisters) by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourself to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them: if prophecy, in proportion to the faith; if ministry, in ministering; if one is a teacher, in teaching; if one exhorts, in exhortation; if one contributes, in generosity; if one is over others, with diligence; if one does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, and serve the Lord.

FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING:

1. Where and how do you think the Holy Spirit is leading you in the *Called to Holiness and Mission* implementation process?
2. God gives different gifts to different people. How do we discern our God-given gifts, and then use them for the good of the Church?
3. How open am I (we) to God's Spirit working in and through each other? Do we encourage and support one another?
4. To what extent are we willing to sacrifice our opinions and biases in order to work for consensus and unity?

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS:

Response: Holy Spirit, guide us.

That we may be open to the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we pray...



That our parish may be strengthened by our wholehearted commitment to ongoing transformation and revitalization, we pray...

That we may have the grace to discern our God-given gifts, and generously use them for the good of others, we pray...

That we may be people of prayer and action who follow in the footsteps of the Lord, we pray...

THE LORD'S PRAYER

SIGN OF PEACE

CLOSING PRAYER: Prayer for the Diocese of Scranton

Heavenly Father, hear our prayer. Moved by your Holy Spirit dwelling within our hearts, we humbly ask you, Father, to bless the Diocese of Scranton as this time of profound parish renewal. Send your Holy Spirit upon our clergy, religious and lay faithful, so that we may imitate the fidelity, love and zeal of the early Church. Grant us the humility to preserve and teach the Catholic faith which has been handed on to us, so that we may worship you in Spirit and in Truth. Increase our charity, so that we may generously attend to those who pass before us in need. Bless us with missionary zeal, so that through the proclamation of the Good News, we may be salt, light and leaven to those who are distant from your love.

Holy Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, Saint Peter, Saint John Neumann, Saint Katharine Drexel, (here name local patron) and all the saints, allow us to join our prayers to yours. Through our union with you in prayer, lead us to the glorious banquet of Heaven, where you praise the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who is Lord forever and ever. Amen.



Sample Three

Prayer throughout the Parish Pastoral Council meeting

Effective Councils find ways to allow prayer to permeate the whole meeting, not just at the beginning” of the agenda. Here are several ways:

1. Intersperse prayers of thanksgiving

Follow each committee report with prayers of thanksgiving. Or conclude committee reports by singing a hymn or song, such as “Now Thank We All Our God.”

2. Prayers of petition

Ahead of time, the chair may ask one or two members to listen and note anything that would be the basis for prayers of petition relating to the members gathered, for parish or cluster concerns and for the work of God at the Diocesan and Universal levels.

3. Prayers of confession

Being human, each of us and all of us together must admit that we are in need of help and forgiveness at times. Advent or Lent, or times when a conflict arises are appropriate times for the Council to model their hope of becoming a reconciled community. By pausing to listen and lift up feelings of weariness, hurt, sadness, boredom, confusion, frustration, elation and fulfillment, prayer can be woven in between agenda items to refocus and center the Council

4. Sing the prayers

A favorite familiar seasonal hymn, or a simple chant of the “Our Father,” can rejuvenate the spirit.

5. Silence

The appropriate use of a few minutes of silence at Council meetings is another effective means to refresh the group, especially at the end of conversation on a significant issue. It is also a good idea to take a time of silence before striving to arrive a consensus.



APPENDIX B - IDEAS FOR RUNNING SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS AND TAKING MINUTES

WHAT DOES A WELL-RUN MEETING LOOK LIKE?

Well run meetings are the result of good preparation, effective facilitation and reliable records of thought-through decisions and next action steps. When there is lack of clarity about the purpose of the meeting, when the agenda is vague and there are no time limits on items, when there is poor facilitation and lack of closure, when a few people dominate the discussion and there is no evaluation at the end of the meeting, people get frustrated, attendance diminishes and precious energy is lost. Nothing inhibits collaboration more than poorly run meetings. The materials which follow are provided as resources to help collaborative groups operating out of Servant Leadership work well together and accomplish goals.

Meeting Preparation

Preparation is key to successful meetings. There are four general things to consider when planning a meeting: participants, purposes, physical environment and social tone. Who are the participants? Do they know each other? What are the goals of the meeting? What is the optimal physical environment for the meeting? How can we create a positive up-lifting environment?

The following is a basic check list to use in preparing for a meeting.

1. ___ What are the purposes of the meeting? What does it hope to accomplish?
2. ___ What materials are needed for the meeting? Minutes? Reports? Prayers?
3. ___ How is the room set up? Can all see and hear? If it is a small group that is meeting, are the tables and chairs set up to create a warm and friendly space? If there are to be observers at the meeting, can they see and hear all that is going on? Can observers participate? When? How? Is the space conducive to observer participation?
4. ___ Are there refreshments prepared for a break or before or after the meeting?
5. ___ Is the environment conducive to prayer? Is there a Bible and Candle in the prayer environment?

The following is a basic check list for preparing an agenda. (See the template which follows.)

1. ___ Be clear about the purposes of the meeting. (See sample in template)
2. ___ Label agenda items, "Information Sharing," "For Discussion," "For Decision," "Action"
3. ___ Structure the meeting so that it begins and ends on time. (Two hours is usually the maximum amount of time that a meeting can be effective.)
4. ___ Invite a brief "check in" time at the beginning of each meeting. This allows people to say how they are coming into the meeting or share anything of significance which they want to share. (See started questions in the template)
5. ___ Include faith sharing in the prayer service. (See sample in template)



6. ___ Consider basing your prayer on a part of the readings from the Liturgy of the Word the Sunday before the meeting or the Sunday after the meeting.
7. ___ Depending upon the number of people in your meeting group, allow at least 15 minutes for prayer and faith sharing.
8. ___ After check-in and prayer begin with acknowledging the previous minutes which should have been distributed before the meeting, and asking if there are any corrections.
9. ___ Carefully time your agenda.
10. ___ Be sure, if decisions are to be made at the meeting, that all the needed information is available and the participants had that information before the meeting.
11. ___ Consider using the Meeting Agenda Template and adapting it to your needs.
12. ___ Have someone prepared to lead prayer before the meeting.
13. ___ Be sure to include on the agenda a brief time at the end of the meeting to evaluate it and/or have people say a phrase about how they are feeling leaving the meeting.
14. ___ Send out the agenda and needed materials a week before the meeting.
15. ___ Ask to be notified ahead of time, if an expected participant is unable to attend.

Facilitating Effective Meetings

The following are tips for facilitating effective meetings:

1. Be familiar with the agenda and the time allotted for each item. (See Agenda Template)
2. If it is a new group have name tags the first couple of times the group meets or permanent name place cards, so people can easily refer to each other by name.
3. If this is the first time a group has met, allow sufficient time for introductions. Ask for specific information to be shared depending on the purpose of the group, etc. Examples:

Please tell us your name, what parish you are from, something about your family and/or work.
 You may add a humorous request also, to break the ice, such as "What is your favorite food?"
4. Use a check-in question and ask for a brief response as part of orientation to the meeting such as:

Coming to this meeting I am feeling...

The best thing that happened to me last week was...

The good news that I want to share is...

The funniest thing I have heard recently is...

You may also add and ask for a response to: "This meeting will be worthwhile for me if..."
5. Ask someone at least a week before the meeting to prepare the prayer. (Be sure there is time for reflecting and sharing insights as part of the prayer.)
6. Ratify the agenda. Ask if there are other things to be added.
7. Review the purposes or goals of the agenda and process the meeting will follow: (See Agenda Template.)



8. Be sure everyone is invited to participate. Avoid letting anyone dominate the meeting.
9. At appropriate times ask for a moment of silence before beginning a discussion to give the introverts in the group a chance to think and feel comfortable speaking.
10. If there is conflict between participants, respectfully acknowledge it, consider using the conflict resolution steps noted in "Norms" or other methods. Sometimes "tabling" the issue and asking for more information is a helpful strategy. Discounting or ignoring conflict is not advantageous, as it creeps up on subtle negative ways and contributes to the dysfunction of a group.
11. If it looks like there is need for the group to spend more time on an issue than allotted on the agenda, ask the group if it wants to continue for a specific amount of time, like 10 minute, or table the rest of the discussion until the next meeting.
12. Keep the group on track so that they can accomplish their goals.
13. Encourage honesty by valuing all input.
14. Use "round robins" (going around the circle) to get input. Remind all that they can "pass" when it is their turn.
15. When appropriate rephrase or reframe a response or a question to bring greater clarity to the issue.
16. Discourage "side-bar" conversations which distract the group from the agenda.
17. If the agenda gets "bogged down," despite your best efforts to keep it on track, ask the group to prioritize what remains, so that essentials get accomplished.
18. Ensure that minutes are taken at all meetings. (See Template for Minutes)
19. Ask for agenda items for the next meeting.
20. Be sure to have an evaluation, even if it is brief, at the end of each meeting to assess if the group feels the goals were accomplished and to discuss anything that could have made the meeting more successful.



SAMPLE AGENDA

St. Mary Parish Council Meeting

September 21, 2011

(Be sure all have Bishop Bambera's Pastoral Letter and the Worship Committee report before the meeting and know they are to study it in preparation for the meeting.)

PURPOSES:

1. To share prayer and faith
2. To welcome new members to the Parish Pastoral Council
3. To study the Bishop's Pastoral, "*Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered*"
4. To receive the Annual report and have conversation with leaders in Ministry of Worship
5. To continue working on the Parish Mission Statement
6. To share the yearly calendar and approve it

1. Introductions and Prayer (15-20 Minutes) (Action)

- Welcome new members. Have each person introduce him or herself by tell your name, one interesting thing about yourself, one thing about your family by telling one reason you said "yes" to being on Parish Pastoral Council
- This meeting will be successful for me if...
- Prayer: See Prayer section in this guide. A separate prayer sheet can be provided for each meeting.

2. Provide a brief up-date to the new members about what the Council accomplished last year and what you hope it will accomplish this year. (10) (Discussion) (This assumes that there has been a general orientation of new member before this meeting.)

3. Study and Discuss the Introduction and Initial Story in "*Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered* (20 Minutes) (Discussion)

Introduction and "Tell These Secrets: Tales of Generosity from Around the World"
p. 2-3

- a. What is at the heart of Bishop Bambera's introduction to the pastoral?
- b. What insights did you get after reading the story of the boy who wanted a drum?
- c. What can we take from the introduction and the tale to inspire us as members of the Parish Pastoral Council?

4. Receive the Annual report and have conversation with leaders in Ministry of Worship (30 minutes of discussion—possible decisions coming from it.)

- a. What excites us about the report?
- b. What concerns do we have?
- c. What can we do to be supportive of the Worship Committee?



5. Report on feedback on the draft of the parish mission statement (25 Minutes) (Discussion)
 - Focus Groups
 - Survey Monkey
 - Preparations for next draft—next steps

6. Review and approval of the annual calendar (15 minutes) (Discussion and Decision)
 - See Sample in Appendix G
 - Discuss the Annual Calendar and make any needed adjustments
 - Through consensus approve the Annual Calendar as a working document

7. Other

8. Review of any decisions made (5 minutes) (Decisions)

9. Next meeting agenda items (remind people that the Word Committee is up for its annual report) Other agenda items (5 minutes) (Discussion)

10. Meeting Evaluation (5 minutes) (Discussion)
 - Examine the purposes of the meeting. How well did we do on each? Ways to improve our meetings
 - At the end of this meeting something I am feeling, thinking or want to say is...



MEETING AGENDA TEMPLATE

DATE

PURPOSES:

AGENDA (Note for information, discussion, decision, and action)

1. Check-in and Prayer
2. Up-dates/Reports (Written reports should be prepared ahead of time and distributed. Clarification questions should be entertained at the meeting.)
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
7. Other
8. Review of Decisions Made
9. Next Agenda
10. Meeting Evaluation



TEMPLATE FOR MINUTES

Date:

Those present:

Reports: (Name and summarize. Keep original written reports on file after they have been discussed at the meeting.)

Important Discussion Items (Succinctly summarize significant discussion items)

Decisions Made

Next Steps

Next Agenda

Meeting Evaluation



APPENDIX C - SAMPLE CONSTITUTION AND BY LAWS

The Parish Pastoral Council Constitution which follows is offered as a sample to save you time in developing your own. It is not a template which must be rigorously followed. Please use or adapt according to you needs.

SAMPLE

Parish Pastoral Council

(Insert Parish Name)

, Pennsylvania

(Insert City/Village)

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization shall be ----- Parish Pastoral Council, hereinafter referred to as the "Council." ----- *(Insert Parish Name)*



ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

Form 1

- Section 1.** The Council shall be a vehicle which exercises Servant Leadership by which each parishioner gives expression to those gifts of the Holy Spirit, uniquely granted at baptism, and necessary to accomplish the mission of the Church.
- Section 2.** The Council formulates parish policy, fosters good communication, and provides Servant Leadership by clarifying parish vision, establishing goals and witnessing the gospel message in the larger community and the world.
- Section 3.** The Council shall cooperate with other parishes and with Diocesan offices and agencies, to carry out its work. The Council shall contribute to the formation of Diocesan goals and policies.

Form 2

- Section 1.** The Council shall be a vehicle for fulfilling the pastoral mission of the parish through Servant Leadership. It does this by fostering growth within the parish family and the sharing of spiritual gifts and talents; by encouraging positive relationships among all members of the parish, and by collaborating with other parishes and the wider community.
- Section 2.** The Council shall be involved in planning to meet the needs of the parish, the diocese and the broader community, with a vision for the future and a strong basis in stewardship.
- Section 3.** The Council, after prayerful discernment, shall advise the pastor and develop policies to support those activities and programs which foster the spiritual, intellectual, moral and temporal well-being of the parish, and shall make a contribution to Diocesan goals and policies.

Form 3

- Section 1.** The Council shall strive to unite all members of the parish in a community of prayer, leadership, service and pastoral action.
- Section 2.** The Council shall develop and maintain a parish mission statement, which embraces the total life and mission of the parish: word, worship, community and service.
- Section 3.** The Council shall engage in a continuous process of pastoral planning which takes into consideration the needs of its own parishioners and the needs of the diocese, the broader community and the world.



ARTICLE III: SCOPE

Section 1. Except to the extent limited by faith and morals, church or civil law or Diocesan policy/norms, the Council shall be the planning, consultative and policy formulating body in all matters of the parish, including but not limited to spiritual, educational, social and financial concerns, with due respect to the scope and responsibility of the Parish Finance Council.

Section 2. In any case where any member of the Council interprets an action of the Council or any of its committees to be outside the limits set forth in Section 1, such member shall present such interpretation no later than the next meeting of the Council and ask for reconsideration. Pending consideration, the effect of the action shall be suspended.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

(Insert the total number of members in the blank.)

Section 1. The Council shall be comprised of----- members, all of whom must be baptized, practicing Catholics, at least 18 years old, registered members of the parish, and participants in the parish worship life, especially Mass and the sacraments.

Section 2. The Council shall have the following ex officio members: the pastor, parochial vicar and permanent deacon. Ex officio members participate fully and equally in all Council decisions.

Section 3. At-large members shall be selected from and by the membership of the parish 18 years of age or older.

Section 4. The term for selected members shall be three years and shall be limited to two consecutive terms. The new members shall begin their terms with the conclusion of the annual transition meeting.

(Youth membership is optional.)

Section 5. One youth representative who is at least 14 years of age but not yet 18 shall be selected annually from and by the youth members of the parish.



ARTICLE V: OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of the Council shall be a chairperson, (optional) a vice-chairperson and a secretary. They shall be selected by and from the Council at the annual transition meeting. They shall serve for a one-year term beginning with the conclusion of the transition meeting. Ex officio members of the Council are ineligible to serve as Council officers or committee chairpersons.

Section 2. _____ shall serve as the parish representative to the Diocesan Pastoral Council district meetings. The Council vice-chairperson or secretary may be delegated to perform this function. (Pending as to how the Diocesan Pastoral Council is delineated.)

ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS

(Monthly meetings are recommended in order to build community among members and to conduct normal Council business.)

Section 1. Regular Parish Pastoral Council meetings shall be held monthly.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson, pastor, or a quorum. A quorum consists of two-thirds of the total membership and includes the pastor.

(Both out-going and in-coming Council members attend the transition meeting and participate equally in selecting new leadership. Liaisons to committees are selected at this meeting. See Article IX.)

Section 3. A transition meeting shall be held at the next regular Council meeting following the annual selection of Parish Pastoral Council members. At this meeting the newly selected members shall join the existing Council for the purpose of selecting Council officers for the following year.



ARTICLE VII: RELATIONSHIP OF PASTOR TO COUNCIL

Section 1. The pastor is the Parish Pastoral Council president. He presides at the Council by:

- a. Attending all Council meetings;
- b. Making certain that the scope of the council's concerns reflects the entire mission of the Church;
- c. Enabling the Council to build a community of faith and an atmosphere of trust among Council members;
- d. Making certain that Parish Pastoral Council members have adequate training;
- e. Assisting in formulating the Council agenda;
- f. Sharing in the dialogue that leads to the formulation of policy;
- g. Serving as chief administrative officer of the parish; and
- h. Executing the policies formulated by the Council.

Section 2. The pastor does not chair Council meetings.

ARTICLE VIII: MANNER OF OPERATION

(Consensus is the decision-making process of choice for all parish-related groups.)

The Council's manner of decision-making shall be communal discernment which includes prayerful reflection, gathering of information, dialogue and sharing of conclusions. The usual method of reaching conclusions shall be consensus

ARTICLE IX: PARISH COMMITTEES

Section 1. The Parish shall have the following committees: (Each parish decides on its committees and subcommittees. The four listed below reflect the Pastoral, "*Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered.*")

- Ministry of Word
- Ministry of Worship
- Ministry of Community
- Ministry of Service

Section 2. The Council may establish ad hoc committees.



Section 3. Council Committee Liaison

The Council shall select from its at-large members a liaison to each of its committees at the annual transition meeting following the selection of new officers. Liaisons shall serve for a one-year term beginning with the conclusion of the transition meeting. Ex officio members and officers of the Council are ineligible to serve as liaisons.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any regular or special meeting by consensus or a two-thirds vote of the Council and thereafter by approval of a majority of the parishioners participating in the parish approval process.

Date of Parish Ratification: _____

Date of Most Recent Amendment: _____

Date of Next Full Review: _____



PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL BYLAWS

This set of Parish Pastoral Bylaws are offered as a sample to save you time. They are not a template which must be rigorously followed. Please use or adapt according to you needs.

SAMPLE

ARTICLE I: NOMINATION AND SELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Section 1. At each annual selection, one-third of the members shall be selected for a term of three years to fill the vacancies caused by the members whose terms are due to expire.

Section 2. The Council may establish ad hoc committees.

(This method of choosing Council members implies that the total number of selected members is evenly divided by three, with each member having a staggered three-year term. This traditional selection method ensures that there is constant stability of membership on the Council and at the same time provides for systematic turnover of members.)

Section 3. *(Since the end of the diocesan fiscal year is June 30, it is highly recommended that Parish Pastoral Councils schedule annual selection of new members in April or May, with new Council members taking office by July 1.*

At least 60 days prior to each annual selection of new members, the chairperson shall appoint a Selection Committee of a least four members, two of whom are Council members. The Selection Committee's responsibility is to manage all aspects of the selection process including:

- a) **Education of Parishioners:** Parishioners are educated through bulletin and pulpit announcements about the Council and the selection process for at least two weeks. They are asked to give prayerful consideration to nominating parishioners or themselves for the Council.
- b) **Nomination:** Nomination forms are distributed at all liturgies on a designated weekend. Parishioners are invited to write down the names of persons they feel have the essential characteristics of a Council member.
- c) **Notification:** Persons whose names were submitted by parishioners are contacted by Selection Committee members to inform them of their nomination and of the required orientation. At least 30 days before the date of selection, the Selection Committee publishes in the parish bulletin, the names of those who have agreed to continue in the nomination process. Additional nominations are acceptable if submitted in writing to the Selection Committee within ten days after this publication. *(Notification should include information about responsibilities of Council members and an invitation to attend the next Council meeting.)*



- d) **Orientation:** The Selection Committee plans the local orientation session and requires nominees' attendance at a local and/or Diocesan orientation.
- e) **Acceptance:** Those who feel called to serve as Council members accept nomination and participate on the final slate of nominees. The Selection Committee ensures that the slate of nominees is representative of the parish community. In no event shall any persons be deemed nominated unless the Selection Committee receives an expression of willingness to serve. If a member of the Selection Committee becomes a nominee, that person ceases to be a Selection Committee member.
- f) **Final Slate of Nominees:** Nominees submit biographical information and their statement of parish vision to the Selection Committee for publication in the parish bulletin at least two weeks prior to the selection of new members.
- g) **Facilitation:** The Selection Committee facilitates the actual selection process and informs the parish of the results.

Section 4. The selection of new members of the Council shall be by _____.

(Fill in the blank with either discernment or election.)

If discernment, add: In the context of prayer and with the help of a facilitator, the nominees who are best suited to serve on the Council at this time are discerned.

If election, add: The Selection Committee provides ballots for all parishioners. The Selection Committee administers, supervises, tabulates and keeps records of the selection. A tie vote is resolved by lot.

(Eliminate Section 4 if the Council does not have a youth representative.)

Section 6. For the youth representative, the same selection procedure shall be followed. Only eligible youth shall participate in this process.

ARTICLE II: VACANCIES AND REMOVALS

Section 1. Any member of the Council may resign by filing a written resignation with the pastor, with a copy to the chairperson.

Section 2. At any meeting of the Council, any at-large member may be removed for good cause by consensus or by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the Council. Any member whose removal has been proposed shall be given an opportunity to be heard at the meeting. Good cause includes missing two consecutive meetings without good reason, physical or mental incapacity, or failure to perform duties as a Council member.



Section 3. A vacancy among the at-large members shall be filled by one appointed to serve the remainder of the term. The chairperson will make appointment, with approval of the Council. Consideration should be given to previous nominees.

ARTICLE III: OFFICERS

Section 1. Selection of officers of the Council shall be by _____ from among and by the Council members present at the annual transition meeting. Offices shall be filled in the following order: chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary.

(Fill-in the blank with either discernment or election. Council officers are not to be selected directly by the parish-at-large. Each duly constituted body has the privilege of selecting its own officers.)

Section 2. At the transition meeting following the annual selection of Council members, newly selected members join the existing Council for the purpose of selecting Council officers for the following year.

Section 3. No Council officer may serve more than three consecutive 1 year terms in any one office.

Section 4. The chairperson:

1. Is aware of the tasks and responsibilities of the Council and communicates these to the Council, committees and parish community.
2. Organizes/coordinates activities and work of the Council. Develops and maintains an annual Council calendar consistent with the parish calendar.
3. Prepares the meeting agendas in consultation with the pastor and other Council officers. Ensures that time is spent in prayer. The agenda is published in the parish bulletin the weekend before the meeting or posted for parishioners to review. Submits the agenda to Council members at least 3 days before the meeting.
4. Provides formation/education for Council members, utilizing the parish staff and offerings at the regional and diocesan levels.
5. Facilitates Council meetings by helping members work together, participating fully in discussions and decision-making through consensus. Also conducts parish meetings.
6. Monitors implementation of all Council recommendations and decisions.
7. Ensures that a Council budget is established in consultation and approval of the Finance Council.
8. If there is no council liaison, is an ex officio member of all ad hoc committees of the Council
9. Assists the next chairperson in understanding the Council's history, responsibilities and resources. Transfers all Council materials to the new chairperson.
10. Serves as the parish representative for the Diocesan Pastoral Council regional meetings
11. Performs duties consistent with the office as the Council may direct.

The positions of chair, vice-chairperson are time-consuming. These persons should not be asked to assume other duties on the council or in the parish.



Section 5. The vice-chairperson: (Optional)

1. Conducts meetings in the absence of the chairperson.
2. Becomes chairperson in the event of vacancy.
3. Performs duties consistent with the office as the chairperson or the Council may direct.

(The vice-chairperson can serve the parish in other capacities, especially in any areas of collaboration.)

Section 6. The secretary:

1. Oversees the accurate recording of the minutes of each meeting and sees to it that the minutes and the agenda are made available to the Council members, committee chairpersons, and the parish. Provides a condensed report of the meeting for publication in the parish bulletin.
2. Takes attendance at meetings and records absences.
3. Maintains the official list of all Council and committee officers and members and their terms, the list of all ad hoc committee chairpersons and members and keeps these lists current with regard to addresses and phone numbers.
4. Updates the Diocesan Extranet whenever a change in membership on Council occurs. This is done on-line. The Council secretary works with the parish web administrator to keep the Diocesan registry current.
5. Reports to the Council all communication. Handles correspondence for the Council, including agendas, minutes, notification of regular and special meetings, notes of thanks, etc.
6. Performs such duties consistent with office as the chairperson or Council may direct.

(The Council may designate a non-member as "recorder" of the minutes. However, the responsibility rests with the Council's secretary. The "recorder" has no rights of membership.)

ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS

Section 1. Regular meetings of the Council shall be held at such time, place and date as the Council may designate. Prayer shall be an integral part of the meeting.

Section 2. The agenda shall be developed in advance of the meeting by the pastor and council officers based upon the proposals from committees, liaison reports, the Parish Pastoral Council annual calendar, strategic plan or mission goals, ongoing needs and concerns of the parish. Parishioners may submit items for consideration to any council member one week before the meeting.

Section 3. Advance notice of the time and place of the meetings of the Council shall be published in the parish bulletin, and all members of the parish shall be entitled and welcome to attend as observers. The Council may open any meeting to discussion by parish members on such subjects and under such rules as the Council may announce.



Section 4. Special Meetings. Notice of special meetings shall be given to all members within a reasonable time before the meeting, stating its time, place and purpose. No other business than that stated, as the purpose shall be conducted at that meeting.

Section 5. Closed Session. When a question arises at a Council meeting that relates to a person's right to privacy, the Council may request the absence of visitors for that portion of the meeting. The content of the closed session is not part of the formal minutes of the meeting and is not made public.

RE: Closed Session:

This type of situation should be a rare occurrence. Parish Pastoral Councils do NOT have executive committees, which make decisions apart from the full Council, nor do Councils make personnel decisions, which are rightfully the responsibility of the pastor who is the chief administrative officer of the parish.

Section 6. Absence. Notification of intended absence should be given to the Council Chairperson, Vice-chairperson or Secretary before the meeting.

ARTICLE V: PARISH COMMITTEES

(For more in-depth information about parish committees, refer to the Diocesan publication, Parish Committee Resource Book.)

Section 1. Purpose. Each committee implements parish priorities and goals in its own areas of responsibility in the collaborative spirit of working together to accomplish the parish's stated mission. All committee work leads to building a faith community, proclaiming the Word of God, calling people to prayer and motivating people to serve others.

Section 2. Scope. All committees are accountable to the Council. Committees make decisions in their areas of responsibility following the principle of subsidiary, which means making decisions at the most appropriate level in the parish committee structure.

(All parish groups/organizations should relate to the Council through the committees, and be accountable for carrying out their mission work as expressed in the parish mission statement.)

Section 3. Functions. The basic functions of each Council committee are to:

1. Identify needs of the parish within its areas of responsibility and in keeping with the parish mission.
2. Establish priorities among the needs and communicate how these needs can realistically be addressed and where inter-committee collaboration might be effective.
3. Formulate long-range and short-term goals and objectives.
4. Research and investigate options to implement goals.
5. Submit the proposed programs to the Council for support.
6. Communicate with the pastor and pastoral staff about the implementation.



7. Maintain communication with the parish concerning programs, encouraging active support and involvement.
8. Maintain communication with the respective Diocesan offices and agencies for guidelines and resources.
9. Provide on-going formation of committee members in its areas of responsibility through workshops, study, spiritual formation, etc.
10. Determine budget priorities in the area of the committee's responsibility and make recommendations to the Council through the Finance Council.
11. Periodically evaluate existing programs and activities.
12. Provide the Council with regular, oral or written reports of the work of their committees.

Section 4. The descriptions of the individual committees of the Council are:

(These committee descriptions may be adapted to meet the Council's requirements with respect to committee ministry.)

Ministry of Worship: This committee nourishes and gives direction to the liturgical aspect of parish life. They provide opportunities for parishioners to deepen their faith through a variety of prayer experiences and liturgical celebrations. They identify the spiritual needs of parishioners and maintain an on going program of education and training for liturgical ministers.

Ministry of the Word: The role of this committee is to develop within the parish awareness that the parish community has the responsibility for promoting the educational/formation aspect of the mission of the Church. Christian Formation is a lifelong process aimed at personal conversion and growth in faith. This committee is advisory to educational administration in the design, implementation and evaluation of the total Christian educational/formation programs in the parish, which include: sacramental preparation, adult and family ministry, youth ministry, school ministry and child ministry.

Ministry of Community: This committee looks at parish ministries from the standpoint of community, which is an essential part of parish life. Community draws parishioners together in mutual support, activity, celebration and growth. The committee uses the lens of community to ensure that parish life nurtures and is shared with the people of God. The committee brings about intergenerational wisdom to enrich the whole parish, cluster and larger community. The ministry in this area does all it can to create a deep and abiding sense of unity which binds the parishioners together in faith and collectively helps them experience what it means to be God's people.

Ministry of Service: This committee discerns needs of persons in the parish and wider community, especially the poor, and identifies resources to meet those needs enlisting the active cooperation of parish members. This committee fulfills the justice dimensions of scripture and our Church tradition acknowledging that every Christian is called to service and to work for justice, including Respect Life efforts. The committee's scope of responsibility is two-fold:

- 1) to meet immediate needs;



2) to work for changes in the structures of society, which are oppressive. Committee members are not responsible to do all of the committee's work but rather to involve others in actively accepting the responsibility of their baptism. The committee supports those in the parish who are already involved in service, advocacy, justice education, and empowerment of people. This committee works with community groups and other parishes to help solve related problems. They keep parishioners aware of issues relating to justice, peace, hunger and homeless persons on local, national and international levels so that appropriate Christian action on such issues can be determined.

(Each parish will develop its own areas of special interest based on the needs and concerns of its parishioners and community.)

Section 5. Committee Officers. The chairperson of each committee shall be discerned by and from the committee members, based on competence, leadership ability and knowledge of the committee's area of ministry. The term of office for the chairperson is one year. Other officers determined by the committee's, e.g. secretary, are selected in a similar manner. Neither an employee of the parish nor an ex officio member of the Council shall be eligible to be an officer.

ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

The Council may amend the bylaws by consensus or a two-thirds vote of the members at two consecutive meetings of the Council.

Date of Most Recent Amendment: _____

Date of Next Full Review: _____



APPENDIX - D COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

SAMPLE

These guidelines are a sample format. Each parish will adapt them to fit their own situation. The guidelines are an important resource for the Parish Pastoral Council and committees, especially the committee chairpersons. They clearly define the committees' responsibilities, manner of operation and expectations. The Committee Guidelines should be reviewed in conjunction with the Parish Pastoral Council's review of their constitution and bylaws. Committee chairpersons can alert the Parish Pastoral Council chairperson to any discrepancies or problems in the guidelines.

I. PURPOSE

Each committee implements the Parish Pastoral Council's priorities and goals in its own areas of responsibility, working together to accomplish the parish's stated mission. All committee work leads to building a faith community, proclaiming the Word of God, calling people to prayer and motivating people to serve others.

II. SCOPE

All committees are accountable to the Parish Pastoral Council. Committees make decisions in their areas of responsibility following the principle of subsidiary, which means making decisions at the most appropriate level in the parish committee structure.

III. FUNCTIONS

The basic functions of each Parish Pastoral Council committee are to:

1. Identify needs of the parish within its areas of responsibility and in keeping with the parish mission.
2. Establish priorities among needs and communicate these needs to the Parish Pastoral Council, discerning with them which needs can be realistically addressed and where inter-committee or inter-parish collaboration might be effective.
3. Formulate long-range and short-term goals and objectives.
4. Research and investigate options to implement goals.
5. Submit program proposals to the Parish Pastoral Council for support.
6. Develop and recommend policy in their area of responsibility to the Council.
7. Communicate with the pastor and pastoral staff about the implementation.
8. Maintain communication with the parish concerning programs, encouraging active support and involvement.
9. Maintain communication with the respective Diocesan offices and agencies for guidelines and resources.
10. Provide on-going formation of committee members in its areas of responsibility through workshops, study, spiritual formation, etc.
11. Determine budget priorities in the areas of the committee's responsibility and make recommendations to the Parish Pastoral Council through the Parish Finance Council.
12. Periodically evaluate existing programs and activities.

In any case where any committee member interprets an action of a committee to be outside the limits of its responsibilities, that member shall present such interpretation to the Parish Pastoral



Council liaison or a council officer, no later than the next Parish Pastoral Council meeting and ask for reconsideration by the council. Pending reconsideration, the effect of the committee action shall be suspended.

IV. MEMBERSHIP

1. All committee members must be baptized, practicing Catholics and registered members of the parish. All members participate equally in decision-making.
(The pastor, with the approval of the Council, may appoint a non-Catholic or non-parishioner to serve as an advisor to a committee for a limited time. An advisor gives input to the committee but does not participate in the decision-making task of the committee. Committee members need to be recruited actively and continuously by the committee itself and its subcommittees.)
2. The term for committee members shall be one year. Annual membership lists shall be submitted to the Parish Pastoral Council secretary.
3. Any committee member may resign by filing a written resignation with the committee chairperson.
4. At any regular meeting a member may be removed for good cause by consensus or by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the committee. Any member whose removal has been proposed shall be given an opportunity to be heard at the meeting. Good cause includes missing two consecutive meetings without a good reason, physical or mental incapacity, or failure to perform duties as a committee member.
5. A vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the committee chairperson. The Parish Pastoral Council secretary shall be notified of the change.
6. Each new member is to be adequately prepared for membership on the committee by being provided with the opportunities for spiritual growth, appropriate theological foundation and the skills and information required for membership on the committee.
7. Optional: A young person at least 14 years of age but not yet 18 may be recruited annually to serve as a representative of the parish youth to the committee.

V. OFFICERS

The officers of each committee shall be a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and a secretary. Officers are selected annually by and from the committee based on their competence, leadership and knowledge of the committee's responsibilities. Offices are filled in the following order: chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary. Ex Officio members of the committee are ineligible to serve as committee officers.

A. The committee chairperson:

1. Is aware of the tasks and responsibilities of the committee and communicates these to the committee, Parish Pastoral Council and parish community.
2. Organizes/coordinates the activities of the committee. Develops and maintains an annual committee calendar consistent with the Parish Pastoral Council calendar.
3. Prepares the meeting agenda and submits it to committee members at least 3 days before the meeting.
4. Provides formation/education for committee members in its areas of responsibility, utilizing the parish staff and offerings on the district and Diocesan levels.
5. Conducts meetings by assisting the committee members to work together effectively and arrive at appropriate decisions through consensus.



6. Facilitates the task of determining priorities and setting goals for programs and services to be developed within parish guidelines and Diocesan structures and goals within the committee's areas of responsibility.
7. Monitors implementation of all committee decisions.
8. Establishes a budget based on committee objectives; and communicates budget information to the Finance Council and Administration Committee.
9. Forms ad hoc committees when necessary and appoints their chairpersons; makes appointments of subcommittee chairpersons; assigns individuals specific tasks; delegates responsibilities; and encourages cooperation both in and out of meetings.
10. Maintains committee membership roster and notifies the Parish Pastoral Council secretary of any changes.
11. Is an ex officio member of all subcommittees of the committee.
12. Oversees recruitment and orientation of new committee members.
13. Assists the next chairperson in understanding the committee's history, responsibilities and resources. Transfers all committee materials to the new chairperson.
14. Performs duties consistent with the office as the Parish Pastoral Council or committee may direct.

B. The committee vice-chairperson:

1. Conducts meetings in the absence of the chairperson and is familiar with the parish structures, committee guidelines and activities, and consensus decision-making so as to provide continuity for the group.
2. Becomes chairperson in case of a vacancy.
3. Performs special tasks consistent with the office as assigned by the chairperson or the committee.

C. The committee secretary:

1. Oversees the accurate recording of the minutes of each meeting and sees to it that the minutes and the agenda are made available to the committee members, Parish Pastoral Council, other committees and the parish.
2. Takes attendance at meetings and records absences.
3. Maintains the official list of all committee members and their terms, the list of all ad hoc and subcommittee chairpersons and members and keeps these lists current with regard to address - es, phone numbers and e-mail.
4. Handles correspondence for the group, including agendas, minutes, notification of regular and special meetings, notes of thanks, etc.
5. Performs duties consistent with the office as the chairperson or committee may direct.

VI. MEETINGS

1. Regular committee meetings are held at such time, place and date as the Parish Pastoral Council may designate. Each meeting consists of prayer/formation, decision-making and planning.

An agenda is prepared before the meeting by the chairperson, after appropriate consultation with other committee members, based on an understanding of the on-going needs and concerns of the parish within the scope of the committee's responsibilities. A written agenda is presented to committee members at least three days before each meeting.



2. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson, Parish Pastoral Council chairperson, pastor, or a quorum of the committee. A quorum consists of a majority of the members. Notice of such meetings is given to all committee members within a reasonable time prior to the meeting, indicating its time, place and purpose. No business other than that stated as the purpose is conducted at that meeting.
3. Advance notice of the time and place of committee meetings is published in the parish bulletin, and all members of the parish are entitled and welcome to attend as observers. The committee chairperson may open any meeting to discussion by parish members on such subjects and under such rules as the chairperson may announce.

VII. MANNER OF DECISION-MAKING

Committees' manner of decision-making is communal discernment, which includes gathering of information, prayerful reflection and dialogue, leading to consensus.

VII. SUBCOMMITTEES

The committee chairperson shall form subcommittees as needed. Each subcommittee shall have a chairperson or representative who speaks for the subcommittee at committee meetings. The initial task of each subcommittee is to delineate its responsibilities for review by the committee and Parish Pastoral Council. Upon approval, the subcommittee must develop its own goals. Guidelines and operating procedures should be established if they are significantly different from the committee guidelines.

IX. REVISIONS TO GUIDELINES

The Parish Pastoral Council may revise these Committee Guidelines by consensus or a two-thirds vote of the Parish Pastoral Council.



APPENDIX E - FOR REFLECTION IN PREPARATION FOR DISCERNMENT

What does discernment require of those 'Discerning?'

- **Faith**, belief in the power and presence of God in our personal lives and in our faith community
 - **Prayer**, calling upon the Holy Spirit to be present through the process of decision-making (Romans 12:2ff)
 - **Preparation**, research and study information necessary to make an informed decision. Facts, not opinion.
 - **Identified criteria** for making the decision.
 - **Being open** to and obtaining input from the community. A willingness to be open to a final decision that may be different from the opinion I currently hold, but is in the best interest of the common good.
 - **Personal reflection** on the issue being discerned.
 - **Group dialogue and listening**, articulating the pros/cons for and against the proposal.
 - **Personal reflection and communal prayer** for the gift of discernment. (Ephesians 5:8-10, 15-17)
 - **Consensus**. Each member of the council states their position based on their perception of God's hope for the parish at this time. They give their reason for supporting their position, *This is not a vote*. After all members have been heard, the chair states whether or not consensus exists or is near. If needed, further dialogue takes place. This may result in an improvement of the initial statement. In the end, **agreement may not be unanimous, but those who initially favored another response are able to live with the final decision of the group**.
- If consensus cannot be reached, the decision can be tabled and scheduled for the next meeting. During that time, more information might be gathered and more prayers offered.
- **Confirmation** (Colossians 1:9-14) Once the decision is made there is a sense of peace in the decision. Over time there is clarity that it was the right decision.



APPENDIX F - NOMINATING AND DISCERNING PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

SAMPLE

- Seek Commitment
- Pastor (*to newly selected*): Are you willing to serve as members of the parish council?

Newly selected: I am, with the help of God

Pastor (*inquires of those not selected to council ministry*): Will you restate your intentions regarding other ministries or committee work?

Nominees respond.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

(All) Loving God, thank you for these parishioners who are ready and willing to be of service to our community of faith. Bless those selected for council ministry as they begin their journey. Bless and renew all gathered here, that we might be women and men enthusiastic for Your mission, generous in our lives, and eager to be among Your people as ones who serve. We ask this through Jesus Christ, who came as servant to us all. Amen.

Sign of Peace

WE GO OUT TO LOVE AND SERVE



PERSONAL REFLECTION

SAMPLE

Parish Councilors are:

- Prayerful:** They are believers who attend liturgy regularly. They willingly share their own faith stories, and desire to know more deeply, what it means to be Eucharist without Walls. Their actions are guided by Gospel values.
- Pastoral:** They are able to hear the deep longings of the people, to facilitate conversation around difficult issues, to follow-up with action, to reconcile differences, alleviate fears, offer comfort.
- Representative:** They have the ability to listen well to others, and represent all members, not just a few.
- Discerning:** They are able to dialogue in an effort to reach consensus for the common good.
- Prophetic:** They respect the unique mission of the Church and are willing to challenge the status quo to initiate action to affirm or change it.
- Empowering:** They help create and sustain an environment that brings out the best in all resources of the parish community - human, financial and material. They work well with others.
- Collaborative:** They understand the challenges facing our parish, cluster, and diocese. They are servant-leaders who share their talents generously and from an attitude of shared responsibility.

After a period of reflection, facilitator asks the nominees:

Is there anyone among you who wishes to withdraw their name from consideration?

THE WORD OF GOD

- Proclamation of Scripture 1 Cor. 12:4-11

All: Loving God, we have heard your living Word call to us:

We have opened our hearts to you. We pray now for the gift of discernment.

Send your Spirit to help us choose leaders who will imitate

The model of Servant Leadership shown to us by your Son, Jesus Christ.

May the same Spirit help us, in our discernment, that your Kingdom may come.

CALL PROCESS

- Each one writes on a ballot the names of those they *most strongly believe are called and gifted for Council ministry at this time*. The number of names corresponds to the number of open positions.
- Ballots are placed on the Bible
- *The facilitator tallies the ballots and announces those selected*. Those with a simple majority are deemed selected. (A second or third ballot may be required due to a tie or lack of a simple majority)



THE PRAYERFUL SELECTION OF NEW PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

SAMPLE

THE GATHERING

- Lighting of the Christ Candle
- Seasonal Hymn

PRAYER FOR OPENNESS AND THE GIFT OF DISCERNMENT

(All) Blessed are You, Holy God, Who has given each of us talents,
For our own good, and for the service of others.
To shape and guide our parish, and to give You glory!

Blessed are You for relying on us in our limited humanity!
Purify our motives, so that our first wish is to learn and do Your Will.

Help us. O Wisdom, to prayerfully discern new members for our council.
Open our hearts that we may see with the eyes of Christ, hear with His ears, think with His
mind, love with His heart, and to decide with His single-mindedness.

Bless are You, Lord our God! You have given to each of us the gift of faith and the sign of
baptism.

A share in the present and future mission of the Church.

Help us share the task of shepherding in the name of Jesus, the one true Shepherd.
To Him are glory and honor, love and praise, forever and ever. AMEN.

SHARING AND LISTENING

Council Statements: A designated Council member reminds the discerning community of the criteria for members, the goals of the parish and other pertinent information.

Candidate Statements: A facilitator leads the nominees in a discussion to address these or similar questions:

- How are you currently involved in the parish?
- Why do you feel called to Parish Pastoral Council ministry? Why do you think you were nominated?
- What issues, concerns, challenges will/should the parish Council address in the coming 2-3 years?
- What skills, talents, expertise or life experience do you bring to move the work of the parish forward?
- If not selected for ministry on council how will you offer your talents at the service of the parish?
- Are you able to make a 3-year commitment?
- Is there anything you will have to let go of in order to serve on council?

DISCUSSION

- Clarifications and Additions



PARISH COUNCIL NOMINEE WORKSHEET

Please take a few minutes to answer the questions on this page and the next

BEFORE I DECIDE...

- In what areas of ministry have I been involved?

- How would I describe the quality of those experiences? Why?
 1. Participatory
 2. Satisfying
 3. Challenging
 4. Real opportunities for spiritual growth

- What new areas of ministry interest me?

- How would I describe the mission of our parish?

- Relative to the mission, what three qualities do I think our parish needs most right now?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

- Why, in my opinion, was I nominated?



PARISH COUNCIL NOMINEE WORKSHEET

- Am I willing to make a three-year commitment?

- How do others in my household feel about me serving on council?

- Is there anything I will have to let go of in order to serve on council?

- Do I have experience with consultation, planning and developing policy?
 1. Much (and I enjoy it!)
 2. Some (but, I could use a little more practice!)
 3. None, (but I'm willing to learn!)
 4. None

- Am I willing to

- Do I meet all of the following requirements?
 1. Registered member of the parish?
 2. Baptized, practicing Catholic?
 3. Over 18 years of age?
 4. Participant in parish worship life especially the Mass and sacraments?
 5. Willing to participate in an orientation and in a discernment process or an election?



APPENDIX G - SAMPLE ANNUAL CALENDAR

July	Organizing for the year's work. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review roles and responsibilities of Council• Review decision-making process: discernment & consensus• Create communication strategy to update parishioners on leadership changes• Affirm the annual Council calendar
August	The mission and current year parish priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review Parish Mission statement and Diocesan Mission statement• Review feedback from Diocesan Implementation Commission on your annual Cluster work plan and discuss implications for the parish• Review over-all goals for the year• Orientate new members of the Parish Pastoral Council
September	Annual report and conversation with leaders in Ministry of Worship
October	Annual report and conversation with leaders in Ministry of the Word
November	Annual report and conversation with leaders in Ministry of Community
December	Annual report and conversation with leaders in Ministries of Service
January	Organizing for budget planning
February	Begin budget planning
March	Annual conversation with leaders in ministries regarding Parish and Cluster Planning (in preparation for Cluster Evaluation and Annual Report to the Diocesan Implementation Commission) Preliminary conversation on next year's budget
April	Begin the nomination processes for new Parish Pastoral Council members Recommend for approval or revise proposed budget
May	Annual meeting with all Cluster Parish Pastoral Councils (before May 15 th) Approval of Cluster Evaluation and Annual Report Selection of new council members
June	Celebrate! Thank retiring members and welcome new members



APPENDIX H - GLOSSARY

Glossary

CATECHESIS: An essential element of parish life through which individuals and communities systematically acquire and deepen their Christian faith.

CODE OF CANON LAW: Law enacted and promulgated by the Pope for the orderly pastoral administration and government of the Church. The revised Code, effective November 27, 1983, consists of 1,752 canons in seven books.

COLLABORATION: The act of working together through reflective listening and genuine articulation of ideas, in a partnership of mutual respect and diversity.

CONSENSUS: A method of making decisions through which the pastor and pastoral council strive to reach substantial, though not necessarily unanimous, agreement on the overall direction of the pastoral life of the parish.

CONSULTATION: The act of conferring and deliberating in order to come to decisions together. Refers particularly to the relationship between pastor and laity, respecting the pastor's unique role as canonical head of the parish.

DELEGATE: To assign responsibility and authority to the appropriate level.

DIOCESE: The local or particular Church, referring to a geographically designated area in which Catholics, usually gathered in parishes, are united in faith and sacraments with their bishop, ordained in apostolic succession.

DISCERNMENT: The formal prayerful process by which a group discovers God's will in a particularly significant situation or decision.

EMPOWER: To provide individuals and or groups with skills, information, authority and resources in order to carry out their responsibilities.

EUCCHARIST: An essential element of parish life which is the central and fundamental prayer of the Church. The Eucharist is where Christ is fully present in His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. It is through the Eucharist that Christ gradually transforms those who receive Him, leading them to witness their faith in the world. Participation in Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life.

EVALUATION: Can be formative or summative. Formative evaluation involves collecting feedback in an ongoing way as a plan is monitored and adjusted. Summative evaluation is a systematic way of measuring performance against objectives at the end of the planning cycle.

EVANGELIZATION: An essential element of parish life which encompasses any way in which the parish continues to spread the good news of Jesus, especially, although not exclusively, through personal and corporate sharing of faith.

FINANCE COUNCIL: A consultative body within the parish that offers expertise in matters of finance and plant management as they relate to the mission of the parish.

FORMATION: The element of parish life which promotes a lived faith which is informed and integrated.

GOAL: A clearly defined constructive statement of desired direction or activity in broad, general terms.



MINISTRY: The active service of the baptized, dependent upon the gifts of the individual and the needs of the community and always directed to the building up of the Body of Christ.

MISSION (OF THE CHURCH): The purpose for which Christians are gathered in faith to create a new people, healed and saved through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

MISSION STATEMENT: A brief, general statement (about 30 words) which identifies and establishes the unique direction of a parish as it lives out the mission of Christ in our day and age.

OBJECTIVE: A planned action which directs efforts toward attaining a goal. Besides describing a result, an objective also specifies what is to be done, who is to do it and when it is to be completed.

PARISH: A gathering of the people of God united in faith and dedicated to continuing the universal mission of the Church in their local setting. Its life is expressed through the pastoral elements of Word, Worship, Service and Community.

PASTOR: The proper shepherd of a parish who exercises pastoral care in the community entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop. The pastor is given the charge to preside at the Parish Pastoral Council deliberations.

PASTORAL: An approach of caring for the life of the parish as a whole.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL: A consultative structure in a parish designed primarily to investigate, consider and recommend pastoral initiatives to further the mission of the parish

faith community as an extension of the Mission of Jesus.

PASTORAL PLANNING: A prayerful and participative process by which a pastor and pastoral council identify and craft a unique mission and future goals within a particular span of time on behalf of the parishioners.

SELECTION: A method by which leaders are chosen to serve on the Parish Pastoral Council, through a discernment rather than election process.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP: A way of leading through serving the needs of the parish. Servant Leadership calls forth the gifts of others. "Serving, one realizes that service to God and neighbor is an act of leadership that differs in kind and orientation from what normally counts as leadership" Bishop Bambera

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY: The theological principle that each member of the Church, by reason of baptism, has the right and duty to participate in the Church's mission.

STEWARDSHIP: An essential element of parish life which encompasses prayer of thanksgiving for the many gifts of God and the sharing of those gifts through acts of service.

TRADITION: The long-standing practices and beliefs of the Church, developed since the days of the Apostles, and revered as normative, along with Scriptures, for the life of the Church.

VATICAN II: The most recent of 21 Church councils in which bishops from throughout the universal Church gather with the Pope to discuss and decide on matters of Church teaching and practice. A Council of this nature has supreme and full teaching authority over the Church.

