

In a Missionary Style:

Putting the Parish Pastoral Plan into Action

Since the conclusion of *Called to Holiness and Mission*, parishes in the Diocese of Scranton have placed renewed emphasis on the strengthening of Parish Pastoral Councils and the development of longer-range pastoral plans. In recent years, perhaps your Parish Pastoral Council has discerned new members, sustained a year or two of prayer and formation to embrace the role and responsibility of a Parish Pastoral Council, and initiated a parish-wide planning process.

Nearly 25% of our parishes have now articulated a 1, 3, or 5 year plan, with goals and objectives for enlivening every aspect of parish life and engaging ever more of the parish membership in the missionary activity of true disciples of Jesus Christ. These fore-runner parishes have been helping to refine the planning process tools and to share their experience with other parishes just getting started in the process. The next urgent question would be: *Now that we have written the plan and published it in the parish community, how do we make it really happen?*

In the Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines for the Diocese of Scranton, Section Four describes the addition of commissions/committees flowing from the structure of the Parish Pastoral Council. By reviewing the guidelines, pages 34-40, Council members can see the intended relationship of this extended structure, both in terms of **implementation of the parish pastoral plan** and for the opportunity to create **parallel structures with neighboring parishes for cluster planning**.

This document is designed as a “workbook” for creating the structures which will enable your parish to put your plan into action. As you will see, there are **different models suggested for different types of parishes**, and many options which are left to the wisdom guiding your own parish. The materials in this tool will be more readily understood, and their usefulness perceived, when your Parish Pastoral Council has completed a broad listening process with parishioners, and is beginning to write goals. At this important juncture, it becomes immediately obvious that **more people will need to be involved in achieving these goals successfully, and that more coordination will be needed precisely in order to increase involvement.**

Building a successful parish-based renewal and evangelization effort of the kind envisioned in Bishop Bambera’s pastoral letter, *Wounded and Loved: Regathering the Scattered*, requires tapping each and every Catholic’s baptismal call to serve. One of many important challenges is to create an effective structure for carrying out this important work. With a collaborative effort between the pastor, the parish staff, and the parish pastoral council, an ever greater number of the parish members can share responsibility for the Church’s mission.

Three Essential Functions

For successful parish renewal and implementation of new pastoral plans, the leadership of your parish needs the inter-relationship of three vital functions:

1. Tending the Vision; Steering Toward Mission (Pastor and Parish Pastoral Council)
2. Organizing the Planning and the Planners (Coordinating Team(s), with PPC Liaison)
3. Doing the Tasks/Driving the Projects (Parish Activity or Ministry Groups/Action Teams/Project Teams)

Adequate attention has been given, in the Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines, to the first function of the Council as a wisdom, **visioning body** serving the whole of parish life.

To understand the remaining two functions and their proper ministry roles, it is essential to explore the difference between “organizers” and “doers.” These two activities are very different and require different characteristics. Please consider...**organizers** tend to do the following activities:

- Planning
- Being strategic
- Recruiting leaders and participants
- Bringing people together
- Organizing training sessions
- Facilitating problem solving discussions and meetings
- Listening and communicating

Doers of ministry are busy with...

- Putting the solutions into action
- Being energetic and dedicated to completing tasks
- Learning ministry skills
- Deepening their baptismal call to serve through participation in ongoing formation
- Providing input, ideas, data that shapes the planning process

As distinguished from the ministry leaders who are the “organizers,” the “doers” of ministry make sure specific tasks get done. They do not organize the effort, they perform the service. Of course, organizers can be doers and vice versa. However, **the critical thing is to know the difference and to make sure the parish has a structure or system that includes leaders, or organizers, who make sure many parishioners have opportunities to become “doers.”**

In relation to implementing the 3-5 year pastoral plan, it could be understood that:

- Parish Pastoral Council members **create** the plan,
- Coordinating Team(s) **organize and facilitate** in order to move the plan from paper to reality (see Parish A, Parish B and Parish C visuals for different types of parishes), and
- All parishioners are “**doers**” of some aspect of **carrying out the plan**, in accord with each person’s gifts given for the sake of the mission.

The next three pages show different models of how the three functions can be structured, with the emphasis on the intermediary role of the Coordinating Team. This is one or more groups of ministry leaders who organize the implementation of the parish pastoral plan as articulated by the Parish Pastoral Council, coordinating all ministries and parish activities that fall within its area of focus.

Parish A: (see diagram, pg 5)

In a larger parish, with many existing committees already serving in the four areas of Word, Worship, Community and Service, there would be a Coordinating Team for each of these four areas. Each Coordinating Team would organize the activities of many sub-committees (action teams/project teams/parish activities), and facilitate their efforts. A liaison from the Parish Pastoral Council would link to each of the Coordinating Teams, and a relationship with parish staff members would be defined where applicable.

Parish B: (see diagram, pg 6)

In any size parish where the creation of action teams/project teams/parish activities is a fairly recent development, it could be more effective to establish a single Coordinating Team, whose function would still be to organize the activities of the various groups. This Coordinating Team will need to be well versed in all four arenas of parish life: Word, Worship, Community and Service – and have the ability to see their inter-relationships. There would be a liaison role from the Parish Pastoral Council and a staff member (like Pastoral Associate or Coordinator of Ministries) could facilitate this Coordinating Team.

Parish C: (see diagram, pg 7)

In smaller, or newly consolidating parishes, the visioning and organizing functions might both reside in the Parish Pastoral Council. In this case, while the Council needs to be able to express the overall mission and vision for the parish as a whole, each member might also need to serve on a Coordinating Team for either Word, Worship, Community or Service. As in the other models, the goal is still to increase the number of “doers” among the parish members at large – and gradually move from Parish C to Parish B or Parish A model -- so that the Parish Pastoral Council is free to sustain its primary purpose of continuous pastoral planning.

In all three of these models, the Coordinating Team(s) meet regularly in order to:

- Create and maintain an effective system of communication about parish activities;
- Ensure that each ministry leader or action team produces some type of annual plan; that it is achieved and evaluated;
- Identify situations where two or more ministries might work together;
- Identify emerging parish and community needs and potential leaders;
- Provide for skills training opportunities for parishioners;
- Ensure, with the Parish Pastoral Council, fidelity to the original parish pastoral plan, vision, mission and values.

The key to success with any of these parish structures will be effective communication between the various roles. It will be important to discuss the following suggestions as a Council, and to include parish staff members where applicable.

How does the Parish Pastoral Council relate to the Coordinating Teams?

- Orient them to the Parish Pastoral Plan and inspire them to participate in bringing it to life with you;
- Facilitate collaboration among members of all four Coordinating Teams;
- Gather with all Coordinating Team members annually for review of the plan – celebrating accomplishments and adjusting the action steps for the coming year;
- Develop policy that supports the ministry of the Coordinating Teams;
- Facilitate regular opportunities for leadership development and formation for groups involved in putting the plan into action;
- Provide a liaison member from the Council to each Coordinating Team – this person is not the chairperson, but a conduit of information between the Council and Coordinating Team. The Liaison a) helps the Coordinating Team to retain their focus on the Mission/Vision/Values statements and the Parish Goals as they relate to any particular area of parish life; b) keeps the Coordinating Team informed of the decisions, actions or policies developed by the Council; c) provides necessary updates to the Council regarding current work or requests for needed direction or guidance.

Do Coordinating Teams get involved in Council matters? These Coordinating Teams interact with the Parish Pastoral Council in these ways:

- By bringing proposals and other recommendations to Council through the Liaison;
- By participating in long-range planning and evaluation of annual action plans, along with the parish programs related to the plans;
- By following the lead of the Council – developing projects and action steps which are appropriate to their respective area of parish life and which are in keeping with the broader vision and goals established by listening to and planning with the whole parish.

What are the best ways for the parish staff members to interact with the Parish Pastoral Council and the Coordinating Teams?

- Promoting spiritual growth and leadership development opportunities among people in the parish, including helping with discernment of gifts for ministry;
- Assisting Council and Coordinating Team members with action planning and identifying suitable resources and programs to meet the identified goals;
- Designing, implementing and evaluating programs, services and activities that carry out the long-range goals of the parish and Diocese;
- Establishing procedures and professional practices consistent with policies of the Diocese and the Parish Pastoral Council, to carry out the mission of the parish;
- Managing the daily operations of the parish, in accord with each staff member's role;
- Maintaining open communication with and among the various groups and individuals in the parish, the Diocese, and the local community.

Parish A – Action Planning Structure

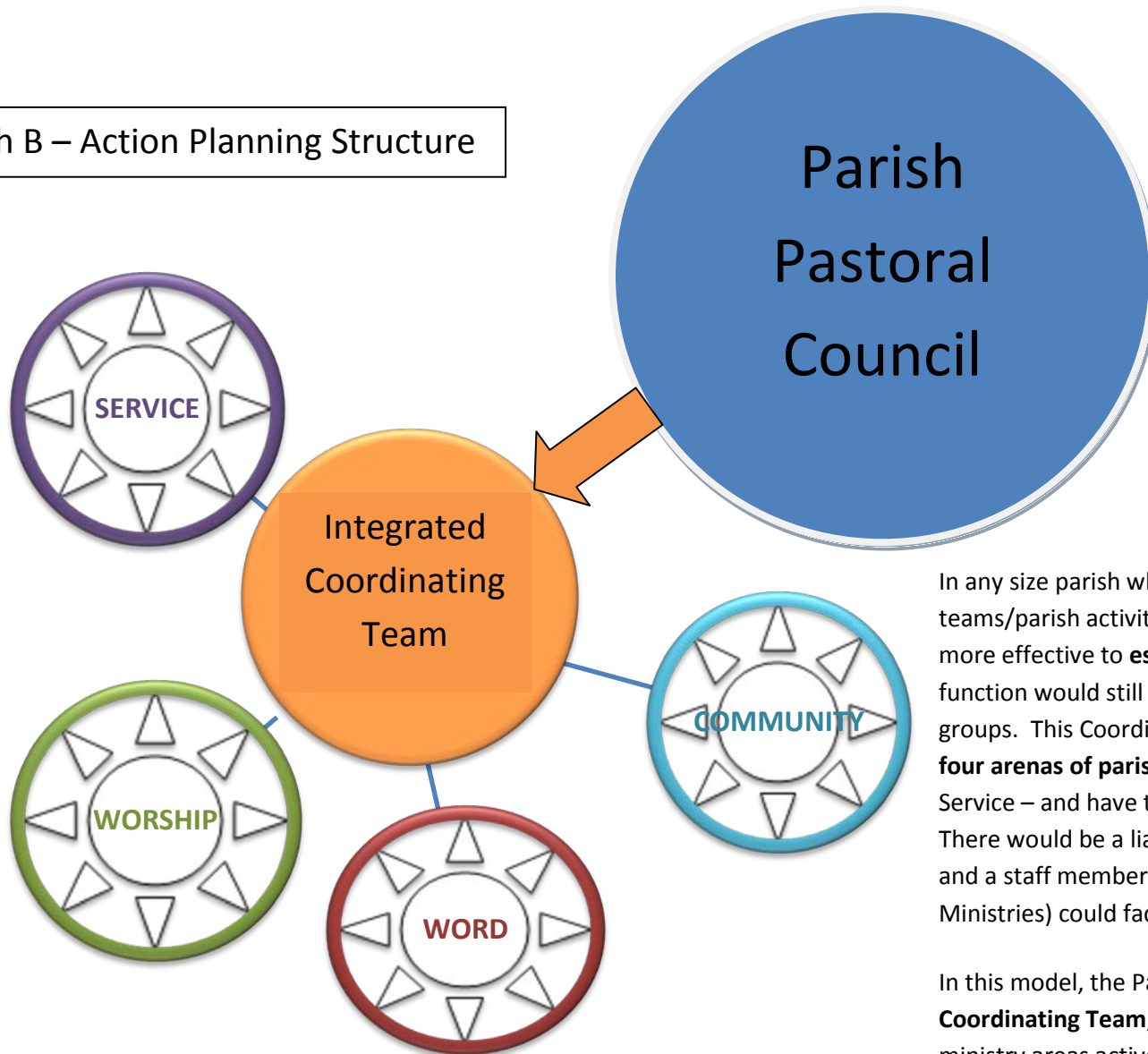


In a larger parish, with **many existing committees already serving** in the four areas of Word, Worship, Community and Service, there would be a **Coordinating Team for each of these four areas**. Each Coordinating Team would organize the activities of many sub-committees (action teams/project teams/parish activities), and facilitate their efforts. **A liaison from the Parish Pastoral Council** would link to each of the Coordinating Teams, and a relationship with parish staff members would be defined where applicable.

Arrows represent the **Parish Pastoral Council Member who is a liaison to each Coordinating Team**. This person is not the chair of the Coordinating Team, but a support, resource, and communication link to the Parish Pastoral Council. In parishes with **staff members**, each parish needs to determine the manner in which they are affiliated with the Coordinating Teams.

Smaller circles represent **sub-committees or action/project teams** which relate to each of the four pillars of parish life. Every parish will have a different structure for these smaller teams, and a different set of activities particular to your parish. On the following pages, there are **samples** of how this might look in a given parish, along with **worksheets for you to create your own diagram**.

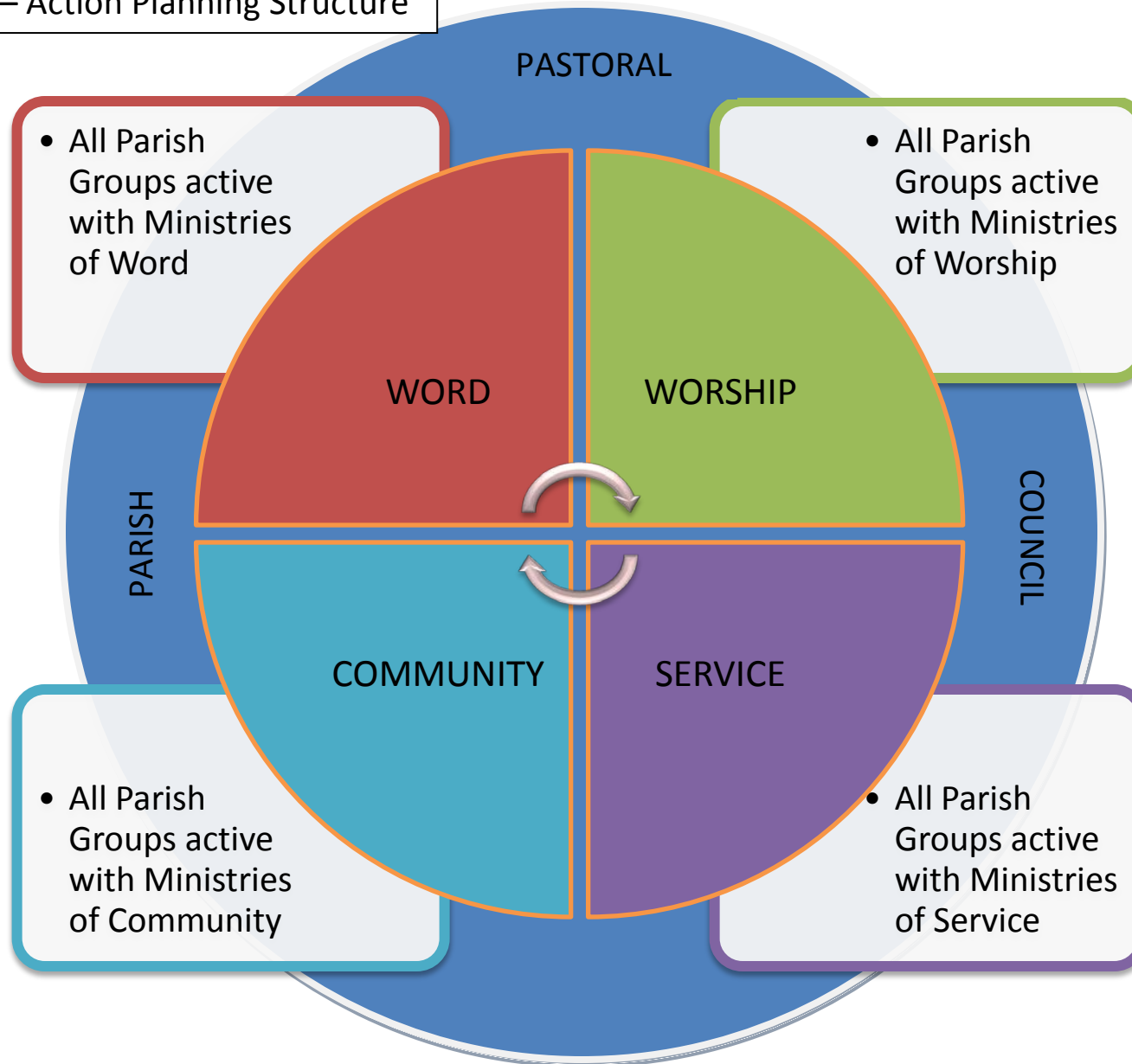
Parish B – Action Planning Structure



In any size parish where the creation of action teams/project teams/parish activities is a fairly recent development, it could be more effective to **establish a single Coordinating Team**, whose function would still be to organize the activities of the various groups. This Coordinating Team will need to be **well versed in all four arenas of parish life**: Word, Worship, Community and Service – and have the ability to see their inter-relationships. There would be a liaison role from the Parish Pastoral Council and a staff member (like Pastoral Associate or Coordinator of Ministries) could facilitate this Coordinating Team.

In this model, the Parish Pastoral Council develops a **single Coordinating Team**, with structures for relating to all of the ministry areas actively implementing the parish pastoral plan. For each of the four pillars, there would not need to be a formal committee, but there would continue to be various **sub-committees or action/project teams**, according to the priorities and goals of each parish. There will need to be a **Parish Pastoral Council member(s) serving as liaison (arrow)** between the Coordinating Team and the Council. In this case, a staff member such as **Pastoral Associate or Coordinator of Ministries** might also facilitate the Coordinating Team.

Parish C – Action Planning Structure



In smaller, or newly consolidating parishes, the **visioning and organizing functions might both reside in the Parish Pastoral Council**. In this case, while the Council needs to be able to express the overall mission and vision for the parish as a whole, **each member might also need to serve on a Coordinating Team** for either Word, Worship, Community or Service. As in the other models, the goal is still to increase the number of “doers” among the parish members at large – and **gradually move from Parish C to Parish B or Parish A model** -- so that the Parish Pastoral Council is free to sustain its primary purpose of continuous pastoral planning.

In this model, the well formed Parish Pastoral Council (background blue circle) assigns to its members the role of “Coordinating Teams” within the Council – each Council member continues to serve the visioning/planning role, but also takes up the organizing/coordinating role for one of the four ministry areas of parish life. **As in the other two models, the goal is still to engage as many parish members as possible in the action/project/doing teams.**

Coordinating Teams for Word, Worship, Community & Service

- **Definition:** A group that organizes the implementation of the plans of the Parish Pastoral Council and the mission/vision/values of the parish and that coordinates all ministries that fall within its area of focus.
- **Relationship to the Whole Parish:** The PPC members **create** the plan, the coordination team **organizes and facilitates** in order to move the plan from paper to reality and all parishioners **carry out** the plan.
- **Responsibilities:**
 - Create and maintain an effective system of communication about parish activities;
 - Ensure that each ministry leader or action/project team produces some type of annual plan; that it is achieved and evaluated;
 - Identify situations where two or more ministries might work together;
 - Identify emerging parish and community needs and potential leaders;
 - Provide a forum for proposing and discussing major new ministry initiatives;
 - Provide for skills training opportunities for parishioners and ministry leaders;
 - Ensure, with the Parish Pastoral Council, fidelity to the original parish pastoral plan, vision, mission and values.

	WORD	WORSHIP	COMMUNITY	SERVICE
Focus	Evangelization, formation, sacramental preparation and lifelong catechesis.	The liturgy as the source & summit of Christian life (Mass, Sacraments, Devotional Prayer) the practices and activities related to community prayer, devotional practices and adequate, on-going training for all liturgical ministers.	Nurturing everything that binds us as the People of God, saved as one, including hospitality, inclusivity, evangelization, spiritual growth and solidarity.	Practices and activities related to serving those in need, making justice and mercy lived values in the parish/society, living out the Gospel and creating a sustainable future for all Creation.
Sample of Ministries This May Include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic schools • Youth & Young Adult Ministry • Faith Formation for All Ages • Family Catechesis • RCIA • Vacation Bible School • Small Faith Sharing Groups • Returning Catholics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liturgy committee • Music ministries • Communion Ministers, Sacristans, Lectors • Ushers • Altar Servers & Acolytes • Children's Liturgy of the Word 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greeters • Parish Social Events/ Festivals • Parish Ministries Booklet • Parish Disabilities Advocate • Hispanic Ministries • Family Ministry • Divorce Support • Parish Nurses • Communications and Public Relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative Advocacy • <i>Just Faith</i> Program • Food Pantry • Outreach to elders • Outreach to community • Homebound and Hospital Ministry • Comprehensive Bereavement Ministry • Holiday Baskets • Social Concerns (Pro-Life, Prison Ministry, Missions, Stewardship)

Evangelization is an aspect of each area because each area seeks to bring the love of Christ and the message of salvation to both the ministers and those they serve. The coordination team for each area must have an awareness of their evangelizing mission in all they do.

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Ministries in your Parish for each of these areas of Parish Life				

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Forming a Parish Community Coordinating Team

Recommended Preliminary Reading

- ***Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered*** –the whole document if possible and, at the very least, pages 10 -11 on Community by Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L., Bishop of Scranton, 2011.

I call us to be servant leaders who build COMMUNITY through hospitality, respect, inclusion and holiness.

Following my installation as Bishop of Scranton just over a year ago, a priority for me was to arrange to celebrate a Mass in each of the eleven counties of our diocese. These pastoral visits provided me with a unique opportunity to experience the lives and ministry of so many of our people and parishes. In addition to celebrating the Eucharist, meeting new brothers and sisters in the Lord and visiting with old friends as well, a highlight of these gatherings for me was simply watching faith communities in action. For many of the celebrations, choirs joined together from all of the parishes in a given region. Rehearsals created opportunities for the establishment of new friendships. Receptions were generally held following the celebration of the Eucharist with all sorts of collaboration regarding what was to be served, who was to prepare it and how many people needed to be fed. People came from near and far to celebrate their faith and unity as Church.

In short, communities of believers joined together, one with another, for worship, fellowship and service. What made these gatherings unique, however, was the very heart and soul of what bound them together as communities in the first place. They weren't simply organizations working for a common purpose. They were people of faith devoted to prayer, committed to one another, and enlivened by the living God in their midst. In so many ways, such communities that abound in the Church today reflect the life of the early Christian community that we hear of in Acts 2:42-47. "They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. ... And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."

The great Church of Scranton as it gathers in word, worship and service seeks to reflect a call to be a people with a mission saved in hope. This is impossible outside of community. Community life is our great strength for the future. "God has willed to make people holy and save them, not as individuals without any bond or link between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge him and serve him in holiness." (Constitution of the Church, Chapter 2, Paragraph 9)

For the believer, faith is not a private affair acted upon in isolation; it is a call to holiness with a community of people; it means living out a faith commitment with a community of people. The ultimate expression of this community is in its gathering for word, worship and service.

- ***Go and Make Disciples: Commentary and Planning Guide*** –while evangelization may be seen as only one aspect of community ministry, the US Catholic Conference of Bishops' explanation, goals and objectives for evangelization echo much of what Bishop Bambera is encouraging the Church of the Diocese of Scranton to do in the area of community ministry. The Planning Guided facilitates group exploration of the text.

The complete text of the pastoral was issued by US Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1993. The *Commentary and Planning Guide* was written by Frank DeSiano, CSP and Kenneth Boyack, CSP, 1993.

Introduction

Building a successful parish-based community ministry as Bishop Bambera challenges us to do in his pastoral letter, *Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered*, requires tapping each and every able Catholic's baptismal call to serve. There is much ministry to do but the good news is that there are plenty of baptized sisters and brothers to invite to participate.

The Community Coordinating Team can be the source of organizing community work. One challenge is to create an effective structure for carrying out this important work. The structure must be able to encourage and nurture community ministry in the parish with a view to the larger picture provided by the parish pastoral council.

Another challenge is the nature of community ministry: it is the atmosphere in which the work of Word, Worship and Service take place. Every parish ministry has a community ministry flavor to it. Therefore, the Community Coordinating Team will have to organize the parish's community-building efforts in close cooperation with the coordinating teams for Word, Worship and Service and many of the ministries that one could easily categorize as belonging properly to these areas of parish life.

Furthermore, because community ministry has this nature of being the "background" or "atmosphere," the Community Coordinating Team will be challenged to communicate the vision of community to the larger parish. Often, community ministry is not about adding ministries so much as it is about rethinking how the current ministries are being done, so that all are welcomed, evangelized and enabled to grow in their ability to love God and their fellow human beings.

Core Messages of the Preliminary Suggested Readings with Implications for Structure/Purpose of Community Coordinating Team

1. *Go and Make Disciples* reminds us that every person is called into relationship with Jesus and that relationship is always lived out by active, loving participation in a community. Bishop Bambera reinforces that idea. Therefore, **creating a sense of community that pervades all aspects of parish life is essential.**

We all have – and are—stories of faith ... We can understand evangelization in light of these stories of faith: namely, how we have been changed by the power of Christ's Word and sacraments and how we have an essential role in sharing that faith through our daily lives as believers. Looked at in this way, evangelization is what we are all about! Being involved in the story of salvation is what faith is all about! Evangelization is the essential mission of the Church. (Go and Make Disciples, p. 4)

For the believer, faith is not a private affair acted upon in isolation; it is a call to holiness with a community of people; it means living out a faith commitment with a community of people. (Wounded and Loved, p. 11)

2. *Go and Make Disciples* provides the insight that the three goals of evangelization are all important. Therefore, **community ministry must have these three simultaneous foci: we must develop the holiness of the individual throughout life; we must reach out to everyone to invite them into a relationship with Jesus Christ; and community ministry includes making the world a more just and respectful place for everyone.**

Goals of Evangelization

1. *To bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others.*
2. *To invite all people in the United States, whatever their social or cultural background to hear the message of salvation in Jesus Christ so they may come to join us in the fullness of the Catholic faith.*
3. *To foster Gospel values in our society, promoting the dignity of the human person, the importance of family, and the common good of our society, so that our nation may continue to be transformed by the saving power of Jesus Christ. (Go and Make Disciples, pp. 30-34)*

Basic Structure

In *Wounded and Love, Regathering the Scattered*, Bishop Bambera highlights five “practical considerations” for community ministry in parish:

- Nurture the personal relationship of our members with God
- Deepen everyone’s knowledge of God’s saving ways
- Encourage and empower members to be evangelizers at home, school, in the workplace, neighborhood, marketplaces, and places of leisure
- Reach out to the unchurched, inactive and alienated, inviting them to join in the Church’s belief and worship and life of discipleship
- Strive to promote the consciousness that we are all part of a global community and our actions often have broader implications than just within our local community

These could be translated into the following five elements of parish community ministry:

1. Hospitality
2. Inclusivity
3. Evangelization
4. Spiritual Growth
5. Solidarity

The diagrams at the end of this article (pp. 15-16) illustrate:

- a) Parish Community Coordinating Team fully developed in light of the above elements, and
- b) How your parish might choose to begin building its Parish Community Coordination Team.

It is important to keep in mind that these are only examples. There are certainly other ways to organize the work to ensure that all elements of the *Wounded and Loved* framework are covered and that effective, engaging community ministry can occur in the parish.

Areas of Responsibility

Each area shown in the diagram represents an area of responsibility or function that might be filled by one or a few people or by several sub-groups. The following descriptions of the areas include examples for illustration purposes. In each of the areas described, it is essential for the Community Coordinating Team to respect the expertise of those parish staff members and volunteer leaders who are responsible for or involved in related ministries or programs. The Community Coordinating Team does not replace or supervise those in these other roles; rather, there should be ongoing dialogue and cooperation, as well as respect, so that all are working together toward the same goal of strengthening community ministry in the parish.

Hospitality

The Hospitality leader or team oversees all ministries that create a sense of “being at home” and being part of the parish community. They would work with greeters, ushers and members of the Parish Welcoming Committee to guarantee that every newcomer is recognized and made to feel welcome. They could empower a group to produce a parish ministries booklet and hold a “Sign-up Sunday” so that all members can be aware of their options and have the opportunity to participate in the work of the parish. They could support a lively Lazarus Ministry, which provides food in the parish hall to grieving families after a funeral. They might meet with leaders/committee chairs of parish community events to ensure that, during a time of blending parishes, parishioners from all the parishes are invited to work and to mingle with each other at the event. They could also discuss with these event organizers how to make sure that these events are infused with a welcoming atmosphere. They would also organize a Hospitality Committee to provide food for events/after masses. They might coordinate with the Word Coordinating Team to see that child care is provided at adult gatherings.

Inclusivity

Segments of the parish community that often feel left out would be the purview of the Inclusivity team or leader. The Inclusivity team/leader could coordinate with the parish youth ministry to develop a Young Adult Ministry. This team/leader might also oversee the development of a support group for single parent families. This team or leader is concerned with taking care that persons with disabilities are included in all aspects of parish life. They might call forth a Parish Disabilities Advocate(s) who could make certain that persons with disabilities are invited to parish events, have access to them and are able to participate in them. The Inclusivity leaders would work with the Director of Religious Education to ensure that inclusivity was part of training for catechists and that aids were assigned to students as needed. They could identify and organize interpreters for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This team could work with the Buildings and Grounds Committee to walk the parish plant and identify ways to make the facilities more handicapped accessible. They might even encourage the development of a subcommittee on the Buildings & Grounds committee whose focus would be accessibility. In addition, the Inclusivity team/leaders would coordinate ministry to groups who are new to this country or for whom English is a second language. The team/leader could work with the Worship Coordination Team to develop regular masses in Spanish. They could establish a festival to celebrate the parish’s cultural diversity. They could work with the Word Coordination Team to see that religious education for both adults and children includes translators and/or a form of family catechesis that is provided in Spanish or includes elements of Central or Latin American culture. (Obviously, this team/leader would include ministries aimed at whatever nationality or non-English speaking language group was in their parish.)

Evangelization

The Evangelization leader or team would look at all parts of parish life through the lens of evangelization. They could coordinate with the priest(s) and Director of Worship to develop an approach to worship, and homilies in particular, that cultivates the ongoing conversion of the congregants. The Evangelization team could come together with the team for Spiritual Growth to offer small faith-sharing groups using *RENEW* or a similar program. Both teams could work with the Word Coordinating Team to ensure that Scripture study with a faith-sharing component or book discussion that included a faith-sharing component was a regular part of the parish calendar. The Evangelization team/leader could advance a program for returning/inactive Catholics, such as *Landings* or *Awakening Faith*, as well as a program in which all parishioners could be trained to invite inactive Catholics to return. This team/leader could coordinate with the RCIA team to ensure that the inquiry stage of RCIA evangelized, rather than catechized. This collaborative effort could extend to introducing an inquiry program such as *Seeking Christ*. The Evangelization team/leader might establish a Parish Mission Committee with the Worship Coordinating Team members to offer parishioners the opportunity to renew their relationship with Christ regularly.

Spiritual Growth

If parishioners are to be more than a group of people with a common interest, they need to live out of an ongoing relationship with God that is nurtured and challenged daily. This area of parish life is the focus of the Spiritual Growth team/ leader. Helping families see how they are “domestic churches” requires a coordinated Family Ministry team, which could be established by this Spiritual Growth team/leader, who would also plan for its formation and education. The Spiritual Growth team/leader would ensure that the parish’s Eucharistic Adoration participants had a central coordinator(s) and that the program was inviting and functioning well. They could coordinate with the Word Coordinating Team to provide a Lenten/Advent Study Series and plan for small faith-sharing groups with both the Word Coordinating Team and the Evangelization team/leader. This team/leader could also create a list of local, available spiritual directors, educate the community on what they do and publish the list. The team/leader could publish retreat offerings and Internet links to helpful prayer websites.

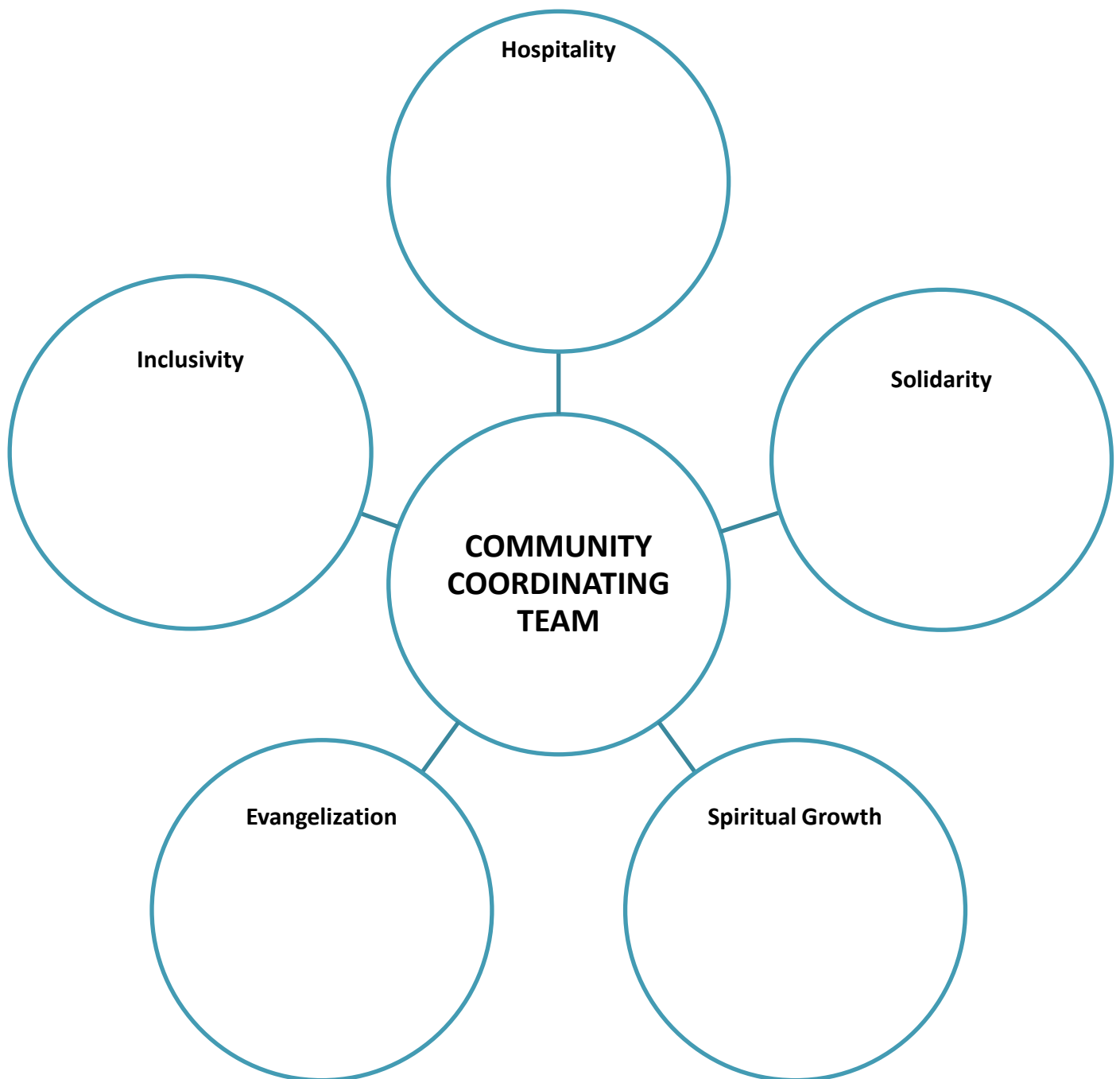
Solidarity

As Jesus stood with each person, whatever their life situation, in their struggles, suffering or sin, so too our parish must be in solidarity with each member, especially in times of need. The Solidarity team/leader could work closely with the Service Coordination Team to ensure that the parish is offering strong programs for Grief Support and Divorce Support, for children as well as for adults. This collaborative effort could also yield a Parish Nurses Committee. Together, the Solidarity team/leader and the Service Coordinating Team could invite to the parish speakers on health issues, elder care and financial health. They could also coordinate efforts to provide meals for families with a member in the hospital or transportation for people with doctor visits or medical testing. The Solidarity team/leader could organize outreach to those in prison – another effort which may benefit from cooperation with the Service Coordination Team. Solidarity also includes working towards making the world a more just place for those without a voice or who are vulnerable. The Solidarity team/leader would work with the Service Coordinating Team to encourage the education of parishioners on legislative issues or on the plight of needy persons/communities, locally, nationally and globally, and manage parish efforts to help. They could combine efforts with the Inclusivity team around raising awareness and the welcoming of parishioners with disabilities.

Sample Parish Community Coordination Team:



Your Parish Community Coordinating Team:



Forming a Parish Worship Coordinating Team

Recommended Preliminary Reading

■ ***Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered*** by Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, DD., J.C.L., Bishop of Scranton, 2011—the whole document if possible, or, at the very least, page 10 on Worship.

I CALL us to be servant leaders who WORSHIP our God and celebrate the Sacraments in union with the universal Church.

Basic to the faith life of the local parish community is its great act of worship, the liturgy. It challenges and celebrates our relationship with God, one another, and the world. According to the Second Vatican Council, baptized believers fulfill their liturgical role at worship through “that conscious and active participation ... which is demanded by the nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people ... have a right and obligation by reason of their baptism.” (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Chapter 1, Paragraph 14a)

Pope Benedict in his most recent book, *Jesus of Nazareth* defines Eucharist as a visible process of gathering. He writes, “In each locality, as well as beyond all localities, it involves entering into communion with the living God, who inwardly draws people together. The Church comes into being from Eucharist. She receives her unity and her mission from the Eucharist.” (*Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict XVI)

We must take every advantage to emphasize that at the heart of our mission to be evangelizers is the Paschal Mystery of Christ celebrated in the Eucharistic liturgy. It is into Christ’s dying and rising that we were baptized. And here it is that we faithfully strive to understand and appreciate our own daily dying and rising. This Paschal Mystery lies at the heart of our hope for one another.

■ ***Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium)*** Second Vatican Council 1963—the entire document if possible, or, at the very least, sections 1-58. This document can be found in various liturgical books or online at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html

At the very heart of the Catholic faith is its worship, specifically the sacred liturgy, which makes the work of our redemption in Christ a present reality. It’s what we do on a regular basis and has become the identifying practice of Catholicism. While our regular worship may seem repetitive and habitual, the Church continuously calls us to renew our understanding of the liturgy, our participation in it, and the collaboration of individuals whose gifts enhance its celebration.

In December of 1963, Pope Paul VI promulgated the first document of the Second Vatican Council, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, known by its Latin title, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. This document called for a profound renewal of the liturgy, and, while over fifty years have passed since its declaration, much work still needs to be done in achieving the reforms for which this council aimed. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* provides a solid understanding of what our Catholic worship is about and the goals that both the parish pastoral council and the parish worship coordination team should strive for.

Core Messages of the Preliminary Suggested Readings
with Implications for Structure/Purpose of Worship Coordinating Team

The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* and *Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered* provide two basic messages that have implications for the responsibilities and structures of the Worship Coordination Team:

1. ***The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fount from which all the Church's power flows*** (CSL 10)

Obviously, we know that going to Mass is important in the Catholic faith, but this statement challenges us to see our Sunday worship as not simply an obligation: it is, in fact, the source and summit of our lived Catholic faith—"an expression as mentioned in Bishop Bambera's pastoral vision. Some questions that a parish worship coordination team should consider are: Do most of our parishioners view going to Mass as merely fulfilling an obligation? Is our liturgy really the source from which all activity in the parish flows and the summit towards which it is all directed? Is the life of the parish intimately connected with its liturgical celebrations? Do our personal prayer and popular devotions harmonize with and help strengthen our liturgical prayer? Do we offer ourselves at Eucharist along with the bread and wine that become the Body and Blood of Christ so that we too can be changed? Are we strengthened through our worship to be faithful disciples of Christ in the world?

2. ***The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy*** (CSL 14).

Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered reiterates this statement and emphasizes that this participation is a "right and obligation" by virtue of baptism. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* declares that this aim is to be considered before anything else—strong language to emphasize the importance of this goal--and Canon law even states that the obligation of Catholic Christians is not simply to "attend" Mass but "participate" in (Canon 1247). For this reason, parish worship coordination teams should keep this objective in mind in every aspect of their planning and preparation. In what ways can we better foster the participation of our parishioners? Is there anything that inhibits their participation? Who should be setting the example for this full, conscious and active participation?

Basic Structure

In *Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered*, Bishop Bambera highlights these “practical considerations” for WORSHIP ministry in parish:

- Present Sunday as the “weekly Easter,” an expression of the identity of our community and the center of its life and mission;
- Develop a comprehensive catechesis of the Eucharist including the implementation of the Roman Missal;
- Find ways to promote: liturgical catechesis in the parish, and improved quality of participation by parishioners of all ages in Sunday Mass, the calling of men and women to liturgical ministries, the training of liturgical ministers, both spiritually and functionally, and improved use of music and art to enhance liturgical celebrations in a way that the world can comprehend;
- Help parishioners to understand that the same “Spirit” of God transforming the bread and wine at Eucharist is also breathing life into our scripture readings at Mass;
- Provide for the needs of new immigrants in the context of our liturgical celebrations; and
- Engage a Director of Liturgy in each parish or cluster of parishes to coordinate worship for the community.

These could be translated into these five elements of parish worship ministry:

1. Vitality
2. Catechesis and Formation
3. Living the Lectionary
4. Culture
5. Devotional Prayer

The diagrams at the end of this article (pp. 22-23) illustrate:

- a) WORSHIP coordinating team that is fully developed in light of the above elements and
- b) How your parish might choose to begin building its WORD Coordinating Team

It is important to keep in mind that these are only examples. There are certainly other ways to organize the work to ensure that all elements of the *Wounded and Loved* framework are covered and that effective, engaging worship ministry can occur in the parish.

Areas of Responsibility

Each area shown in the diagram represents an area of responsibility or function that might be filled by one or a few people or by several sub-groups. The following description of the areas include examples for illustration purposes. In each of the areas described, it is essential for the Worship Coordinating Team to respect the expertise of those parish staff members and volunteer leaders who are responsible for or involved in related ministries or programs. The Worship Coordinating Team does not replace or supervise those in these other roles; rather, there should be ongoing dialogue and cooperation, as well as respect, so that all are working together toward the same goal of strengthening community ministry in the parish.

Vitality: The Vitality leader or team oversees the different ministries and committees responsible for the planning, preparation and execution of effective liturgy. This team would recognize the gifts and talents of parishioners and invite them into planning and doing liturgy. “Vitality” would oversee the Liturgy Committee, Art and Environment Committee, Music Ministry and Sacristans. A key task is coordinating the work of these groups through effective communication and organizational skills. The goal is to create vibrant liturgies. This team could also work with any of the other branches of the Worship Coordinating Team, so that all liturgical ministers are properly informed and prepared. They would also work with other Coordinating Teams for special liturgies or prayer services sponsored by those teams (e.g. with Word for Christian Initiation, or First Communion; with Community’s Solidarity leader for an All Soul’s Mass for the grieving; with Service for the integration of Catholic Social Teachings in the themes and messages of liturgy, etc.)

Liturgical Catechesis and Formation—the Catechesis and Formation leader or team oversees the proper training and ongoing formation of liturgical ministers (Extraordinary Ministers of Communion, Lectors, Cantors, Altar Servers etc.) as well as providing liturgical catechesis to parishioners of all ages. The effective collaboration with catechetical leaders in the area of WORD, would include many aspects of sacramental preparation and the formation of catechumens and candidates in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

Living the Lectionary—the Living the Lectionary leader or team oversees that all aspects of the parish life are guided by the Lectionary (the readings we hear proclaimed at Mass). Some groups that would fall under this area would be a faith-sharing group that reflects on the upcoming Sunday readings (this in partnership with the Community Spiritual Growth Team); an intercession preparation team; a homily preparation team that does faith-sharing with the pastor/assistant pastor so that the priest can offer a homily with insights that truly speak to the lives of parishioners. A lectionary-based social action team could work with the Service Coordinating Team to base its weekly call to action on an inherent theme in the Sunday readings.

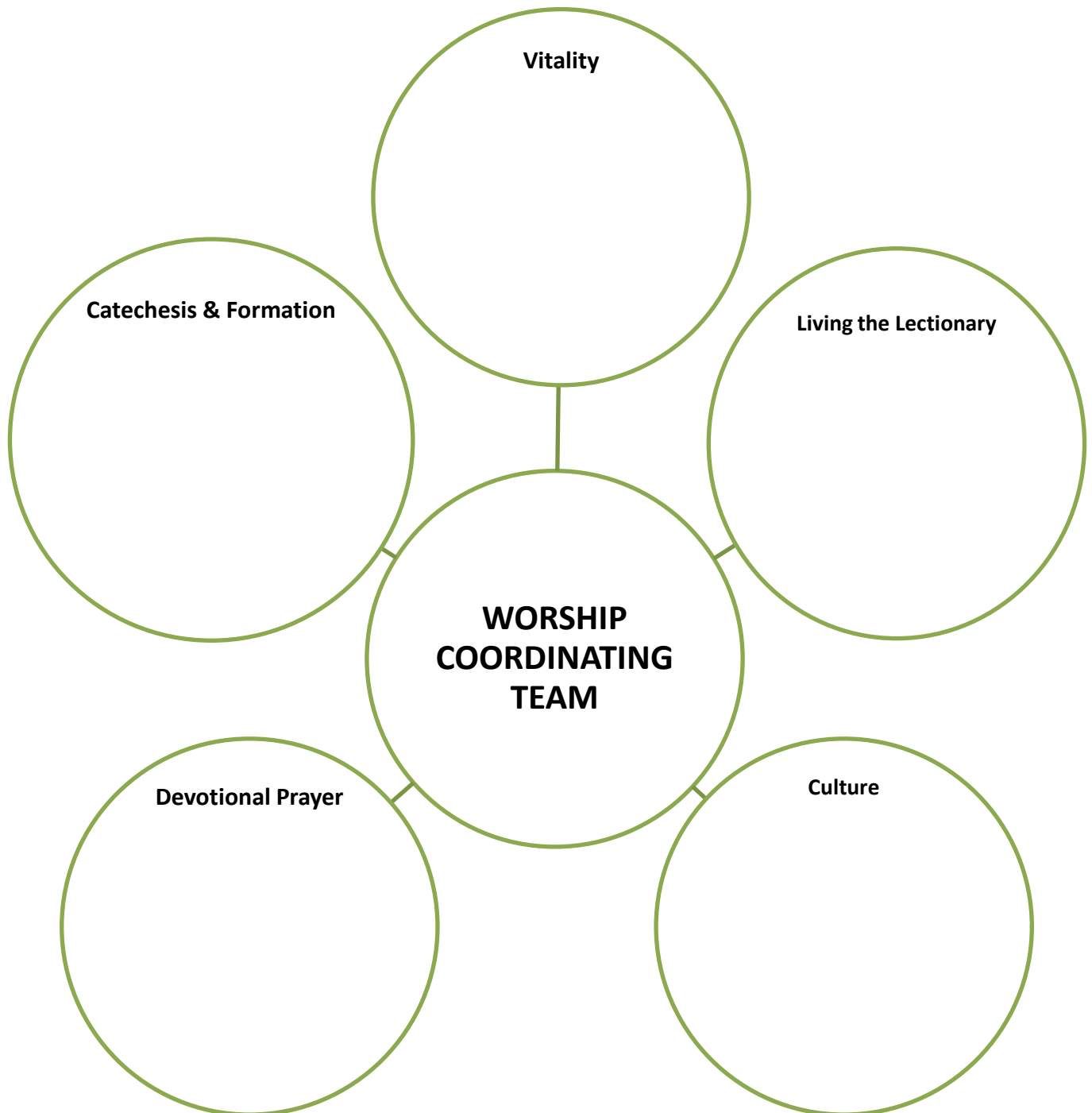
Culture—the Culture leader or team recognizes and fosters both the current cultural diversity and the cultural background of parishioners. This would include opportunities to remember and respect the roots of parishioners in liturgy or personal devotions and providing for the needs of new immigrants, especially the Hispanic population, at liturgy and personal devotions; developing a radical sense of welcome and hospitality at our parish liturgies. This will be an important area for cooperation with the Community's Inclusivity and Hospitality Teams.

Devotional Prayer—the Devotional Prayer leader or team oversees the popular and personal devotions that foster the personal spirituality of parishioners. Popular devotions of the parish may include group recitation of the Rosary or the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, Eucharistic Adoration, novenas, prayers to saints and sacramentals. Informing and inviting parishioners to participate in these devotions helps foster the rich spiritual tradition of the Catholic Church. This group could easily coordinate its efforts with the Community Spiritual Growth Team.

Sample Parish WORSHIP Coordinating Team:



Your Parish WORSHIP Coordinating Team:



Forming a Parish WORD Coordinating Team

Recommended Preliminary Reading

- ***Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered*** –the whole document if possible and, at the very least, pages 8-9 on Word, by Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L., Bishop of Scranton, 2011.

I call us to be servant leaders who are people of the WORD, preaching, teaching, evangelizing and cherishing the Gospel message throughout our entire lives.

The parish as the local community of faith constitutes a primary environment in which faith is shared and formation takes place. Educational efforts in the parish are intended to provide formation for Christian life. Before ascending to the Father, Christ gave the apostles a final command -- to make disciples of all nations and to teach and observe all that he has commanded. (Mt 28: 18-20) The process of forming disciples very soon received the name of catechesis. *“Catechesis further specifies evangelization. It is a moment in the evangelization/conversion process. Being a form of the ministry of the Word, catechesis aims at developing understanding of the mystery of Christ in light of God’s word.”* (The relationship between Evangelization and Catechesis, NCDD Study Paper, page 2)

Thus, from the earliest days of the Church until now, we find a consistent and continuing call to include the four-fold dimension of parish life: word, worship, community and service, in all our ongoing faith formation efforts just as in all of evangelization. The challenge for Catholic formation in our parishes is to make the baptized aware of the universality of Christ’s mission. We must educate the faithful to their responsibility for justice and ecumenism; we must facilitate the development of moral judgments and Christian decision-making; and we need to offer opportunities for the study of Scripture, and ways to grow in prayer and service to others.

- ***National Directory for Catechesis, USCCB 2005*** -- especially Ch. 7, “Catechizing the People of God in Diverse Settings” and Ch. 9, “Organizing Catechetical Ministry”
- ***Our Hearts Are Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation*** in the United States, USCCB, 1999 -- with available Leader’s Guide; a three week seminar on this document is available through the Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation.

Core Messages of the Preliminary Suggested Readings
with Implications for Structure/Purpose of Word Coordinating Team

The National Directory for Catechesis is a compendium of the vision, guiding principles, and core content for lifelong faith formation -- and therefore provides an essential resource for all dimensions of WORD ministry in the parish and Diocese. Three over-riding themes will help the parish WORD coordinating team retain its focus while organizing many different parts of this ministry:

1. The missionary character of catechesis

Catechesis that awakens an initial faith and encourages conversion to Christ and the conviction to live as his disciple is the primary aim. In this context, rooted in the baptismal catechumenate, catechesis aims to achieve a more integral formation of the person rather than merely to communicate information. This approach seeks to foster a committed conversation through a systematic catechesis based upon a thorough integration of Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, through liturgical catechesis, proper pastoring and insertion into the parish community. These four aspects lead people to a life of faith in Christ, hope in his promises, and charity toward those in need. This life of faith, hope and charity is nourished through communion with Jesus in the Liturgy, above all in the Eucharist.

No one who meets Christ and no one who knows Christ can keep that knowledge secret. We must equip disciples to proclaim him openly and confidently testify to his transforming presence in our lives. This passion stirs in all the members of the Body of Christ a reinvigorated sense of mission akin to the enthusiasm of the first Christians. This passion reawakens and redirects the Church's apostolic outreach and fuels the initiatives of the new evangelization. Such genuine passion sets the hearts of catechists on fire with the love of Christ and the desire to lead others to his light.

2. Lifelong, continuous, and adaptable to stages of formation and circumstances

Lifelong catechesis is absolutely necessary for the Christian formation of the faithful. While the catechesis offered initially in the family is ordinarily informal, unstructured and spontaneous, it is critical for the development of the child's faith. Nothing replaces family catechesis, especially for its positive and receptive environment, for the example of adults, and for its first explicit experience and practice of the faith.

The most important task of the catechesis of children is to provide, through the witness of adults, an environment in which young people can grow in faith. Having introduced them to the person of Jesus Christ within the family, faith formation for school-age children presents a more formal and systematic catechesis, revealing in an elementary way all the principal mysteries of faith and their effects on the child's moral and religious life.

Catechesis for pre-adolescents and adolescents should take into account their changing physical, social, and psychological conditions. Such programs aim to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today; to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community; and to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

With young adults, great care must be given to a pastoral approach that understands their particular concerns and questions, and which strives to connect them -- to the person of Jesus Christ, to the Church, to the mission of the Church in the world, and with a peer community.

The maturation of the Christian life in adulthood requires that it be cultivated in all its dimensions: knowledge of the faith, liturgical life, moral formation, prayer, belonging to community, and missionary spirit. Adult catechesis should be the organizing principle, which gives coherence to the various catechetical programs offered by a particular church...This is the axis around which revolves the catechesis of childhood and adolescence as well as that of old age.

The catechesis of elder members of the parish notes the significant contributions that they make to the entire community through their wisdom and witness. Their formation is a catechesis of hope, and they contribute to the overall parish effort the invaluable element of intergenerational dialogue that adds a significant dimension to the proclamation of the Gospel within the family and within the community of faith.

Persons with various disabilities are integral members of the Christian community, and each has the capacity for growth in holiness. Persons with disabilities have catechetical needs that the Christian community must recognize and meet. All baptized persons have a right to adequate catechesis and deserve the means to develop a relationship with God.

3. Integrated within a comprehensive program of pastoral ministry

A comprehensive parish-based catechesis harmonizes the catechesis of adults, families, parents, youth, children in the parish catechetical program and Catholic schools, children in the parish baptismal catechumenate, and small Christian communities.

The most effective catechetical programs for all stages and circumstances are integrated into a comprehensive program of pastoral ministry that includes catechesis, community life, evangelization, justice and service, leadership development, pastoral care and prayer and worship.

Basic Structure

In *Wounded and Love, Regathering the Scattered*, Bishop Bambara highlights these “practical considerations” for WORD ministry in parish:

- Promote on-going family-centered Christian formation through cooperative catechetical programs for all ages and groups with the special needs of individuals and families in mind;
- Use the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in all parishes as a primary means of fulfilling our mission to evangelize;
- Promote full incorporation of youth and young adults into the life of the parish through ministry programs and the inclusion of young people in parish activities, organizations, and structures;
- Develop and support teachers, catechists and others involved in Christian formation;
- Provide the opportunity for all the faithful to participate in ongoing programs of catechesis with special attention to lectionary based methods of learning in order to develop a greater understanding of Scripture and its application in our lives and world;
- Engage a life-long Faith-Formation Minister to coordinate religious education and/or youth ministry for the parish or regional partnership;
- Incorporate Catholic colleges and universities more fully into the life of the diocesan parishes;
- Impress upon all of the faithful our membership in the domestic, parish, diocesan and universal Church through catechetical initiatives;

- Re-focus our educational ministry or catechesis on events such as birth, marriage, death or other personal celebrations of joy and loss;
- Promote an ecumenical attitude by encouraging prayer and cooperation among various religious traditions.

These could be translated into the following five elements of parish WORD ministry:

1. Mission of Evangelization
2. Christian Initiation Ministries
3. Lifelong Faith Formation
4. Family Perspective
5. Ecumenical/Interfaith Dialogue

The diagrams at the end of this article (pp. 29-30) illustrate:

- a) a WORD coordinating team that is fully developed in light of the above elements and
- b) how your parish might choose to begin building its WORD Coordinating Team.

It is important to keep in mind that these are only examples. There are certainly other ways to organize the work to ensure that all elements of the *Wounded and Loved* framework are covered and that effective, engaging community ministry can occur in the parish.

Areas of Responsibility

Each area shown in the diagram represents an area of responsibility or function that might be filled by one or a few people or by several sub-groups. The following descriptions of the areas include examples for illustration purposes. In each of the areas described, it is essential for the WORD Coordinating Team to respect the expertise of those parish staff members and volunteer leaders who are responsible for or involved in related ministries or programs. The WORD Coordinating Team does not replace or supervise those in these other roles; rather, there should be ongoing dialogue and cooperation, as well as respect, so that all are working together toward the same goal of lifelong faith formation ministry in the parish.

Mission of Evangelization: In collaboration with the Ministries of Community, this team supports all parish efforts to reach out, invite, welcome, and support inquiry with persons whose faith is still to be awakened or is newly emerging. Along with providing programs of direct outreach, this team equips the current members with the foundations and tools needed to “Go and Make Disciples.” Working closely with the Community Coordinating Team areas, this team could organize a parish mission or outside guest speaker, and offer parish retreats for all ages. Something like the Paulist Evangelization Center’s programs of *Landings*, *Awakening Faith*, or *Seeking Christ* would be helpful resources.

Christian Initiation Ministries: The Christian Initiation leader or team oversees all ministries that pertain to initiating members more fully into the sacramental life of the Church. The Mission of Evangelization group could assist in a smooth transition from the initial evangelization outreach into these more formal catechetical steps. This would focus especially on the RCIA, and baptismal catechumenate with children, but also includes aspects of Sacramental Preparation at each stage of readiness for Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. This team would

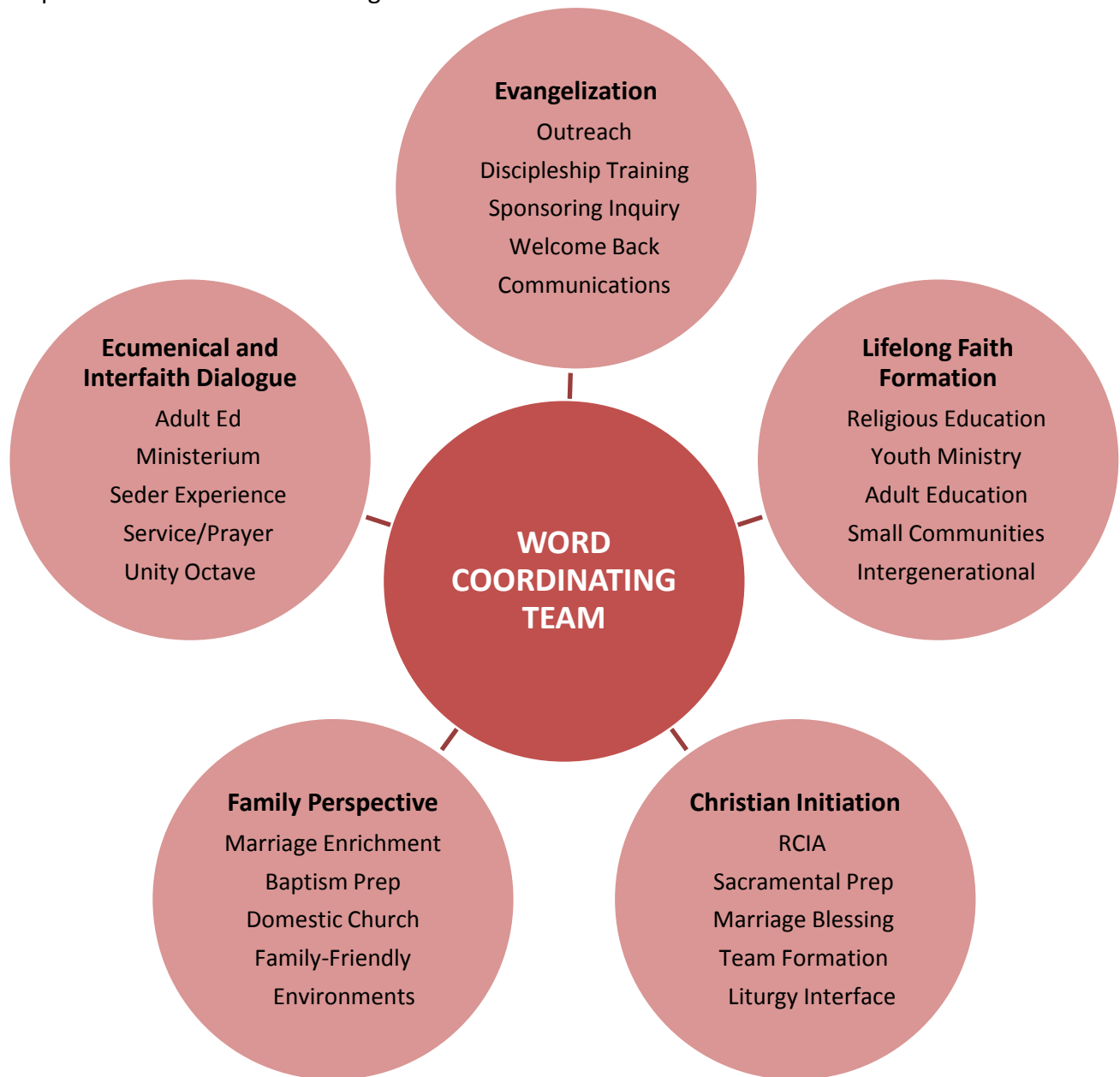
invite people into such ministries as sponsor, catechist, hospitality minister, faith-sharing companions, family-to-family minister, etc. and works closely with the Worship Coordinating Teams of Catechesis and Vitality to prepare the liturgical celebrations for these sacramental moments.

Lifelong Faith Formation: This function helps to develop and deliver a comprehensive scope of faith formation opportunities for all ages and stage of development of members in the parish community. Here youth ministry, religious education in the parish program PreK-12th grade, and in the parish school community, Vacation Bible School – all of these programs can be integrated and orchestrated. This team needs to work with Family Perspective as well as the Community's Inclusivity team so that what children and teens learn in class is connected and communicated to families, and so that what is happening in real families is addressed in the faith formation process. Customarily, adult participants are invited to shape the content and approach, and parishes are encouraged to partner with neighboring communities for to enrich the dialogue and the array of choices. This team takes up the challenge to make adult catechesis the "axis around which revolves the catechesis for all" other groups in the parish.

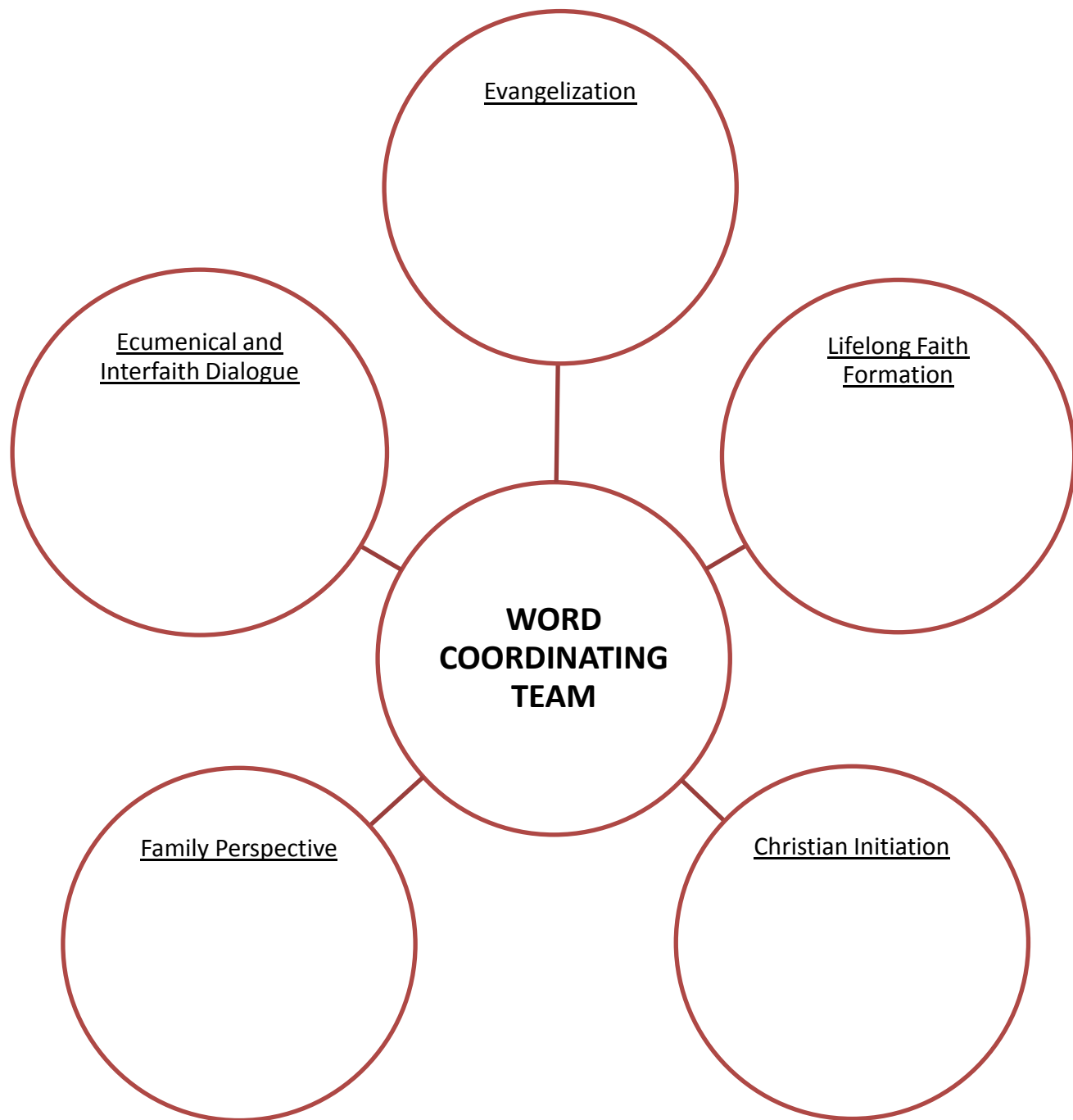
Family Perspective: Closely aligned with all of the other areas, this team looks at all of parish life through the lens of supporting families in their efforts to be centers of faith formation. With attention to all programs of faith formation, this team especially looks to enhance the total family experience at key moments like: marriage preparation and enrichment, birth and baptism, milestones in family/child development, parent involvement in sacramental preparation, times of family loss or crisis, anniversaries and graduations, and the like. This team can also interface with the Ministries of Worship in seeing that all communal worship experiences are "family-friendly" and with the Ministries of Service to create service opportunities for families to engage in together and with Community's Inclusivity group to make sure events are planned with families in mind.

Ecumenical and Interfaith Dialogue: At the most local level, this team will become aware of the faith traditions represented by members within the parish (spouses, other family members) as well as the immediate geographic vicinity. Working with the pastor, this team will nurture ecumenical and interfaith relationships through the Ministerium and support both educational and service-oriented activities in partnership with other faith bodies. This would be a place to reach out to Service's Outreach and Charity team, as well as the Legislative Advocacy team, who will have programs and connections that are or can be developed with ecumenical opportunities. Within the parish, this team can provide faith formation with an ecumenical/interfaith sensitivity, and facilitate the parish's participation in regional and Diocesan initiatives.

Sample Parish WORD Coordinating Team:



Your Parish WORD Coordinating Team:



Forming a Parish SERVICE and Social Concerns Coordinating Team

Recommended Preliminary Reading

- ***Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered*** – the whole document if possible and, at the very least, pages 11-12 on Social Justice and Stewardship by Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L., Bishop of Scranton, 2011.

I call us to be servant leaders who engage in SERVICE to our neighbors near and far and who work for justice and stewardship to hasten the Reign of God.

Service to the poor and those in need abounds and the mission of the Church is not only acknowledged in words but thrives due to faithful and generous hearts committed to living out the Gospel of Jesus. The more people realize that service is a constitutive dimension of the gospel, the more they will see their outreach as being the living presence of the risen Christ today.

As God's people, we participate in the social mission of the Church primarily in the marketplace. It is within the context of everyday life in the home and workplace that men and women of faith live out their call to ministry and work for a just society. We are all challenged to envision a world described in the Sermon on the Mount presented in Matthew's gospel. The mission is called forth, enlivened, and focused primarily in the parish.

Parish social ministry responds to human needs, whatever and wherever they may be, whether with parishioners or other members of the community, whether the need be hunger, housing, illness, loneliness, employment, fair wages, physical disabilities or ecological sustainability. Parish social ministries must respond to issues of respect for human life at every stage of existence. We must encourage broad group action on behalf of those who hunger for righteousness and peace. However it is done, parish social ministry needs to be organized and deliberate. It must be communal, planned and directed by a group, and not a simple individual response.

As Bishop, it is my great privilege to proclaim our responsibility to carry out the mission proclaimed by Jesus at the beginning of his ministry when he stood up in the synagogue and quoted Isaiah 61: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me for God has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the afflicted, to soothe the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, release to those in prison, to proclaim a year of favor from the Lord."

- ***Communities of Salt and Light: Reflections on the Social Mission of the Parish***, a pastoral letter written by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1993-4, available at http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/communities-of-salt-and-light-reflections-on-the-social-mission-of-the-parish.cfm#_topdoc

Communities of Salt and Light: Reflections on the Social Mission of the Parish tells us,
The parish is where the Church lives. 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. Parishes are the home of the Christian community; they are the heart of our Church. Parishes are the place where God's people meet Jesus in word and sacrament and come in touch with the source of the Church's life.

Core Messages of the Preliminary Suggested Readings
with Implications for Structure/Purpose of Service and Social Concerns Coordinating Team

Communities of Salt and Light provides three key messages that have implications for the responsibilities and structures of the “Coordination Team:”

1. *Our social mission should be integrated throughout parish life.*

As the story of the Last Judgment in Mathew's Gospel reminds us, in the end we will all be judged by how we have cared for the least among us. This means that the Catholic social mission is an essential part of the faith life of every able Catholic. It must be woven into education programs so that all Catholics learn about Catholic social teaching. It must be reflected in the prayer and worship of our faith community. And it must include a wide range of opportunities for members of our parishes to act on the social dimensions of our faith. In his Pastoral Letter, *Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered*, Bishop Bambara's call to “include in our teaching and preaching an understanding of the Church's social teaching and the responsibility of all Christians of every age to be involved in the work of justice, especially bringing the principles of justice and peace into their everyday life and work” (p. 12) echoes the call of the bishops in their *Communities of Salt and Light* document.

2. *Social Concerns Committees, in their leadership capacity, should organize the work, not do the work.*

The primary role of these leaders is to provide opportunities, invite and recruit members of their faith community to become involved in Catholic social mission. For example, the leaders of the parish's program to support a local soup kitchen can do their job well only by creating opportunities and inviting other parishioners to volunteer. This is not to suggest that members of Coordination Teams should absent themselves from being involved in the doing of work; rather, in the role of leader/organizer/planner, the critical task at hand is to organize, invite, recruit, orchestrate and create opportunities for the parish – and all of its

members – to become engaged. In *Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered*, Bishop Bambara encourages all of us to “identify and act on local social concerns and educate parishioners in the common call to justice” (p. 12).

3. Parish social ministry must include both efforts to provide direct service or outreach to people in need and efforts to work for justice and peace

by shaping the policies, programs, and structures of society. These two dimensions of the Catholic social mission are essential and complementary. Once again, in his letter, Bishop Bambara joins the call of the bishops for a multi-faceted approach to social justice when he states, “We must encourage broad group action on behalf of those who hunger for righteousness and peace” (p.12).

Basic Structure

In *Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered*, Bishop Bambara highlights these “practical considerations” for SERVICE ministry in parish:

- Involve all parishioners in social ministry and include awareness of human needs into all aspects of parish life and worship;
- Promote initiatives rooted in the Gospel of Life that both acknowledge and treasure all forms of human life as created in the image and likeness of God;
- Identify and act on local social concerns and educate parishioners in the common call to justice;
- Form regional or partnership “assessment teams” that determine strategies of service in the area;
- Include in our teaching and preaching an understanding of the Church’s social teaching and the responsibility of all Christians of every age to be involved in the work of justice, especially bringing the principles of justice and peace into their everyday life and work;
- Encourage all of the faithful to embrace fully their vocational calling as baptized Christians and to promote a deeper awareness of and appreciation for vocational calls to the priesthood, diaconate, consecrated life and lay apostolates;
- Take seriously the need to care for the Earth to create a sustainable future for the world;
- Address from a local and global perspective those in need by supporting opportunities provided by the diocesan office of the Pontifical Mission Society, Catholic Relief Services, and other efforts;
- Form parishioners in an understanding of stewardship as a responsible personal and communal use of time, talent and treasure within the Church and all of life.

These could be translated into these five elements of parish service and social concerns ministry:

1. Formation in Catholic Social Teaching
2. Outreach and Charity – Local and Global Solidarity
3. Legislative Advocacy
4. Care for all of Creation
5. Vocation and Spirit of Stewardship

The diagram at the end of this article (pp. 37-38) illustrate

(a) a parish Service Coordinating Team that is fully developed in light of the above elements
(b) how your parish might choose to begin building its parish Service Coordinating Team. It is important to keep in mind that these are only examples. There are certainly other ways to organize the work to ensure that all elements are covered and that engaging an effective service and social concerns ministry can occur in the parish.

Areas of Responsibility

Each activity area shown in the diagram represents an area of responsibility or function that might be filled by one or a few people or by several sub-groups. The following descriptions of the areas include examples for illustration purposes. In each of the areas described, it is essential for social concerns leaders to respect the expertise of those parish staff members and volunteer leaders who are responsible for, or involved in, related ministries or programs.

Formation in Catholic Social Teaching: The primary role of this team is to ensure that the social mission of the Church and Catholic Social Teaching is integral to all education and formation efforts. For example, they would work with the parish DRE to ensure that the Catholic social mission is incorporated into all parish educational programs. It might mean helping education staff or leaders know what is being planned by the Coordinating Team and developing a plan for involving students in some of these outreach and advocacy activities. It might include organizing a session on Catholic social mission for sacramental preparation programs or the RCIA process. It could mean this team sponsors *JustFaith* in the parish or CCHD's *Journey to Justice Program*. This team will also interface with the Worship Coordinating Team, developing opportunities to connect Sunday liturgies to Catholic social mission and organizing prayer services focused on charity, justice, and peace.

Outreach and Charity (Local and Global Solidarity): This is the group that focuses on direct service activities to people in need. They might organize parishioners to serve once a month at a soup kitchen, or to fold clothes every week at a clothing distribution center. They might organize a collection of blankets for homeless people or a collection of food for Thanksgiving baskets. The key is understanding that this team's job is not simply to show up at the soup kitchen, but to provide opportunities for other parishioners to get involved. Recruitment of volunteers is the critical task. In some parishes, this team may be made up of leaders who

organize various ongoing outreach projects or programs (e.g. St. Vincent de Paul, Gabriel Project, Thanksgiving baskets, etc.). When a collection of goods for homeless people is planned, the prayer and worship leader(s) might work with the parish liturgy planners to include some of those goods as part of the presentation of the gifts. Where outreach programs have been active for a long time, it is important to connect them to the larger social ministry effort in ways that respect the knowledge and experience of those who have been working hard on parish outreach. Since Catholic Relief Services of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has as its mission the call to global solidarity and peace, promoting and organizing its wide variety of programs can be central to this team's efforts, along with the parish's response to invitations from the Pontifical Mission Societies and other global initiatives as they arise. This group could coordinate efforts with Community's Solidarity leaders working on grief support, divorce support, parish nurses, prison ministry, and/or help for families needing food or transportation during illnesses.

Legislative Advocacy: The Legislative Advocacy Team is the group that creates opportunities for parishioners to be involved in working on public policies related to justice and peace. This might mean organizing a parish chapter of a local legislative network or a parish affiliate of a group like Bread for the World. It might include coordinating parish participation in a lobby day organized by the state Catholic Conference. It might involve providing information to parishioners about other local advocacy groups. It might also include inviting local elected officials to meet with parishioners about important local issues or inviting speakers to discuss Church teaching on public policy issues. This team might also organize a "prayer network" to pray about issue of human life, justice and peace, or might organize special prayer services to mark feast days and other events that highlight the social mission of the church. Again, it is essential that this team understands their role as providing opportunities for many parishioners to be involved in shaping a world that protects human life and dignity and promotes justice and peace. The Catholic Church in the United States has a long history of supporting community organizing projects that empower people in low-income communities to improve their neighborhoods and their lives. One of the key ways we do this is through the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), a collection taken in parishes nationwide each year through which grants are given to local community organizations. The Legislative Advocacy Team in your parish could support this initiative, and also consider local projects worthy of applying for CCHD grants.

Care for All Creation: This team focuses the parish members and resources on all aspects of conservation and care for the earth and all living things. In some parishes this will involve direct responses to "reduce, re-use and recycle" as well as interaction with community organizing efforts directed to care for the neighborhood, preservation of air and water quality, compassionate care for animals, or similar concerns specific to your area. In cooperation with the other teams, this group would work both on charitable outreach and legislative advocacy, with a focus on Care for All Creation. In many cases, this effort will include the need for educational programs and consciousness raising among the parish membership. Partnering

with nearby parishes, churches of other faith expressions, and civic organizations will make for greater success in the work of this team in all efforts to provide for a sustainable future.

Vocation and Stewardship: This team is primarily concerned about encouraging all of the faithful to embrace fully their vocational calling as baptized Christians and to promoting a deeper awareness of and appreciation for vocational calls to the priesthood, diaconate, consecrated life and lay apostolates. This group could work with Worship's Devotional Prayer group to foster prayer for vocations. It will be important to interface with the Word Coordinating Team for various education/formation opportunities, and to ensure that this understanding of the *universal call to holiness rooted in Baptism* is integrated throughout all levels of faith formation. In addition to this awareness of each one's ultimate vocation path, the Vocation and Stewardship Team creates pathways for the parish to optimize the "time, talent and treasure" of each member and of the community as a whole – tending these resources wisely and applying them in a mission-oriented style in order to accomplish the goals of the parish in response to the mission of the Church. Programs such as *Living Your Strengths* or *Called and Gifted* will assist this team to develop awareness of gifts in all of the members. The Vocation and Stewardship Team must interact closely with all of the other Coordinating Teams, along with the Parish Finance Council, since together they are striving to achieve the "means for the mission" outlined by the Parish Pastoral Council.

Sample Parish SERVICE and Social Concerns Coordinating Team:



Your Parish SERVICE and Social Concerns Coordinating Team:

