

GUIDELINES, POLICIES &  
BEST PRACTICES  
FOR  
PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS

DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO

November 2020

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## DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO

McRaith Catholic Center | *Office of the Bishop*

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Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

*“Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature”* (Mk 16:15). This command of Christ has inspired countless men and women throughout the Church’s history to give themselves to the work of spreading the Good News. The Second Vatican Council has repeated and renewed this mandate of the Lord, calling all members of the Church to involve themselves in witnessing to the Gospel.

As part of its renewal to the Church, the Council called for a number of new structures to promote active involvement and collaboration in the mission of the Church. After the Council, a new structure was proposed by the Church to call forth in an orderly fashion the insights and cooperation of persons at the level of the local community. That structure is the parish pastoral council.

One of the greatest models of collaboration within the Diocese of Owensboro continues to be the parish pastoral council. For many years in our diocese, pastors and their councils have worked together to create and implement a vision of ongoing renewal within each parish.

All of us can look toward the future with hope that parish pastoral councils will continue to work collaboratively with pastors and parish staff members to bring greater vitality and vibrancy to parish life. To bring this hope to fruition, I encourage all pastors to remain committed to the development of parish pastoral councils, consulting with them to address the varied aspects of parish life. I also encourage the laity to continue to step forward to lend their gifts and talents to the ongoing development of parish pastoral councils and the building up of their parish communities as communities of prayer and worship, communities of faith and service.

My hope is that these Guidelines, Policies & Best Practices for Parish Pastoral Councils will assist pastors and parishioners alike in revitalizing and utilizing this consultative structure for a more fervent and vibrant experience of God’s love poured out in his Church.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend William F. Medley  
Bishop for the Diocese of Owensboro

## **POLICIES REGARDING PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO**

1. Parish Pastoral Council - Every parish must have a Parish Pastoral Council. *(c. 536; Diocesan Policy / Parish / Parish Pastoral Councils & Parish Finance Councils #1)*
2. Finance Council - Every parish must have a Finance Council as a coordinating committee of the Parish Pastoral Council or as a subcommittee of the Parish Administration Committee, governed by the norms on pages 23 & 24 of this document. *(c. 537; Diocesan Policy / Parish / Parish Pastoral Councils & Parish Finance Councils #2)*
3. A pastor may not disband the Parish Pastoral Council or the Finance Council without the permission of the bishop. *(Diocesan Policy / Parish / Parish Pastoral Councils & Parish Finance Councils #3)*
4. At least two-thirds of the membership must be lay -- 75% must be elected. *(Diocesan Policy / Parish / Parish Pastoral Councils & Parish Finance Councils #4)*
5. Members must be registered and active members of the parish. *(Diocesan Policy / Parish / Parish Pastoral Councils & Parish Finance Councils #5)*
6. Each Parish Pastoral Council must have its own statutes (constitution and by-laws). *(Diocesan Policy / Parish / Parish Pastoral Councils & Parish Finance Councils #6)*
7. Members are to be elected/appointed for particular term, determined by the parish statutes. *(Diocesan Policy / Parish / Parish Pastoral Councils & Parish Finance Councils #7)*
8. Meetings will be held at least quarterly and minutes kept on file in parish archives. *(Diocesan Policy / Parish / Parish Pastoral Councils & Parish Finance Councils #8)*
9. In addition to the Finance Council or Committee (Subcommittee), there must be at least three other coordinating committees: Worship, Education/Faith Formation, Social Concerns. There may be a need in some parishes for a specific coordinating committee to focus attention on the needs of new immigrant and ethnic communities and assist with communication with the other parish committees. The committees may be called by the above names or they may be called by similar names (e.g. Administration instead of Finance). *(Diocesan Policy / Parish / Parish Pastoral Councils & Parish Finance Councils #9)*
10. The School Board will function as a sub-committee of the Education/Faith Formation Committee. *(Diocesan Policy / Parish / Parish Pastoral Councils & Parish Finance Councils #10)*

## **GUIDELINES, POLICIES & BEST PRACTICES FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS**

### **I. THEOLOGY**

In the years since the Second Vatican Council, the Church continues to become aware of itself as the People of God, a community in which all the baptized share in the mission and ministry which Jesus entrusted to the Apostles and through them to the entire Church.

This understanding has its scriptural foundation in the writings of St. Paul who reminds us "now you together are Christ's body" (I Cor. 12:27). The Second Vatican Council further articulated this vision when it stated: "the faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are established among the People of God. They are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ" (LG 31).

When the revised Code of Canon law was promulgated in 1983, it sought to reflect the decrees of the council and to structure the various institutes of the Church according to this communal vision. Thus, canon 204 restates LG #31 and canon 216 articulates the rights of all the faithful to cooperate in the building up of the Body of Christ. "All the Christian faithful, since they participate in the mission of the Church, have the right to promote or to sustain apostolic action by their own undertakings in accord with each one's state and condition..."

All the faithful, laity, priests, religious and bishops work together exercising their baptismal call in "true equality with regard to dignity... in accord with each one's own condition and function" (canon 208). This co-responsibility for the Church's mission is manifested on many different levels in the Church. On the parish level the Parish Pastoral Council is perhaps the best structure to enable shared ministry to occur. Such a council affords a structure through which the members of the local Church can plan together and cooperate with one another in proclaiming the Gospel and building up the body of Christ.

The canonical foundation for the Parish Pastoral Council is found in Book II of the code, "The People of God", which has many canons stating the right of all members of the Church to participate in the Church's mission and to express their needs and opinions (e.g. canon 212). Canon 536 specifically legislates regarding this Parish Pastoral Council. "After the diocesan bishop has listened to the Presbyteral Council and if he judges it opportune, a Pastoral Council is to be established in each parish; the pastor presides over it, and through it the Christian faithful along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity."

Canon 536 further explains the nature of the Parish Pastoral Council in its relationship to the pastor of the parish. While the Parish Pastoral Council is not merely a rubber stamp for the pastor, neither is it a final decision making body. Rather, its purpose is to investigate, and to study pastoral matters and to propose practical conclusions as recommendations to the pastor. The second paragraph of the canon states: "this Parish Pastoral Council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop."

## **II. PURPOSE OF A PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL**

The purpose of a Parish Pastoral Council is dictated by the name itself. The Council must be genuinely pastoral, playing a role in the overall pastoral ministry of the parish. In years past, some Parish Pastoral Councils have primarily focused on administrative and fiscal ministries. While these are important components of parish life, the mission of the Parish Pastoral Council is much broader. The Parish Pastoral Council is to be the coordinating and unifying structure of the parish community that should make it possible for all the faithful to participate in the mission of the parish. Evangelization and hospitality form the base of all parish unity. "Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize." (EN #14, 1975) "The priority of every parish community is evangelization...." (John Paul II, March 20, 2004). "If we understand that the love of God is the fundamental issue of our lives, then our perspective changes." (Benedict XVI, January 29, 2006)

The Parish Pastoral Council is more than a group of advisors to the pastor, more than representatives of various groups or factions within the parish, and more than the decision makers of the community. Members of the Parish Pastoral Council are called to become effective parish leaders who are attentive to current cultural realities and have a sense of ministry flowing from an on-going spirituality. These leaders are challenged to be inclusive of all members and to develop a sense of parish Church within the broader context of the diocesan and universal Church.

The primary responsibilities of the Parish Pastoral Council are:

- A. Setting an example of unity and cooperation as the People of God to both the parish and the larger community of the Church and society.
- B. Serving as an instrument for sharing the mission of Jesus, proclaiming His Gospel, building His community, celebrating His liturgy and serving His people.
- C. Providing direction for the local Catholic community based on the mission of Jesus and the presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling within the parish.
- D. Assisting the pastor with his mission of teaching, sanctifying and governing the parish.

## **III. FUNCTIONS OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL**

The essential function of the Parish Pastoral Council is to lead the parish as it strives to be faithful to the mission given it by Jesus. To this end, the Parish Pastoral Council will:

- A. Develop a general parish Mission Statement (why the parish exists, what the parish is called to be, how this parish will respond to that call here and now, cf. Appendix II, GPBPPPC).
- B. Engage in annual stewardship education/formation as an organized process, which involves each household of the parish, of assessing needs, identifying resources and establishing goals and objectives for the parish as well as priorities in service to the parish mission.
- C. Coordinate parish efforts to implement the identified goals, objectives and priorities.

- D. Identify and encourage the gifts and talents of all parish members and to be especially mindful of those who may be overlooked.
- E. Engage in prayer and study in discernment of God's will.
- F. Promote meaningful dialogue and decision-making by consensus among the pastor, parish staff and all others in parish leadership.
- G. Implement diocesan policy and directives relating to parish life and mission.

The Parish Pastoral Council, as organizational stewards, will:

- evaluate its progress over the past year;
- assess needs;
- identify resources;
- establish goals and objectives for the parish; and
- periodically report to the parish.

Each parish household, as personal stewards, will be asked to go through the same process of evaluating the past year, assess needs, identify resources, and establish goals of parish participation in the coming year.

#### **IV. THE PASTOR AND THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL**

*(Note: Modifications of the work of the Parish Pastoral Council should be addressed in the constitution and by-laws developed in individual and in clustered parishes.)*

The pastor is the person who participates in the pastoral ministry of the bishop in a particular parish. According to canon 519 "the pastor is the proper shepherd of the parish entrusted to him, exercising pastoral care in the community entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share; in accord with the norm of law he carries out for his community the duties of teaching, sanctifying and governing, with the cooperation of other presbyters or deacons and the assistance of lay members of the Christian faithful."

Although the primary responsibility for pastoral care is the pastor's, this responsibility is not exclusively his. Canon law and other ecclesial documents call for him to enable others and to elicit their cooperation in fulfilling the pastoral obligations within a parish. Even though the pastor is the ultimate decision-maker within the parish, he is not the only minister and he can only make decisions effectively if he is in close communication with the people in his parish.

The Parish Pastoral Council is a unique body through which the pastoral life within a parish is coordinated. Although canon law makes it clear that the primary responsibility is the pastor's and that the Parish Pastoral Council serves as a consultative body to him, the relationship between the pastor and his Council is one of collaboration and shared responsibility rather than one of adversity or of power.

Because of the consultative nature of the Council, the pastor is not technically a member of the Council, although he participates in all meetings and deliberations. Even though

he is not bound by the decisions of his Council, a process of consensus eliminates the need for a veto. In fact, it can be said that consensus is not achieved without the pastor's approval. Working together, the pastor and the Council form a community of leadership in service to the mission of Christ in the larger parish and Church. Such leadership requires an atmosphere of trust and mutual love and respect among the members of the Council and between the pastor and the Council members.

The pastor and the Parish Pastoral Council are called to work together in a spirit of love, trust and collaboration. Together they are to form a community of faith, prayerfully discerning the direction of the Holy Spirit as they seek to meet the pastoral needs of their parish. Some problems experienced by pastoral Councils can be avoided if everyone clearly understands the nature of the Council and the role of the pastor. At the same time, tension can be eliminated or exacerbated by the pastor's particular style of leadership. Usually, it is not the decision itself that is problematic, but rather the process by which a decision is reached, announced or implemented.

### **Disbanding the Council**

Before any pastor may disband the Parish Pastoral Council, he and a representative group of the Parish Pastoral Council (not necessarily at the same time) must present the reasons to the Bishop and receive permission for this action. When such permission is given, a new Council must be established within a year.

### **Transfer of the Pastor**

Since diocesan policy requires the existence of a Parish Pastoral Council in each parish, a pastor who is transferred into a new parish may only disband the Parish Pastoral Council according to the prescription of the previous paragraph. The new pastor should meet frequently with the Parish Pastoral Council in order to gain a sense of the history of the parish, as well as to get a feel for current pastoral activities and concerns.

## **V. MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of the Parish Pastoral Council will vary according to the size, need, and cultural reality of the parish. Of these, at least two-thirds should be lay members of the parish. Generally between seven and eighteen members are recommended. All Catholics who are registered and active members of the parish are eligible for membership on the Council according to the constitution and by-laws or policy of the Pastoral Council. Parish staff members may serve in an advisory capacity or as ex officio members of the Parish Pastoral Council without the right to vote.

### **A. General membership** on the Parish Pastoral Council includes:

1. Elected from the parish membership – 75%, (or those selected by lot, Page 11, GPBPPPC) preserving an equal balance of men and women
2. An unrepresented segment of the parish, not to exceed 25% of the total membership (e.g. youth, ethnic group, etc.) to be appointed



3. The parish statutes may direct that Parish Pastoral Council members serve as liaisons to each of the coordinating committees (or that a member of the committee, selected by the committee, serve on the Parish Pastoral Council).

In view of the above, each parish should decide upon membership selection. All members of the Council should participate in the consensus process, always mindful of the unique role of the pastor.

It is important that a Parish Pastoral Council represent all the people of all ages and ethnicity of the parish and of all states in life. The challenge to Pastoral Councils is to live this representative role in the Christian sense and not only in a limited, political sense. While pastoral councils may use election procedures like those of a political democracy, all council members must represent and be concerned for every person in the parish community. Christian concern must be unbounded; it cannot be limited by constituencies or by boundaries.

- B. Qualifications:** Each parish should develop clear criteria to determine eligibility for voting and for candidacy.

Furthering the mission of the Church and the faith development of the parish community requires attention to the entire community of the geographic area of the parish boundaries and beyond. Persons called to the important work of ministry as Parish Pastoral Council members should evidence the following:

1. Willingness to participate in an orientation process to the Pastoral Council
2. Awareness of their personal call to holiness
3. Clear understanding of their role in the Church and evidence of their past involvement in parish or Church life
4. Willingness to acquaint themselves with their responsibilities as outlined in the teachings of Vatican Council II and the Catechism of the Catholic Church (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults)
5. Understanding of the parish as a worshipping community and a center for spiritual growth and apostolic formation where people become enabled to serve one another and the needs of the Church and world community
6. Understanding that God has entrusted all people, gifts and resources to our care for specific purposes. All efforts of administration and ministry should flow through these basic concepts of Christian stewardship.
7. Willingness to work with the pastor, who is the leader of the parish community, and with the other members of the Council in setting direction for the parish
8. Willingness to work with the entire parish community rather than advocating only one point of view
9. Willingness to be held accountable for active involvement and leadership in parish life and development
10. Recognition of the relationship of the parish to the diocesan and universal Church and the necessity of open and ongoing communication between the

parish and the larger Church, especially through the parish participation in and representation on the local Deanery Council

(The above criteria set a standard that all the members must take seriously and hope to meet to a significant degree. Although no one Council member will be able to meet all the criteria, all should be present in the Council as a whole.)

### **C. Responsibilities**

1. Active involvement in personal and communal spiritual renewal
2. Participation in the regular meetings of the Council
3. Participation in diocesan ministry formation programs
4. Participation in an annual goal-setting session and in the evaluation sessions
5. Representation of and communication with parishioners, and coordinating committees
6. Study and preparation for each meeting
7. Trust, openness and honesty in learning to work toward consensus

It is the role of the Parish Pastoral Council to draw together the general policies and goals of the parish. Their implementation, however, is the responsibility of the various committees. The committees, with the parish staff, are the working arms of the Parish Pastoral Council. The vitality and effectiveness of the entire Council depends upon the work of the committees.

Commitment to the parish community is an important commitment and places demands on every Council member.

## **VI. ELECTION PROCEDURES**

- A. Parish-Wide Election by Nomination and Ballot is conducted according to the constitution and by-laws of the Parish Pastoral Council, which should include the guidelines for the election committee.

For parishes that use the nomination and election process in determining the members of the Parish Pastoral Council, it is recommended that an election committee serve as an ad hoc committee of the Parish Pastoral Council. Its membership should include, but not be restricted to, Parish Pastoral Council members.

This committee should work to insure free and open nominations and elections calling forth leadership rather than conducting a strictly democratic process that can become a popularity contest.

*Functions of the election committee include:*

- Publicizing the procedures and timeline for nominations and the qualifications for candidates
- Seeking nominations from the parish-at-large for the Parish Pastoral Council election
- Explaining to prospective candidates the purpose, functions, and work of the Parish Pastoral Council and duties of its members
- Developing procedures whereby the members of the parish can become acquainted with the candidates and their qualifications
- Insuring that all eligible members of the parish have the opportunity to vote in accordance with the Parish Pastoral Council Constitution and By-Laws. This task includes determining the time frame of the process and the form, distribution, and collection of ballots
- Supervising the election, counting ballots, and certifying the results of the election
- Notifying the candidates and informing the parish of the election results

#### **B. Election by Discernment**

1. Nomination by parish at large
2. Pastor writes a letter to all who have been nominated affirming their call by the parishioners, asking them if they are willing to serve on the Parish Pastoral Council in accordance with its Constitution and By-Laws.
3. Those who participate in the formation process according to the Constitution and By-Laws, then discern through prayer, reflection, and discussion the gifts of the nominees vis-à-vis the needs of the parish and determine the actual membership of the Parish Pastoral Council
4. Parish Pastoral Council is presented to the parish at the following weekend(s) Masses.

#### **C. Election By Lot** - A possible procedure for the selection of Parish Pastoral Council members is to choose them by drawing lots. The procedure might be as follows:

1. Each year parishioners would be invited to nominate candidates for the Council who meet pre-determined qualifications. After the pastor and Council determine that these nominees are eligible for membership their names are placed in a receptacle along with other qualified candidates.
2. The length of the terms of office is determined.
3. The required number of members for the Council is chosen by lot at the time set for the selection. To maintain a balance of women and men on the Council, the names of the men are placed in one receptacle and the names of the women in another. An equal number of names is then drawn from each receptacle.
4. The other names remain in the receptacle and become a source for choosing committee members, filling vacancies or other leadership positions in the parish.

#### **D. Election by Ministries**

A fourth possible procedure for selecting Council members is called by some the "Pastoral Council of Ministries." This model presupposes that there are active ministry groups or committees in the parish

1. In this procedure and model, each member of the Parish Pastoral Council will have served on some specific ministry committee for at least a year before being selected for the Council.
2. At yearly meetings the members of each ministry committee (or alternately, all the people involved in a particular area of ministry) nominate several committee members as candidates for the Council.
3. The ministry committee then elects (or chooses by lot) one of the nominees to serve on the Parish Pastoral Council for a specific term determined by the particular statutes of the Parish Pastoral Council.
4. In this structure the Parish Pastoral Council coordinates and links together the various areas of ministry in the parish: worship, education/faith formation, social justice, stewardship, administration, special needs, etc.

### **VII. TERMS OF OFFICE**

For some parishes, staggering the terms of membership of the Parish Pastoral Council helps to insure continuity on the Council. In this case, the parish may choose to have terms of either two or three years with no more than two successive terms. For some parishes, choosing a completely new Council best serves the needs of the parish. In this case, a single three-year or four-year term tends to work well.

Vacancies on the Parish Pastoral Council, when they occur, should be filled as directed by the Parish Pastoral Council Constitution and By-Laws. The constitution and by-laws should specify how the position would be filled (e.g. drawing by lot, appointment, etc). In the case of vacancy in the office of chairperson of the Council, the vice-chairperson ordinarily fills the position until the next regular election of officers. The constitution and by-laws of the Parish Pastoral Council should specify whether the person completing an unexpired term may be elected for a full term at the following election.

It is the responsibility of the pastor with the Parish Pastoral Council to provide adequate orientation and formation for all members of the Parish Pastoral Council.

It is the Parish Pastoral Council's responsibility to see that its members fulfill their obligations faithfully. In this regard, the Council statutes or by-laws should empower the Council to terminate a member's term under certain circumstances: for instance chronic absence from Council meetings.

## VIII. MEETINGS

### A. Format

An effective Parish Pastoral Council meeting is the result of careful preparation and efficient procedures. Most of the Council work takes place in the coordinating committees in advance of regularly scheduled meetings. Members and committees charged with a particular responsibility should thoroughly research that topic or area of concern, and summarize all data into a clear concise, written report. These being done, Parish Pastoral Council meetings can then adopt the following format:

1. A well planned agenda, published in advance, affording members the opportunity to be adequately prepared on all issues to be considered
2. Ample time for prayer, with reflection on the Scriptures and on the mission of the Council at the beginning of each meeting to set the tone for a productive meeting of followers of Jesus
3. Meaningful discussion on each topic on the agenda, with all relative comments brought forth, and the result being a general consensus on each issue, rather than divided votes and disappointed minorities
4. Completion of the meeting within a reasonable length of time, with all Council members leaving with a positive attitude about the Council in general, its mission, and its accomplishments. (Ordinarily a Parish Pastoral Council meeting should be able to conclude the business at hand in an hour and a half and not exceed two hours in length.)

### B. Meeting Procedures (Consensus)

1. The Parish Pastoral Council as the parish leadership community has the basic task of setting policies, goals and vision for the parish. In this regard, most Parish Pastoral Councils are striving to adopt a consensual process in their decision-making. Consensus is a general agreement on an over-all direction, rather than agreement on administrative decisions or program planning. It is often easier to achieve general agreement on broad directions than it is to achieve it on practical decisions
2. In the consensual process, no one who is important to the implementation of the decision should be left out. In this regard, the pastor's participation in the process and his acceptance of the decision of the group are essential. Every one of the members has an opportunity for input and everyone's input is taken seriously. It is possible that the insight of one person can be the key to the solution. It is also possible that hearing all the exponents of a given position will be more effective than hearing only one. An even more important concern is in returning to the faith perspective to assure that the Council is consistent with its basic identity as a ministerial community of faith. While it would be valuable to have as many decisions as possible arrived at by consensus, it is particularly important in regard to sensitive issues that may have a great effect on the parish.

3. Parliamentary decision-making, where the majority rules, has its inadequacies. One of the greatest is the possible alienation of the losers. Such a procedure is feasible where there is not a great deal at stake (minor decisions) or in practical or administrative choices.

### **C. Types of Meetings**

1. *Regular Meetings* - each Parish Pastoral Council should conduct business on a regular (e.g. monthly) basis, with at least quarterly meeting mandated. The importance of full attendance at each of these meetings should be strongly emphasized.
2. *Formation Meetings* - Since it is vital that a Council be able to function as a cohesive unit, an initial orientation session should be held (with all members present) after each election in which one or more new members are added to the Council. Ideally this meeting should be held in a "retreat" atmosphere to aid in the separation from everyday concerns, and promote the proper spiritual atmosphere. Suggested topics for the initial orientation meeting might include:
  - a. Information regarding the purpose, functions, and structure of the Parish Pastoral Council and its coordinating committees
  - b. A brief history of the past accomplishments and the growth of the local Parish Pastoral Council
  - c. Materials needed by the members to carry out their responsibilities, e.g. minutes, policies, working procedures, guidelines
  - d. A spiritual presentation that would focus on the commitment to doing the Lord's work in general, and Church/parish work in specific
  - e. A planned social gathering that will promote familiarity, friendships, etc.
3. *Open Meeting* - It is recommended that a single regular meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council be designated as a special open meeting in which the entire parish community is not only invited, but also encouraged to attend. The agenda of said meeting should be published to the general parish at least two weeks in advance. Regular business matters should be discussed at this meeting, to provide the parish community with an understanding of the regular workings of the Council. Additionally, a special format should include a summary of recent accomplishments by the Council, as well as the stated goals and objectives for the future
4. *Committee Meetings* - Committees will meet as deemed necessary to accomplish specific work outside of regular Council sessions. Further discussion on functions of specific committees is found in that section of this manual.

## **IX. OFFICERS**

### **A. Chairperson**

One individual, elected from the membership of the Council, serves as the coordinator of all the various functions of the Council. The following is a suggested list of responsibilities for the chairperson:

1. Plans the agenda for each business meeting, in cooperation with the Pastor. Publishes the agenda to all members of Council and other interested persons in advance (minimum one week) of each meeting
2. Chairs regular Council meetings, not through domination but, by patiently assisting and guiding all discussion toward a goal of a general consensus
3. Appoints Ad Hoc committees, delegates responsibilities, encourages cooperation with the pastor, pastoral staff and the Council (both in and out of Council meetings) in accord with the guidelines of the Council
4. Encourages Council members, through the example of his/her own Christian life, to become spiritual leaders in the parish community
5. Offers leadership to the Council in its task of discerning and serving the needs of the parish community.

### **B. Vice Chairperson**

The vice chairperson, elected from the membership of the Parish Pastoral Council, is responsible for the following tasks:

1. Studies all responsibilities of the Chairperson as detailed previously, plus any other qualities/attributes observed
2. Prepares to assume any or all of these responsibilities in the absence or incapacity of the Chairperson
3. Works closely with the Chairperson in the planning and work of the Parish Pastoral Council outside of regular Council meetings.

### **C. Secretary**

The secretary is ordinarily elected from the membership of the Council (however, this position may be an appointed one and as such, not technically a member of the Council) and has the responsibility to fulfill the following duties:

1. Records the minutes of each regular Parish Pastoral Council meeting and sees to it that the minutes are made available to the Parish Pastoral Council members.
2. Requests written reports from all the committees to be included in the Parish Pastoral Council minutes and parish file
3. Keeps a file of Parish Pastoral Council records, minutes, history, etc
4. Directs correspondence for the Parish Pastoral Council
5. Maintains a roster of members with their terms of office and records attendance
6. Sends names, addresses and telephone numbers of Parish Pastoral Council leadership and committee chairpersons to respective diocesan/committees.

#### **D. Executive Committee**

Parish Pastoral Councils may find it beneficial to have an Executive Committee composed of the pastor, chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary who will be responsible for planning the agenda.

### **X. COMMITTEES**

The structure of the Parish Pastoral Council flows from its call to mission (evangelization), its functions, and its discerned areas of responsibility. This structure includes a system of committees that are the working bodies of the Parish Pastoral Council. These committees broaden the base for dialogue, for parishioner representation and participation in the mission of the Church.

The designation of committees admits of several possibilities. In the interest of some commonality which would enable parishes within the Diocese of Owensboro to share across parish lines, these guidelines propose at least six areas of ministry development: Worship, Spiritual Life, Education/Faith Formation, Social Justice, Family Life, and Finance or Administration. (An additional need in many parishes in this 21<sup>st</sup> century is the need for a committee to welcome all who come to the parish and to address the needs and services for the new immigrants and ethnic groups present in the parish.)

#### **A. Role**

It is the role of the Parish Pastoral Council to draw together the general policies and goals of the parish. Their implementation, however, is the responsibility of the various committees. The committees, with the parish staff, are the working arms of the Parish Pastoral Council. The vitality and effectiveness of the entire Council depend upon the work of the committees.

The committees communicate with the Parish Pastoral Council on three levels in order to accomplish the task they undertake.

1. The committees are channels through which the people of the parish make requests and observations known to the Parish Pastoral Council. Therefore, any subcommittee or organization or parishioner wishing to initiate a project or make recommendations communicates with the appropriate committee. That committee, if necessary, communicates with the Parish Pastoral Council.
2. The committees are to maintain consistent communication with the diocesan offices that directly pertain to the area of responsibility (ministry) of the particular committee. In turn, these offices provide guidelines, policies and resources to the committees in all stages of their growth and development.



## **B. Function**

The basic functions of the committees are identical to those of the Parish Pastoral Council: spiritual formation, participative planning, fostering discipleship, policy development and communication. The functions are focused on a specific ministry within the parish community.

The main functions of the committees are derived from the Parish Pastoral Council responsibilities and include:

1. Praying together for direction and guidance
2. Developing objectives to implement the overall parish goals as established by the pastor with the Parish Pastoral Council
3. Listening to parishioners in identifying the needs of the parish community in its area of responsibility, research feasible responses, and prepare proposals for the Parish Pastoral Council
4. Communicating and working with the parish staff concerning the implementation of the goals and direction of the committee
5. Preparing and presenting an annual budget to the Parish Pastoral Council
6. Designating times and criteria (cooperatively developed with the parish staff) for evaluation of progress in goal achievement and program effectiveness
7. Maintaining communication with the parish community concerning policies, programs and evaluation processes encouraging their active support and involvement
8. Maintaining communication with the respective diocesan offices for guidelines, policies and resources and mail updated rosters of membership to these offices
9. Providing ongoing education and formation for Parish Pastoral Council members and for the parish-at-large in its area of responsibility.

## **C. Membership**

### *1. Numbers:*

The Parish Pastoral Council will determine the minimum number of members needed on each committee and will designate the manner of their selection. The work of some committees may necessitate the formation of subcommittees (e.g. EDUCATION/ FAITH FORMATION: pre-school, Parish School Board, religious education, ongoing faith formation for adults, youth ministry, special needs). It is advisable that a committee (or subcommittee) have not less than three or more than fifteen members.

### *2. Representation:*

Like the Council itself, the membership of each committee should, as far as possible, be representative of the entire parish community with a balance of men and women. The following criteria may be of assistance:

- a. All Catholics who are registered and active members of the parish are eligible for membership on the coordinating committees. Representatives from youth, senior citizens, minority and ethnic groups, persons with disabilities, and persons touched by the work of the committee
- b. Representatives from sub-committees and organizations whose ministry relates to the work of the committee
- c. The pastor or his representative from the pastoral staff.

**D. Qualifications for committee membership should include:**

1. Persons who are registered and active members of the parish or who bring specific experience that is needed on the committee (e.g. cyber technology, fiscal management, etc.)
2. Expertise and interest in the specific ministry of the committee
3. Understanding of the concept of shared responsibility
4. Understanding of the relationship of the work of the committees to the overall goals of the Parish Pastoral Council and to that of the other committees as well as the relationship to the pastor and pastoral staff
5. Willingness to search out the needs of the larger community in the area of responsibility and respond realistically to these needs
6. Ability to work effectively with others and to seek consultation and advice from competent persons and sources
7. Willingness to participate in ongoing education and continuing formation

**E. Term of Office**

The term of office is recommended as neither less than two nor more than three years and renewable each year thereafter.

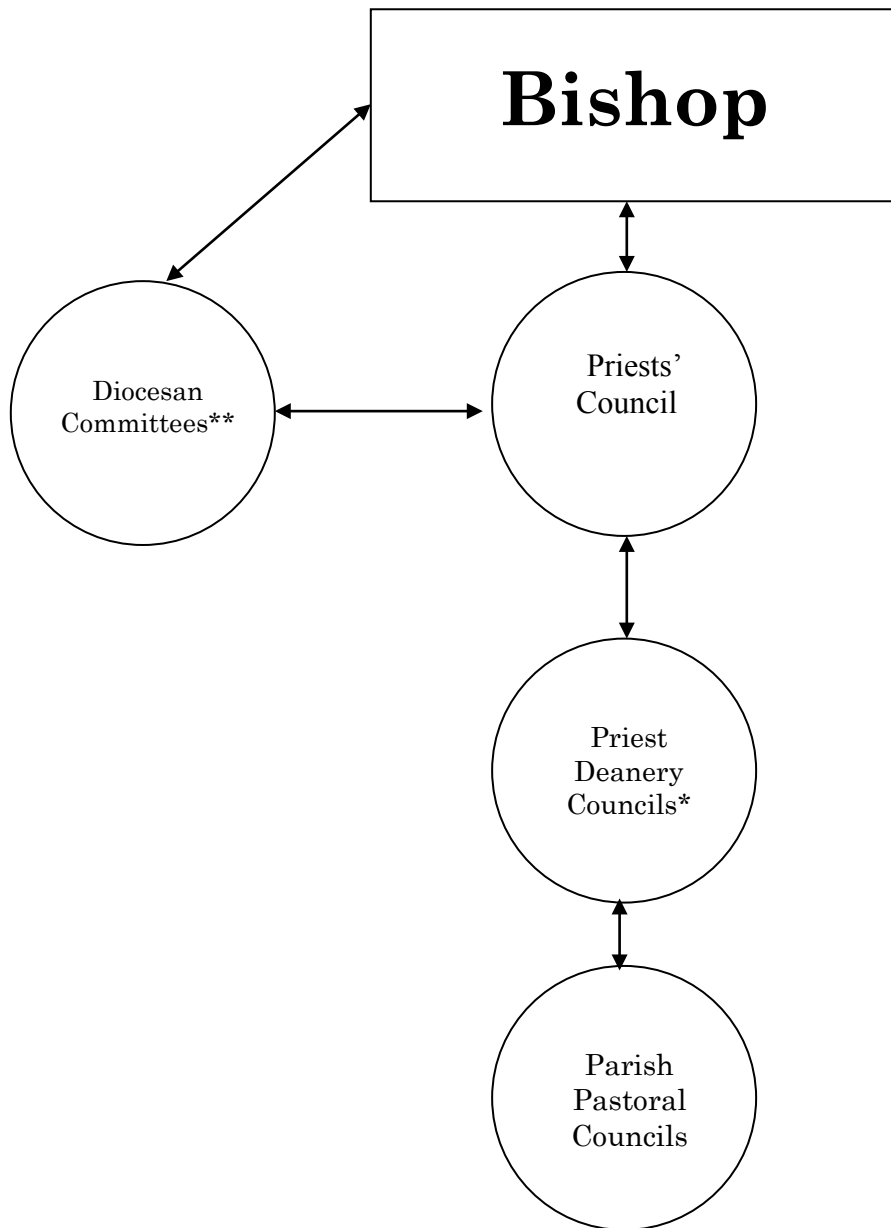
**F. Chairperson**

Each committee selects a chairperson who is responsible for the organization, coordination and promotion of the work of the committee.

Committees need to be aware of one another's activities because of their interrelatedness in working for the common mission and vision of the parish. Communication is strengthened through:

1. Representation from each committee on the Parish Pastoral Council (or having members of the Council serve as a liaison to each committee
2. Making summary reports of issues discussed and proposals prepared by the committee sent to the Parish Pastoral Council members for study with their next agenda.
3. Meeting of committee chairpersons periodically to compare notes, particularly before budget preparation.

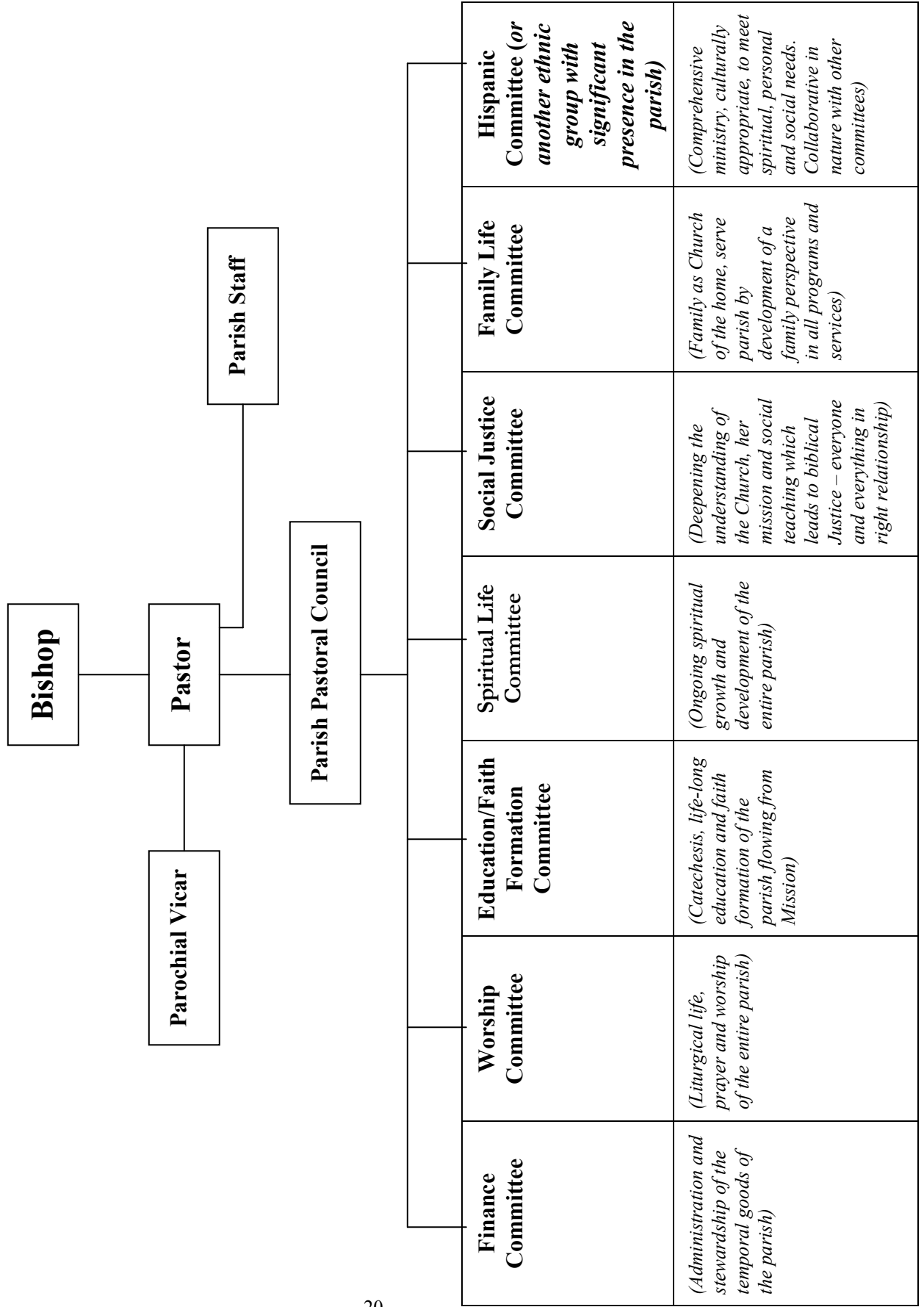
## COMMUNICATION FLOW CHART



\*Deanery Councils: Bowling Green, Central, Eastern, Fancy Farm, Hopkinsville, Owensboro East, Owensboro West, Paducah, The Lakes.

\*\*Diocesan Committees: Social Justice, Finance, Family Life, Worship, Hispanic, Spiritual Life, Education/Faith Formation..

**ORGANIZATION CHART OF THE CONSULTATIVE BODIES OF THE PARISH**



## **XI. GUIDELINES FOR COMMITTEES**

### **A. WORSHIP COMMITTEE**

1. *Role* (Cf. Page 16, GPPPC)

The ministry of the Worship Committee focuses on the liturgical life of the parish community and thus is concerned with the liturgical prayer and worship dimension of parish life.

2. *Function* (Cf. Page 17, GPPPC)

The specific function of the Worship Committee includes the following:

- a. Overseeing the preparation and coordination of Sunday liturgies (in all languages) as the core of parish worship
- b. Providing for the ongoing liturgical education/formation of the parish, with special attention given to the education/formation of liturgy committee members
- c. Establishing short-term and long-term goals designed to encourage the liturgical growth of the parish
- d. Developing processes for the ongoing evaluation of liturgical celebrations and their role in the life of the parish
- e. Overseeing the preparation and coordination of other liturgical rites (e.g. sacramental rites, weddings, funerals, Liturgy of the Hours, etc.)
- f. Providing for the formation and coordination of all liturgical ministers including ministers of the various language groups represented in the parish
- g. Establishing a yearly liturgical budget and overseeing the disbursement of monies within that budget framework
- h. Coordinating the ministries of music and environment in order to provide optimum celebration of the liturgical seasons
- i. periodically evaluating the worship space and adjacent areas as related to the needs of the presider, assembly, ministers and musicians including any in the parish with physical limitations
- j. Providing para-liturgical celebrations for the devotional needs of the parish giving attention to the cultural expressions of new immigrant and ethnic groups (e.g. Marian Devotions, Way of the Cross, processions, etc.)
- k. Overseeing the purchase and maintenance of liturgical appointments, musical instruments, etc.

3. *Membership* (Cf. Pages 17 & 18 GPPPC)

- a. Representing the entire parish, membership should include a broad spectrum of the parish community (age groups, education, ethnic backgrounds, liturgical ministries, and life-styles)
- b. Resource persons: liturgists, artists, writers, and musicians.

Each parish adapts its membership to its needs. It is important, however, that there be persons responsible for the coordination of liturgy planning so that the liturgical celebrations give evidence of balance, integration and smooth movement.

Resource: Office of Worship, McRaith Catholic Center, 600 Locust Street, Owensboro, KY 42301-2130; 270-683-1545; Fax 270-683-6883.

## **B. SPIRITUAL LIFE COMMITTEE**

### 1. *Role* (Cf. Page 16, GPPPC)

This committee's ministry encompasses the spiritual growth of the parish community. It is concerned with building community and the ongoing spiritual life and growth of the parish community.

### 2. *Function* (Cf. Page 17, GPPPC)

- a. Assessing the effectiveness of present programs and organizations in deepening the spirituality of the parish; assist in the development of a sense of mission which flows out of our baptismal commitment
- b. Providing opportunity for the spiritual growth of leadership groups through parish retreats and days of renewal and reflection
- c. Developing support systems for spiritual formation of parishioners
- d. Encouraging the development of Small Christian Communities within the larger parish for study/prayer/reflection
- e. Planning/promoting parish-wide retreats and programs of a spiritual nature
- f. Inviting charismatic and ecumenical prayer groups to use parish facilities and/or hold prayer services in conjunction with those planned by other groups for greater understanding.

### 3. *Membership* (Cf. Pages 17 & 18, GPPPC)

Representing the entire parish, membership should include a broad spectrum of the parish community (age groups, education, ethnic backgrounds, liturgical ministries, and life-styles) and persons with interest and experience in a variety of approaches to spiritual growth and a broad vision of what parish community can be:

- a. Persons involved in retreat ministry (TEC, Cursillo, Koinonia, spiritual direction, etc.)
- b. Member or leader of a Small Christian Community
- c. Representative of religious congregation (consecrated life)
- d. Member of the parish charismatic community
- e. Representative at large of the parish community

Resource: Office for Spiritual Life, Mount Saint Joseph Conference and Retreat Center, Maple Mount, KY 42356; 270-229-0200; Fax: 270-229-0279; [msjcenter@maplemount.org](mailto:msjcenter@maplemount.org); [www.msjcenter.org](http://www.msjcenter.org)

## C. FINANCE COMMITTEE (or SUBCOMMITTEE)

In the parish, the Christian faithful are gathered into one, under the leadership of the pastor, to fulfill their role as participants in the 3-fold mission of Christ as priests, prophets and kings. The kingly mission includes the assistance that they give to the pastor in the administration of the temporal goods of the Church (Decree on the Apostolate of Laity #10).

In order to give form and stability to the assistance offered by the Christian faithful to their pastor in the administration of the Church's temporal goods, the Code of Canon Law requires that each parish in a diocese have a Parish Finance Council governed by universal Church law and by norms given by the diocesan bishop. The particular law of the Diocese of Owensboro mandates that the Finance Council operate as a committee of the Parish Pastoral Council or as a subcommittee of the Administration Committee. Every parish must have a Finance Council as a coordinating committee of the Parish Pastoral Council or as a subcommittee of the Parish Administration Committee (Diocesan Policy Book 104:1, #2) Individual parishes may find it feasible to have sub-committees in various areas of administration. Such a decision is left to the discretion of the individual parish.

### 1. *Role* (Cf. Page 16, GPPPC)

The principal role of the Finance Committee is the provision of the administrative and financial skills necessary to sustain the mission and ongoing development of the parish community. Working closely with the pastor, who ultimately is responsible for the administration of the parish, this committee concerns itself with parish material resources, parish budget, parish financial support and the effective use and maintenance of the parish facilities and properties.

The collaboration of this committee with the pastor and the parish staff is intended to free the pastor for his role of spiritual leadership. This committee fosters and sustains the spiritual growth of the parish community and the overall mission of the parish community must guide its work. Within this framework, the members of the committee study needs and establish priorities according to the goals and objectives established by the Parish Pastoral Council.

### 2. *Function* (Cf. Page 17, GPPPC)

- a. The Parish Finance Committee is a consultative body that helps the pastor to act justly and prudently in the administration of the parish's temporal goods. Its work is to be informed and inspired by the vision of the Church (exemplified in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council) and to be in accord with the Code of Canon Law and applicable civil laws.
- b. The Parish Finance Committee will see that proper financial records are established to record all parish assets, liabilities, revenues, and expenses in accordance with a chart of accounts approved by the Diocese of Owensboro. The finance committee will prepare the annual parish financial report to be made to the diocesan bishop and will provide the parish with regular reports on the financial status of the parish
- c. The Parish Finance Committee will develop the parish budget for each year according to the priorities and goals set by the Parish Pastoral Council and the pastor. Unforeseen expenditures, not anticipated in the budget, should first be reviewed by the Finance Committee.

- d. Other areas of concern are the development of policies for the proper maintenance of the buildings and grounds of the parish, long-range financial planning and the generation of revenue.
- e. In those parishes that operate a parish school, the finance committee has the same overview of the school's financial activity as it does over the financial operation of the parish. Interparochial schools have a similar accountability to participating parishes. Finance Committees have an overview of the interparochial schools' financial activity.
- f. The clear distinction between policy formation – the proper work of the Parish Finance Committee – and administration – the proper work of the pastor and parish staff, should be maintained. At the same time, members of the parish staff should offer to the finance committee their knowledge and judgment regarding questions under discussion.

3. *Membership* (Cf. Pages 17 & 18, GPPPC)

- a. Parishioners who understand the necessity of good judgment and skilled planning, budgeting, maintenance, etc., in order to operate on a fixed income
- b. Professionals who are knowledgeable about banking, business, investment counseling, accounting, insurance (these need not be members of the committee but designated as resource persons for advice)
- c. Persons who understand that the way parish money is spent and parish facilities utilized are theological statements about parish community priorities and spiritual values

4. *Relationship to the Parish Pastoral Council*

- a. In the Diocese of Owensboro the Parish Finance Committee is to be either one of the coordinating committees of the Parish Pastoral Council or a subcommittee of the Parish Administration Committee. This will ensure on-going communication between the two consultative bodies that is essential so that the best use of the parish's temporal goods can be made for the spiritual good of the parish.
- b. The Finance Committee recommends fiscal policy for the parish but does not set pastoral direction, which is the responsibility of the Parish Pastoral Council.
- c. Care must be exercised so that the Parish Pastoral Council does not become immersed in financial and administrative matters rather than specifically pastoral concerns.
- d. The Finance Committee should appoint one of its members to serve as an ex officio member of the Parish Pastoral Council unless another form of representation is chosen (cf. Page 12 #3, GPPPC).

5. *Subcommittees*

Where possible, it is suggested that the following be permanent subcommittees of the Parish Finance/Administration Committee: the budget committee, the building and grounds committee, and the cemetery committee (if the parish has its own cemetery).

Resources: Offices for Finance and Stewardship, McRaith Catholic Center, 600 Locust Street, Owensboro, KY 42301; 270-683-1545; Fax 270-683-6883.



## **D. EDUCATION/FAITH FORMATION COMMITTEE**

### **1. *Role*** (Cf. Page 16, GPPPC)

“At the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son from the Father...who suffered and died for us and who now, after rising, is living with us forever.” To catechize is “to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God’s eternal design reaching fulfillment in that Person. It is to seek to understand the meaning of Christ’s actions and words and of the signs worked by him.” Catechesis aims at putting “people...in communion...with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity.” (CCC, 426)

The Education/Faith Formation Committee is responsible for determining the goals and objectives to meet the faith formation needs of the entire parish community and for monitoring and evaluating the programs designed to carry out these goals and objectives.

### **2. *Function*** (Cf. Page 17, GPPPC)

The specific function of the Education/Faith Formation Committee encompasses the following:

- a. Seeking a deeper appreciation of the truth that the goals of education/faith formation programming in the parish is the promotion of the Gospel through growth in faith for the entire community
- b. Creating an awareness within the parish community of the responsibility of all the faithful for the mission of the Church, the Diocesan Vision Statement and directional elements for religious education/faith formation
- c. Maintaining an active ministry of communications through print and other media to facilitate better understanding between the people of the parish, the larger Church, including diocesan and parish staff, and the local community
- d. Formulating and implementing long-range goals and objectives for the entire parish community through the use of the diocesan religious education/faith formation evaluation process
- e. Encouraging and promoting certification of catechists, youth ministers, and pastoral associates involved in the lifelong faith formation of the parish
- f. Collaborating with other Parish Pastoral Council committees in matters relating to education/faith formation
- g. Cooperating with and supporting the education/faith formation ministry of the parish and to call for clearly defined job descriptions for these members (e.g. directors/ coordinators of religious education/faith formation, RCIA catechists, catechists, youth ministers, pastoral associates, etc.)
- h. Reviewing the annual budget prepared for the education/faith formation ministry of the parish (see policies in the Handbook for Catechetical Leadership)
- i. Knowing how to access the Offices of Catholic Schools, Communications, Religious Education/Faith Formation, Youth Ministry and Hispanic Ministry as they relate to the lifelong faith formation development of the parish
- j. Becoming knowledgeable of the local public school system and facilitate parish involvement in those education/faith formation matters of mutual concern.
- k. Being informed about the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ position

statement on Catholic schools published in 2005 and entitled "Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium."

3. *Membership* (Cf. Pages 17 & 18, GPPPC)

Membership on the Education/Faith Formation Committee should consist of persons who have a sincere interest in pursuing their own education and faith formation and are concerned about the teaching mission of the Church. Representing the entire parish, membership should include a broad spectrum of the parish community (age groups, education, ethnic backgrounds, liturgical ministries, and life-styles). It is recommended that the membership be drawn from:

- a. Representatives of parish education/faith formation - Catholic schools, childhood religious education/faith formation programs, adult faith formation, youth ministry, young adults, seniors, etc.
- b. Representatives of parents of religious education/faith formation students and Catholic school students (pre-school through high school)
- c. Representatives of all age groups
- d. Liaisons from relevant sub-committees, i.e. School Board
- e. Persons, with talents, interests and knowledge of committee's areas of responsibility.
- f. Persons with writing ability, interests in photography or videography, publication preparation, and an understanding of the community media serving the local media market area of the parish

4. *Relationship of the Parish School Board to the Parish Pastoral Council*

Since the Education/Faith Formation Committee is concerned with the total Catholic education/faith formation needs of the parish community, the Parish School Board acts as a subcommittee of the Education/Faith Formation Committee in a parish that has its own school.

In isolated cases it may be feasible for the existing Parish School Board to operate as the Education/Faith Formation Committee of the Parish Pastoral Council. In that event, the school board must extend its membership to be broadly representative of the parish community and must expand its functions to address the education/faith formational needs of all age groups for the entire parish community (birth through old age).

Interparochial School: a school that is supported by more than one parish is known as an interparochial school. One priest appointed by the bishop will pastor this school. There will be one school board comprised of members from all participating parishes. The board will serve in an advisory capacity to the priest (known as the priest pastor). The priest pastor will act in the name of all the pastors involved in the interparochial school. The priest pastor will function in the same capacity as would the pastor in a single parish school.

One member of each parish on the Interparochial School Board is to be an ex officio member of the Education/Faith Formation Committee of his/her respective Parish Pastoral Council. It is the responsibility of this person to communicate decisions, policies and concerns of the interparochial school board to their respective Education/Faith Formation Committee and vice versa.

Resources: Offices of Catholic Schools, Religious Education/(Faith Formation), Communications, & Youth & Young Adult Ministry, McRaith Catholic Center, 600 Locust Street, Owensboro KY 43201; 270-683-1545; Fax 270-683-6883.

## E. SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

### 1. *Role* (Cf. Page 16, GPPPC)

The Diocesan Mission Statement recognizes three areas of ministry as essential to carrying out the mission of the Church: Education/Faith Formation, Worship, and Social Justice.

This committee implements the U.S. bishops' call to the parish community, in their 1994 document Communities Of Salt And Light, to make Social Justice the mission of the whole parish rather than the responsibility of a few. It assists the parish community to bear witness to the truth as expressed by Pope John Paul II that 'faith working through love' is the sign of authentic discipleship.

The Parish Social Justice Committee encourages the parish community to a deeper understanding of Catholic Social Teaching, and provides resources for implementing this teaching through strategies for effective action. This committee facilitates the parish community to engage in its role of "seeking the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will" as stated in the Vatican II document, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.

### 2. *Function* (Cf. Page 17, GPPPC)

The special functions of the Social Justice Committee include:

- a. Assist the parish community in anchoring Social Justice in prayer and worship as its fundamental direction, motivation, strength, and where it finds the depths of God's call to seek justice and pursue peace, thus to witness to the reign of God in their midst.
- b. Educate parishioners about the Church's social teaching. In this Education/Faith Formation, the committee teaches the parish community to understand justice as a basic element of the Gospel of Jesus and leads them to see service to others as essential to living out Jesus' teachings.
- c. Involve the parish community in identifying the human needs and social justice issues in the parish, in the local community, in the state, in the nation, and in the global community.
- d. Mobilize the parish to respond to discovered needs by developing programs and/or cooperating with existing agencies in: direct services (charity); advocacy for people who are hurting or for change in public policy that effects peoples' lives; and empowerment of people to do something about their own needs and the injustices they experience in this area, country, and in the rest of the world.

3. *Membership* (Cf. Pages 17 & 18, GPPPC)

Membership on the Social Justice Committee should include a broad spectrum of the parish community (age groups, education, ethnic backgrounds, liturgical ministries, and life-styles) especially those interested in learning to work with people in need or knowledgeable about helping others. These include but are not limited to:

- a. Persons with a strong commitment to meet the human needs perceived in the local community and the world at large
- b. Representatives of groups concerned with direct services, advocacy and empowerment of persons, such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Knights of Columbus, Legion of Mary, and other traditional parish organizations whose purposes include charitable works and community building: i.e. visiting the sick, the lonely, shut-ins, newcomers, abused spouses, senior citizens, ministry to those in jails and prisons, JustFaith participants, and persons interested in charitable works
- c. Persons with experience in health care, social work, law, law enforcement, immigrant assistance, and financial management
- d. Persons who know the community well and may work in community services
- e. JustFaith graduates, and those involved in volunteering in global solidarity outreach.

Resources: Office of Social Concerns, McRaith Catholic Center, 600 Locust Street, Owensboro, KY 42301; 270-683-1545; Fax: 270-683-6883.

United States Catholic Conference of Bishops [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)

Catholic Campaign for Human Development [www.usccb.org/cchd](http://www.usccb.org/cchd)

Catholic Relief Services [www.crs.org/](http://www.crs.org/)

Catholic Charities USA/ Parish Social Ministry Section [www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/](http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/)

JustFaith Program [www.justfaith.org/](http://www.justfaith.org/)

## **F. FAMILY LIFE COMMITTEE**

### **1. *Role* (Cf. Page 16, GPPPC)**

The Family Life Committee or the Family Life Advocate serves the parish by working to develop a "family perspective" in all the parish ministries programs and services. It helps to raise the level of sensitivity to family life issues and to promote awareness of the family as the Church of the home.

### **2. *Function* (Cf. Page 17, GPPPC)**

The specific functions of the Family Life Committee include the following:

- a. Encouraging programs that strengthen family life particularly in preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage
- b. Including families of all descriptions in parish liturgies and activities
- c. Helping families to understand and to perform their four essential tasks: to form an intimate community of persons; to serve life; to participate in the development of society; and to live out their mission as a believing and evangelizing community in dialogue with God
- d. Implementing the Bishops' Pastoral Plan for Family Ministry, addressing the designated areas of family life: singles, engaged, married, parents, developing families, hurting families and leadership families
- e. Collaborating with parish staff and other Parish Pastoral Council committees in regard to a family perspective
- f. Helping build a relationship of mutual trust and support between parish Church and home Church

### **3. *Membership* (Cf. Pages 17 & 18, GPPPC)**

Membership on the Family Life Committee should include a broad spectrum of the parish community (age groups, education, ethnic backgrounds, liturgical ministries, and life-styles), especially those interested in promoting strong family life and promoting the mission of the family in Church and in society:

- a. Persons who believe in the vision of the family as the first Church
- b. Persons interested in learning more about healthy family functioning
- c. Individuals or couples who represent the various aspects of family life as designated in the Bishops' Pastoral Plan for Family Ministry
- d. Representatives of groups involved in ministry with families: Engaged Encounter, Sponsor Couple, Natural Family Planning, Retrouvaille, Parenting Education/Faith Formation, Single Life, Separated and Divorced Support Groups, Bereavement Ministry, Black Catholic and other ethnic families.

Resource: Marriage & Family Life Office, McRaith Catholic Center, 600 Locust Street, Owensboro, KY 42301; 270-683-1545; Fax 270-683-6883.

## G. HISPANIC MINISTRY COMMITTEE

### *Role* (Cf. Page 16, GPPPC)

The Hispanic Ministry Committee seeks to promote unity in diversity and integrate the Hispanic community into the parish in collaboration with each committee. It helps to reach out to Hispanics in a culturally appropriate manner to meet their spiritual, personal and social needs while encouraging Hispanic parishioners to share their gifts within the wider parish community.

### *Function* (Cf. Page 17, GPPPC)

The specific function of the Hispanic Ministry Committee includes the following:

1. Implementing the Diocesan Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry based on the parish's local reality, focusing on the New Evangelization within the four dimensions of Hispanic Ministry: Formation, Missionary Option, *Pastoral de Conjunto* and Liturgy and Prayer Life.
  - a. *Pastoral de Conjunto* – work in a spirit of communion in mission and collaboration with the other committees and the entire parish.
  - b. Formation – work with the Education/Faith Formation Committee and Family Life Committee in preparing Hispanic parishioners for receiving the Sacraments and the education and faith formation needs of the Hispanic community.
  - c. Missionary Option – work with the Social Justice Committee and Family Life Committee in caring for the needs of the most vulnerable.
  - d. Liturgy and Prayer Life – work with the Worship Committee and Spiritual Life Committee in the formation of liturgical ministers, the use of culturally meaningful signs, symbols and devotions, and in the organization of retreats, Small Christian Communities and charismatic movements.
2. Study the needs of the local Hispanic community and help set priorities, short-term and long-term goals for Hispanic Ministry in the parish.
3. Create awareness among the entire parish community of our call to be united in our diversity, helping to implement the Diocesan Unity in Diversity Plan.

### *Membership* (Cf. Pages 17 & 18, GPPPC)

Membership on the Hispanic Ministry Committee should include a broad spectrum of parishioners (country of origin, age groups, gender, education, liturgical ministries and life-styles) who:

1. Understand the Church as united in our diversity and the goal of integration as opposed to assimilation.
2. Are knowledgeable about Hispanic culture, language and spiritual practices.
3. Are willing to collaborate in a sense of *pastoral de conjunto*.
4. Can serve as liaisons to the other committees, which would most likely require an ability to communicate effectively in English and Spanish.
5. Represent any Small Christian Communities or movements active in the parish.

Resource: Office for Hispanic/Latino Ministry, McRaith Catholic Center, 600 Locust Street, Owensboro KY 42301; 270-683-1545; Fax: 270-683-6883; [owensborodiocese.org/ministerio-hispano/](http://owensborodiocese.org/ministerio-hispano/).

## **APPENDIX I: CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS, A MODEL**

### **Article I. NAME**

*(This section simply states the name by which the Parish Pastoral Council is to be known.)*

The name of this body shall be the Parish Pastoral Council of \_\_\_\_\_ Parish, in \_\_\_\_\_ Kentucky, hereafter referred to as the Council.

### **Article II. PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS**

*(The basic purposes and functions of the Parish Pastoral Council are listed in this section. It states the reason for the Council's existence and what it shall do to achieve its purposes.)*

- A. Purposes
- B. Functions

### **Article III. POWERS**

*(This section describes the powers and authority of the Parish Pastoral Council and the relationship of the Council to the Pastor's canonical authority.)*

The Parish Pastoral Council receives its formal ecclesiastical legitimacy and mandate in a specific parish from the pastor, who united with the Council as an indispensable member, delegates the members of the Council to share with him the responsibility for achieving the pastoral mission of the parish Church.

#### **LIMITATIONS**

The pastor, consistent with the Roman Catholic tradition, bears the final responsibility for the total parish ministry. He cannot abdicate this responsibility given to him by the bishop and the Canon Law of the Church. He is obliged to exercise authority unique to his office by ratifying and implementing Council decisions, or, in rare instances and for serious reasons, rejecting a Council recommendation.

### **Article IV. MEMBERSHIP**

*(This section describes the membership of the Council, specifying the different types of membership.)*

- A. Ex Officio - Representative Members *(Optional)*
  - 1. Religious Representative: a member of the Religious Order serving the parish either appointed by the Superior or elected by the members of the Religious Order serving the parish; term: normally one year, with eligibility for a second term
  - 2. Organizational Representatives - either the president or an elected representative of designated parish organizations; term: for the length of the presidency, or, if elected as representative, one year, with eligibility for a second term

B. Elected Members

1. Area or Section Representatives (*optional*) - a number of men and women each elected by the parishioners of a designated or specific territorial area or section of the parish. Term: normally two years, with eligibility for an additional successive term **OR**
2. Parish-at-Large Representatives (*optional*): a number of men and women who are elected by the total parish population; term: normally two years, with eligibility for an additional term. **OR**
3. Officers and/or Committee Chairpersons (*optional*): a number of men and women who are elected by the total parish population to a specific office or to chair a standing committee; term: normally two years, with eligibility for an additional term. **OR**
4. Age Group Representatives (*optional*): a number of men and women who are elected by specific age groups of the parish population; term: normally two years, with eligibility for an additional term. **OR**
5. After nomination by the entire parish, nominees who agree to and participate in three formation sessions, themselves discern God's call and the needs of the parish and name the membership of the Parish Pastoral Council.

C. Appointed Members

Once the Parish Pastoral Council is elected, the pastor may appoint persons from groups not represented in the elected body.

**Article V. OFFICERS**

*(This section describes what officers the Council is to have and their terms of office.)*

The Council's presiding officer shall be the Chairperson. The other Council officers shall be Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary.

The entire Council, from among the members of the Council, shall elect the officers of the Council. The officers shall be elected for one-year terms and may be re-elected for another one-year term if their terms as members allow.

**Article VI. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

*(This section describes how, when and by whom the elected and/or selected members are to be nominated and elected/selected. Cf. Guidelines)*

**Article VII. COMMITTEES**

*(This section should include the names of all Standing Committees, a description of each one's field of activity and a description of how the committees are to be constituted.)*

A. Executive Committee

There shall be an Executive Committee chaired by the Chairperson and shall include the Pastor and the other officers of the Council (i.e. the Vice-Chairperson and the Secretary.)

B. Standing Committees

1. There shall be at least six standing Committees: Worship, Spiritual Life, Family Life, Education/Faith Formation, Social Justice, and Financial/Administration.



2. The purposes, scope of concern and function of each Standing Committee shall be specified by the By-Laws.
3. All Standing Committees are to be properly understood as extensions of the Parish Pastoral Council itself.
4. All Standing Committees shall be accountable to the Parish Pastoral Council for its decisions, programs and activities. This accountability shall be exercised in the form of a committee report rendered by the Committee Chairperson at the regular business meetings of the Council.
5. Membership in the Standing Committees shall be open to all parishioners. However, each Chairperson shall have the authority to limit committee membership, subject to Council affirmation, if, in his or her judgment, the viability and interaction of the membership would be hampered by an unwieldy membership.
6. Each Standing Committee shall adopt its own rules, subject to Council affirmation, relative to selection of members and terms of membership.
7. Standing Committees shall meet regularly, as dictated by needs and circumstances. Meetings shall be held quarterly; most committees will find it necessary to meet more frequently to carry out their function.

#### C. Ad Hoc Committees

The Council shall have the authority to designate Ad Hoc Committees from its membership or from the parish membership-at-large for a specific pastoral need and for a limited time. The Chairperson shall appoint members to the Ad Hoc Committees after consultation with the members of the Parish Pastoral Council. The Nomination Committee and a Constitution and by-laws Committee shall be considered Ad Hoc Committees.

### **Article VIII. MEETINGS**

*(This section should include the date of regular meetings, how special meetings may be called and quorum requirements.)*

- A. The Parish Pastoral Council will meet regularly monthly and not less than quarterly.
- B. The Parish Pastoral Council meetings shall normally take the form of regular or business meetings. The date, time and place of each regular meeting shall be published in the parish bulletin.
- C. All parishioners may attend regular meetings as observers and may speak when recognized by the Chair.
- D. In addition to, or in place of, regular meetings, the Council may schedule special meetings, such as:
  1. Education/Faith Formational meetings: for the purpose of acquiring greater theological and ministerial insights and skills
  2. Orientation meetings: for the purpose of introducing new Council members and instructing them in the history, procedures and priorities of the Council

3. Planning meetings: for the purpose of developing annual goals and objectives
  4. Renewal meetings: for the purpose of strengthening personal and communal spirituality, as well as Council interaction
  5. Social meetings: for the purpose of strengthening relationships among the Council members and for the celebration of significant achievements and events.
- E. Special meetings may be open to parish members or restricted to Council members, depending upon their purpose.
  - F. All meetings are to include a time frame for prayer and reflection. The Chairperson shall delegate the responsibility for developing a prayer format for each meeting to specific members of the Council, preferably on a rotating basis.
  - G. Emergency meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council may be called at the request of the Pastor or the Executive Committee normally with at least five days notice.
  - H. A quorum shall consist of a majority of existing Council seats; however, a quorum shall not be absolutely necessary for the regular meetings of the Council provided all members were given proper notice.
  - I. The Chairperson with discretion shall be obliged to contact all members who are absent for two consecutive meetings of the Council in order to be informed of the reasons fostering the member's absence.

**Article IX. DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

*(This section includes a description of the processes to be utilized by the Council in reaching decisions.)*

- A. The Parish Pastoral Council should strive for the greatest degree of consensus in all its decisions, and to this end should seek full discussion so that all views may be understood. However, a majority of those present is sufficient to reach a decision.

*(The Council may wish to investigate other methods of decision-making, including a requirement that consensus is obtained or that more than a mere majority be obtained on major issues. A Council wishing to take this route will need to define the nature of important issues requiring such consensus.)*

- B. The role of the pastor is essential to the whole decision-making process. Consensus necessarily includes his approval. Without such approval, consensus and decisions have not been reached.
- C. The Council is ultimately responsible for the actions of Parish Pastoral Council committees. To avoid a review process on each decision, the Council shall establish a process whereby the annual operating plans of committees are reviewed by the Council and approved, possibly with modifications. The Committee shall then be free to operate on matters within its plan. Departures from the plan, or matters not contemplated when the plan was developed, are subject to review by the Council.

## **Article X. AMENDMENTS**

*(This section should describe how the constitution and by-laws can be amended.)*

- A. Amendments to the constitution and by-laws are introduced by Council members at a regular meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council; however, the amendments are to be submitted in writing. Voting on the amendments shall not take place until the next regular meeting of the Council. In order to pass each amendment to the constitution and by-laws will require a two-thirds vote in favor by those present.
- B. Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the Council, but amendments must be introduced in writing and voting on the amendment shall not take place until the next regular meeting of the Council.

## **Article XI. FINANCE**

*(This section should describe the relationship between the Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Council/Committee.)*

- A. The Parish Pastoral Council, although not the parish fund-raising organization, will in its normal functioning will be concerned with the financial resources of the parish as they affect the parish effort to achieve its mission.
- B. OPERATIONAL NEEDS
  - 1. The expenditures incurred by the internal operation and functioning of the Parish Pastoral Council shall be assumed in/by the Church budget. These expenditures shall normally include clerical supplies, printing, registration fees, stipends for speakers and consultants, refreshments and other items needed for the effective functioning and development of the Parish Pastoral Council.
  - 2. The Parish Pastoral Council shall be responsible to formulate an annual operational budget for the twelve-month period designated as the "Council Year." This "Council Year" should be selected so as to coincide with the parish fiscal year and its budgeting and planning process.
  - 3. The Executive Committee shall be responsible to coordinate the finalization of the budget before submission to the Council for approval.
  - 4. Expenditures to be incurred in service to the pastoral needs of the parish, even though such efforts are planned, coordinated and implemented by the Parish Pastoral Council, shall not be included as items in the Parish Pastoral Council budget but in the proper categories as part of the Church (or School) budget (e.g., Religious Education/Faith Formation, Liturgical Development, Property Maintenance, etc.).

*(Comment: The wording of this section will depend upon the specific parish budgeting and planning process.)*

## APPENDIX II: PRACTICAL HELPS

### A. Developing a Parish Mission Statement

A Mission Statement is a brief statement that is developed with some involvement of the entire parish. It serves as the inspiration and motivation to keep the focus on the Gospel mandate of Jesus to “proclaim the Gospel to all creation.” Whatever form it takes it should clearly identify what the parish commits itself to and sees as its mission or purpose.)

An example:

*We are a community of faith proclaiming in our daily lives  
the Gospel of Christ by who we are and  
by the way we live, serve, work and worship.  
Inspired by John 13:14*

How is a Mission Statement formed and written?

1. Ordinarily forming the VISION and writing a Mission Statement for a parish begins with prayer and work at the Parish Pastoral Council. This group works together in responding to the questions: Who are we? What are we about? Why? How do we do what we do?
  - a. What is the Mission of Christ? (Found in the Gospels and Epistles e.g. Mark 16:16-18 and note the early followers response in vs. 20; Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 4:38-43 and note Jesus’ own action in vs. 44; Luke 24:46-48; John 13:34-35; John 20:21-23; in the Acts of the Apostles and in the letters or epistles we find how the early followers of Christ, especially Paul, James, John, Peter, etc. responded to the call of Christ-the mission given to the world). Often a parish might choose a simple and short Gospel passage (one or two verses) to serve as the key of the VISION of the parish that is then reflected in the MISSION STATEMENT.
  - b. Who are we? (A brief description of the parish and the people)
  - c. When/Where? (A brief description of time and place)
  - d. Why? (A brief statement of why this parish exists)
  - e. How? In what specific way(s) are the gifts and graces of this parish manifested and used for the common good of society?
2. A member or small task force takes the answers generated and using the responses writes draft and a very brief summary of the VISION of the parish and presents it to the members of the Parish Pastoral Council.
3. At a meeting, the Parish Pastoral Council prays, studies, modifies, and comes to ownership of and agreement with the VISION and the summary statement. (The summary statement will become the Mission Statement.)

4. The summary statement is then placed in the bulletin and/or in some manner presented to the entire parish as a DRAFT OF A MISSION STATEMENT for the parish. All parishioners are invited to submit in writing any suggestions they have about the statement.
5. The writing group reviews all the input, prays, and then modifies the statement as seems needed.
6. The Parish Pastoral Council reviews the final statement and makes further adjustments, if necessary, and approves the statement by consensus.
7. Some simple ceremony of celebration acknowledges the graced work of the entire parish (e.g. the Mission Statement is presented to the parish as a prayer card and all prayerfully read it aloud) and a framed copy of the Parish Mission Statement is placed in a prominent place.
8. All meetings of the parish begin with a prayer that includes the Mission Statement as a guide to the work of the parish. (The Mission Statement may be used as a letterhead; it may appear on all Parish Pastoral Council and committee agendas, etc.)
9. At any time there is doubt about a particular function or expenditure or action, the question, "How does this help us to live out our Mission?" must be asked and all need to prayerfully return to the core mission of the parish to answer that question.

## **B. Sample Agenda**

- All times are flexible according to the need of the Council with the exception of the prayer/formation piece. This should never be eliminated or relegated to lip service.
- Meetings should begin and end at the agreed upon times. Members and families have a right to know what to expect of the time commitments of this very important and sacred ministry. If a meeting is to last longer than scheduled, the additional length of time is to be negotiated and agreed upon by the members.
- A printed agenda and written reports should be in the hands of all Council members several days before the meeting occurs. The agenda is directed by the on-going work of the Council and is set by the Council chairperson with the pastor.
- Much of the work can be done between meetings making use of current technology.

## Parish Pastoral Council Meeting

May 30, 2020

Parish Center 7:00 - 9:00 pm

6:45 p.m. - Gathering (*Sometimes at least with coffee and snacks*)

7:00 p.m. - Welcome, opening prayer and Council formation (20 min.)

7:20 p.m. - Approval: (5 min).

- A. Agenda for this meeting
- B. Minutes of the last meeting

7:25 p.m. - Reports (3 minutes each) (21 min.)

- A. Worship Committee ( )
- B. Spiritual Life Committee ( )
- C. Family Life Committee ( )
- D. Education Committee ( )
- E. Social Justice Committee ( )
- F. Finance/Administration Committee ( )
- G. Hispanic Ministry Committee ( )

Discussion of specific items from the reports (15 min.)

8:00 p.m. - Old Business (*established at the last or a previous meeting*) (20 min.)

- A. Listed by name and presenter
- B. Listed by name and presenter

8:20 p.m. - New Business (*introduced and initial discussion takes place*) (30 min.)

Usually one or two items. (*A vote or decision on a major issue is never made at the same meeting in which the issue is first introduced. An emergency is an exception. Hastily made decisions are the ones that most often cause division and controversy.*)

8:50 p.m. - Specifics for next meeting (5 min.)

(*Date, time, place, prayer/formation leader, refreshments, etc*)

8:55 p.m. - Have we been true to our Mission tonight? How? (5 min.)

9:00 p.m. - Adjournment and closing prayer

## RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Documents of Vatican Council II

Code of Canon Law

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults

Diocese of Owensboro Policy Manual

USCCB “Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us”

History: The original guidelines were approved in April 1988 with revision and reprinting in:

- April 1991
- November 1993
- March 1999
- March 2017
- November 2020



Diocese of  
**OWENSBORO**

600 Locust Street, Owensboro, KY 42301  
270-683-1545 | Fax 270-683-6883