

*There are different gifts but the same Spirit; there are different ministries
but the same lord.*

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4

MANY GIFTS, ONE SPIRIT: CHURCH GOVERNANCE THROUGH CONSULTATIVE LEADERSHIP

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MANY GIFTS ONE SPIRIT: CHURCH GOVERNANCE THROUGH CONSULTATIVE LEADERSHIP

I. INTRODUCTION

Throughout her history, the Church has borrowed structures, models, and language from the ambient culture and society. For example, the term “diocese” was drawn from a geographic area of the Roman Empire. While the Church still borrows organizational concepts from society, the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the Code of Canon Law provide a clearer understanding of the unique nature of Church governance. Our experience has clarified what is necessary to make Church governance structures effective. Given these new understandings, this revised document does not focus on power and authority as may commonly be experienced in government or business. Instead, this document is based on attitudes of trust in each other, belief in the power of the Holy Spirit working among us, and the exercise of authority as a ministry of service. These attitudes promote appropriate shared responsibility for the mission of the Church and work to build consensus and commitment as called for in Church governance and our tradition as a Roman Catholic community of faith.

Pastors serve the church’s communion by striving to work out in practice the vision of St. Paul, who saw that “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service, but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone” (1 Cor. 12:4-6).

The term “pastor” in this document refers to a priest appointed by the Archbishop as responsible for the pastoral care of a parish. Due to a shortage of priests, and in accord with the *Code of Canon Law (CIC, c. 517 §2)*, the Archbishop may assign the pastoral care of a community to a deacon, religious or lay person, who oversees the day-to-day leadership of a parish as “pastoral coordinator.” Although not sharing all of the canonical rights and responsibilities of a pastor or priest, the pastoral coordinator shares in the pastoral care of the parish community and relates to its consultative structures.

The purpose of this document is to promote a clearer understanding among pastors, councils, commissions, parish staffs, and other parish leadership about the pastor’s responsibility for governance and the respective collaborative roles that each individual or body performs in order to assist him.

This document focuses primarily on consultative bodies in the parish. Consultative bodies are those councils and/or commissions, which the pastor consults in order to provide direction for the mission, priorities, broad goals, strategic planning, and policies of the parish. The document will also address parish executive or administrative structures with which the pastor

collaborates in the day-to-day administrative programs and ministries of a parish.

This document is divided into two parts. The first part provides canonical context, followed by a general description of the roles of the pastor, the parish pastoral council, finance council, commissions, committees and parish staff in the planning process.

The second part describes the roles and responsibilities of parish consultative structures, including pastoral and finance councils, commissions and committees, principles of parish decision-making, and methods for assisting these groups in working together including consensus building and discernment. Finally, guidelines are presented regarding parish organizational structures in exceptional situations and during pastoral transitions.

This document provides direction and guidance for putting into practice our archdiocesan vision concerning the role of parish consultative bodies. The pastor should use the consultative process to develop the parish's mission and pastoral planning. Each parish will be expected to adapt its structures in a way that suits its local situation and in keeping with the spirit of the document.

II. PARTICIPANTS IN ARCHDIOCESAN GOVERNANCE

The *Code of Canon Law* defines some of the roles that various ministers play in church governance; other roles are created by the Archbishop. So long as it is a stable function, established for a spiritual purpose, the ministry is an ecclesiastical office (*CIC*, c.145). To promote clearer communication and understanding, the following terminology is to be used throughout the Archdiocese.

Archdiocesan Leadership

ARCHBISHOP

The Archbishop is appointed by the Pope as the principal teacher of faith, the priest of sacred worship, and the pastor of the “local Church” and the minister of governance of the Archdiocese (*CIC*, cc. 375, 377).

AUXILIARY BISHOP

When the pastoral needs of the Archdiocese suggest it, one or more auxiliary bishops may be appointed by the Holy Father at the request of the Archbishop. An auxiliary bishop does not possess the right of succession (*CIC*, c. 403 §1). Auxiliary bishops assist the Archbishop in the pastoral care of the Archdiocese.

VICAR GENERAL

The vicar general is a priest appointed by the Archbishop to assist him in the administration and pastoral care of the archdiocese (*CIC*, c. 475 §1). The office may be delegated by the Archbishop to an auxiliary bishop.

EPISCOPAL VICAR

Episcopal vicars are priests appointed by the Archbishop to promote good government of the Archdiocese. Episcopal vicars have a specific area of focus such as clergy, education, tribunal, or charity (*CIC*, c. 476).

DEAN

A dean is a priest recommended to the Archbishop through a deanery process and appointed by the Archbishop to promote and coordinate the common pastoral activity within a deanery. Leadership of the deanery requires serving on the Presbyteral council (*CIC*, cc. 553-555).

Archdiocesan Consultative Bodies

Three structures are required by Canon Law to assist the Archbishop in his role of promoting the spirit of communion in the Archdiocese: The College of Consulters, the Presbyteral Council, and the Archdiocesan Finance Council. At least four commissions assist in this ministry of collaboration, over which the Archbishop presides to ensure unity and efficacy, these include: The Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, the Archdiocesan Ecumenical/Interfaith Commission, the Archdiocesan School Board, and the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission.

THE ARCHDIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

At baptism each member of the Church assumes responsibility to carry forward the mission of Christ in partnership with other Church members. While roles and responsibilities differ, and not everyone is called upon to fulfill this fundamental responsibility in the same way, each is to contribute to the common mission according to her or his time, talent, and treasure (*CIC*, cc. 511-514).

- CL 1. In order to further shared responsibility for the mission of the Roman Catholic Church in Western Washington and to foster pastoral planning, the Archbishop establishes the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. The Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, made up of laity, religious, and clergy, provides a forum for mutual, open reflection and dialogue about**

archdiocesan priorities and goals. Archdiocesan Pastoral Council members serve for up to three years or longer at the Archbishop's discretion and are decommissioned at the end of their term.

The council's purpose is to form community among the members of the council through prayer, study, and shared reflection in order to be a sign and witness of unity for the Archdiocese and to listen to the many voices that make up the Church in Western Washington. The Council identifies needs, hopes and dreams of the faithful and recommends broad priorities, goals, and policies. In addition, the Council discusses, reviews, and advises the Archbishop regarding issues he chooses to bring before the Council (*CIC*, cc. 511–514).

THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL

The Archbishop and the priests of this Archdiocese share in the one priesthood of Jesus Christ by their baptism and, in a special way, by their call to Holy Orders. Although all members of the Church belong to the one Body of Christ, priests, by their ordination, are called to a unique ministry in the Church. By their ordination priests are called to collaborate with their Archbishop in his mission and ministry (*CIC*, cc. 495–502).

In a special way, priests collaborate with the Archbishop in his role as Shepherd of the Archdiocese. While the Archbishop is to attend to his presbyters with special concern and listen to them as his assistants and advisers, they, in turn, are challenged to collaborate with the Archbishop as teacher, priest, and pastor.

In order to carry out his responsibilities as effectively as possible, the Archbishop establishes a Presbyteral Council to provide advice and counsel. Their pastoral experience, counsel, and collaborative wisdom are indispensable resources that support this mutual relationship. The Presbyteral Council is a special forum for open reflection and fraternal dialogue between the Archbishop and the priests of the Archdiocese.

- CL 2. The membership of the Presbyteral council consists of ten elected representatives, one representative from each of the ten deaneries of the Archdiocese, the Vicars General, the Judicial Vicar, the Vicar for Clergy (*ex officio* members), and up to six appointed members. In addition, the Jesuit Community residing within the Archdiocese and the Benedictine Community of St. Martin's Abbey shall nominate three members. From the names submitted, the Archbishop shall select one member from each community. The dean of each deanery, elected by the deanery priests, has a three-year**

term, renewable once. The members appointed by the Archbishop shall serve for a term of one year, which can be renewed indefinitely at the direction of the Archbishop.

ARCHDIOCESAN FINANCE COUNCIL

The Archdiocesan Finance Council is a consultative body whose role is to advise the Archbishop in his duties of canonical stewardship over the archdiocesan finances. In the context of Christian stewardship, the Archdiocesan Finance Council makes recommendations to the Archbishop on the best use of Archdiocesan financial resources to fulfill the Church's mission and to meet Archdiocesan goals.

The Archdiocesan Finance Council was established in 1984 in accord with the *Code of Canon Law*. The Finance Council advises the Archbishop regarding the financial health of the Archdiocese, the implications of potential decisions in light of the value of financial stewardship and assists the Archbishop in evaluating the financial management structures and policies in the Archdiocese.

- CL 3. The Finance Council is composed of up to eleven members (at least three members of the Christian faithful, expert in finance and civil law) who are appointed by the Archbishop after an application and screening process for five year terms that are renewable (CIC, c. 492 §§1-2).**
- CL 4. The Archdiocesan Finance Council recommends to the Archbishop overall financial planning, financial policies, (e.g. funding policies, investment policies, and policies regarding balanced operating and capital budgets), and monitors fiscal activity by meeting with auditors to review the annual audit before it is finalized (CIC, c. 493). The Archbishop must also obtain the consent of the Finance Council (and the College of Consultors) to place acts of extraordinary administration (CIC, c. 1277). The Presbyteral Council is a source of final recommendations for those decisions that directly impact parishes.**

THE COLLEGE OF CONSULTORS

The College of Consultors is formed by the Archbishop to fulfill the functions prescribed by the Code of Canon Law and any other duties assigned by the Archbishop. The Archbishop is to obtain the consent of the College of Consultors to perform acts of extraordinary administration, alienate archdiocesan property, and authorize alienation within minimal and maximal sums set by the conference of bishops (CIC, c. 1277).

Members of the College of Consultors are selected from the presbyteral council. The College of Consultors is an independent body from the presbyteral council. There are no fewer than six and no more than twelve members appointed for a term of five years (*CIC*, c. 502, §1).

DIACONAL COUNCIL

As an extension of diaconal service, the Diaconal Council advises the Archbishop about the needs of the Archdiocese and assists him in fostering and promoting a spirit of unity and good order among the diaconal community. The Diaconal Council is responsible to the Archbishop of Seattle under the direction of the Vicar for Clergy.

The Diaconal Council consists of ten deacons, one from each deanery, nominated by the deacons of each deanery and appointed by the Archbishop; an additional six members, chosen from among deacons and spouses, are appointed directly by the Archbishop; four of the appointees must be spouses of the diaconal community.

Nominated members are appointed for three year terms, which are renewable once and which are staggered in such a way that one third of the membership is appointed or reappointed each year. The members directly appointed by the Archbishop shall serve for a term of one year, which can be renewed indefinitely at the direction of the Archbishop. The Archbishop or the Vicar for Clergy convenes and chairs meetings of the Diaconal Council once a quarter. The Archbishop or the Vicar for Clergy approves the agenda of the Diaconal Council and publishes the minutes. Recommendations to the Archbishop are made by consensus.

ARCHDIOCESAN STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION

The Archdiocesan Stewardship Commission is a consultative body to the Executive Director of Stewardship and Development. The commission assists the Executive Director in promoting “Stewardship as a Way of Life” in parishes and among Catholic parishioners in Western Washington. It is composed of Pastors, Pastoral Assistants for Administration, Pastoral Assistants for Stewardship, and *ex officio* members from Chancery staff.

The commission advises the Executive Director on:

- Themes and ideas to promote stewardship as a way of life through parishes and deaneries;

- The development of the annual plan through proposals and suggestions regarding materials and formation efforts to promote stewardship as a way of life, and;

ARCHDIOCESAN ECUMENICAL/INTERFAITH COMMISSION

In accord with the norms of the Code of Canon Law, the entire college of bishops and the Apostolic See is called to foster ecumenical interaction.

The Ecumenical Commission's purpose is to foster continual dialogue towards the restoration of unity among all Christian faithful according to the will of Christ (*DAPNE*, 42, 43).

ARCHDIOCESAN SCHOOL BOARD

The Archdiocesan School Board (the Board) is the chief advisory body to the Superintendent regarding the formulation of policies affecting Archdiocesan, parish, and private Catholic Schools. The Board is appointed by the Archbishop from a list of diverse candidates screened by the nominating committee of the Board.

The Board reviews guidelines and makes recommendations to the Archbishop concerning the opening of new schools, amalgamation and/or grade reduction, and school closure. When approved by the Archbishop, policies recommended by the Board are binding on the Superintendent, local parish school commissions, pastors, school principals, staff, and faculty.

ARCHDIOCESAN LITURGICAL COMMISSION

The Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission, chaired by the Director of the Liturgy Office, includes priests, deacons, religious, and lay members. As an educational arm of the Archbishop, the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission receives directions from the Archbishop or through the Director of the Liturgy Office for presenting and ensuring the implementation of liturgical norms that reflect a local response to directives and norms of the universal church.

The Commission advises the Archbishop, supports the Liturgy Office, and serves the Archdiocese by staffing committees on liturgical music, environment, and art and by forming liturgical ministers. The Commission coordinates episcopal liturgies and special Archdiocesan celebrations and develops guidelines for the celebration of the sacraments.

The Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission has membership in the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions.

The Deanery Structure

The Archbishop groups parishes together to form deaneries for the purpose of providing effective pastoral care for the faithful in a given geographical area (*CIC*, c. 374). The pastors and, in some cases, all ministers of a deanery meet regularly, usually monthly, to provide mutual support and encouragement for ministry and to discuss inter-parish issues such as how to provide effective pastoral care for hospitals, correctional facilities, and other institutions. Deaneries also collaborate in pastoral planning and in sharing resources for common initiatives such as service of cultural communities, liturgical or catechetical formation, the support of Catholic schools, and the celebration of penance services.

Because pastoral needs and resources will vary over time, deanery boundaries may be redrawn to reflect changing circumstances.

For a parish to change deaneries, the following policies apply:

- CL 5. The pastor must bring a request to change deaneries to the current pastoral leadership of both deaneries for discussion.**
- CL 6. The requesting dean must present the request to change deaneries to the Archbishop, who consults with the Presbyteral Council before making his decision.**

III. PARTICIPANTS IN PARISH GOVERNANCE

The Parish

The parish is a community of believers sharing in the mission of the Church.

A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church (diocese); the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop. The diocesan bishop alone is competent to erect, suppress or alter parishes; he is not to erect, suppress or notably alter them without hearing the presbyteral council (*CIC*, c. 515 §§1, 2).

Because it is a community of the Christian faithful, it is essential that the parish structures serve the community in carrying out the mission of the Church: sanctification of the world through proclamation of the Gospel, celebration of the sacraments and service to those in need. Parish organizational structures are never ends in themselves, but are means to promote the mission of the parish, the diocesan Church, and the universal Church.

In the Archdiocese of Seattle, some parishes are clustered under the leadership of a pastor or priest moderator.

Parishes are clustered to ensure that pastoral care is provided by a priest who is assigned to these communities for this purpose. Depending on the communities' history and pastoral needs, there will be a variety of consultative bodies. For example, in some clusters, each parish will have its own councils and committees; in others, one pastoral council and one finance council will advise for all parishes.

Faith communities for the purposes of consultative leadership policies and guideline in the Archdiocese of Seattle are not parishes but are established communities of faith with a chaplain appointed by the Archbishop. For example, cultural and ethnic communities, campus ministry, etc.

Priests

PASTOR

A pastor is a priest appointed by the Archbishop and delegated as the leader of a particular parish entrusted to him. The pastor's role, expressed in its threefold mission of teaching, governing and sanctifying (*CIC*, c. 519), empowers the laity for their mission as light and leaven in the world. As stated in the policies for priestly ministry, "The ordinary term for a pastor is six years, renewable once." In the case of a shortage of priests, a priest may be assigned to pastor more than one parish (*CIC*, c. 526 §1).

PRIEST ADMINISTRATOR

A priest administrator is a priest who is appointed by the Archbishop as a temporary leader of a particular parish. He has the same authority as a pastor and serves a period of time determined by the Archbishop (*CIC*, c. 540 §§1-3).

CHAPLAIN

A chaplain is a priest appointed by the Archbishop to provide pastoral care to a faith community (for example a cultural and ethnic faith community or a particular group of the Christian faithful (for example in a university setting or a hospital) within the Archdiocese. According to *PM* 14, "The term for a chaplain's term is ordinarily three years, renewable indefinitely." (*CIC*, c. 564)

PAROCHIAL VICAR

A parochial vicar is a priest who renders service in pastoral ministry as a co-worker with the pastor, and sharing service in pastoral ministry through common counsel and effort and under

his authority (*CIC*, c. 545 §§1-2), usually for a term of three years (see *PM* 13).

PRIEST MODERATOR

A priest moderator is a priest appointed by the Archbishop with powers and faculties of a pastor for a parish. His role is to monitor and mentor the pastoral coordinator and parochial vicar, and to act as canonical pastor to the parish community to whom an ecclesial lay minister has been appointed (*CIC*, c. 517 § 2). According to *PM* 11, “The term of an appointment for a priest moderator is linked to the term of appointment for the pastoral leader he is moderating.”

Deacons

A deacon is a sacred minister qualified by orders and by faculties from the Archbishop to baptize, witness marriages, conduct the rites of burial, proclaim the gospel and assist at liturgy. He is assigned by the Archbishop to fulfill his ministry of word, liturgy, and service according to the terms of a ministry agreement and under the supervision of a pastor. That ministry may take place in the parish, an Archdiocesan agency, or a public facility such as a hospital or prison. If granted faculties, a deacon may also preach.

Lay Ecclesial Ministers and Religious

Lay ecclesial ministers are non-ordained members of the church who are called to participate in the life of the church through specialized ministerial, pastoral, and formational service.

Men and women who live a life consecrated through the profession of the evangelical counsels (chastity, poverty, and obedience) in a religious community under the supervision of a local superior are commonly known as Religious.

LAY ECCLESIAL PASTORAL COORDINATOR

A pastoral coordinator is a religious or lay ecclesial minister appointed by the Archbishop under the supervision of a moderator and entrusted with the day-to-day leadership of a parish or faith community (*CIC*, c. 517 §2). A pastoral coordinator may also be a deacon.

A pastoral coordinator serves a term of one to three years at the discretion of the Archbishop, as specified in the person’s ministry

agreement. The priest moderator assigned has final canonical responsibility for major decisions within a parish.

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

A pastoral associate is a deacon, religious or lay ecclesial minister delegated by the pastor to assist in fulfilling the pastoral ministry of the parish.

PASTORAL ASSISTANT

A pastoral assistant is a deacon, religious or lay ecclesial minister delegated by the pastor to assist in a specific ministerial area, such as religious education, youth ministry, or administration.

Lay Associations

Lay Associations are defined as groups of the faithful who organize themselves to foster a more personal Christian faith, to promote public worship or Christian doctrine, or to exercise other works of the apostolate. Lay associations may also have a direct relationship with the Archbishop and his delegates in extending the evangelical, pastoral, and catechetical mission of the local church.

Parish Consultative Bodies

Before describing specific guidelines for council and commission operations and membership, it is important to offer a brief summary of the roles of the pastor or, in exceptional situations appointed by the Archbishop, the ecclesial lay minister, staff, and consultative structures and their relationship to one another.

It is the role of the Christian faithful to carry out the mission of the Church in the world. Therefore, all parishioners share the responsibility for that mission with the pastor or other appointed leader. They are called to be responsible stewards of the resources of time, talent, and treasure given to them and to their parish. In order to ensure a diverse group of consultative leadership, an intentional effort is made to invite broad representation. The pastor or pastoral leader, appointed by the Archbishop, exercises a central leadership role in the parish. Using a model of servant leadership, those called to leadership seeks to build a faith community exemplifying diversity in unity and to be a link to the larger Church. They are responsible for parish governance and therefore provides leadership for the parish pastoral council and commissions, the finance council, and the parish staff in accord with Archdiocesan and universal Church guidelines.

The pastoral council's purpose is to be a sign and witness of unity, to recommend parish priorities and directions, to promote community, and to assist the pastor in pastoral planning. The pastoral council is a consultative leadership body of parishioners that advises and makes recommendations to the pastor.

Commissions can be formed that are responsible for the development of strategic plans and policies for their specific ministry areas in response to the broad directions articulated by the pastor and parish pastoral council. The parish finance council, required by the Code of Canon Law, advises the pastor and pastoral council about effective stewardship of the parish's financial resources. It is responsible for developing and overseeing a parish budget process, as well as conducting long range financial planning.

Parish staff under the direction of the pastor or his delegate develop and oversee parish programs and ministries which flow from the directions determined as a result of the council's planning process. Staff may also have responsibilities in financial and personnel administration and/or in pastoral planning at the discretion of the pastor.

The following descriptions of councils and commissions are meant to be guidelines rather than rules. The appropriate application of these guidelines is the responsibility of the pastor, collaborating with his parish leadership.

Parish Pastoral Council

CL 7. Each parish must have a pastoral council as recommended in *CIC*, c. 536.

The pastoral council is a consultative body and is governed by norms determined by the Archbishop (*CIC*, c. 536 §2). Reflecting on the call of Vatican II, the Code of Canon Law and the tradition of the Archdiocese of Seattle, the parish pastoral council collaborates with the pastor to discern through consultation how to address the challenges and opportunities encountered by the parish in its particular time and place. Archbishop Connolly first mandated parish councils in 1972. Archbishop Hunthausen, after consultation with the Presbyteral Council, reaffirmed this mandate in 1978 in his pastoral letter "Shared Gifts, Shared Responsibility, Shared Spirit." Continuing this tradition, Archbishop Brunett has also affirmed this mandate and enhanced its challenge.

PURPOSE

The parish pastoral council is a consultative body to the pastor. The purpose of the pastoral council is to examine, consider, and draw conclusions concerning matters under discussion in order to recommend a course of action to the pastor. Through pastoral planning, the pastoral council assists the pastor in

- Developing and living out of the mission of the parish;
- Forming community as a sign and witness of unity for the larger parish community;
- Providing recommendations for parish priorities, directions, and policies;
- Promoting communication and understanding among parish organizations and between the parish, the Archdiocese, and the universal Church (*CIC*, c. 536 §1).

In forming community, council members are challenged to undertake ongoing renewal through prayer, study, listening, and dialogue. In developing priorities and directions for the parish, the council is to become the means of achieving full participation by the whole parish in its mission by giving all a voice in guiding and directing parish life. In fostering communication, the council encourages and initiates dialogue among parish leadership and organizations and brings to them the concerns of the universal Church.

CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP

A primary value for selecting membership of a parish pastoral council is that the council should be a true reflection of the parish community. For example, members should be inclusive of the demographic realities of the community. Members do not represent a particular constituency but should reflect the diversity of the parish in terms such as age, race, and length of membership in the parish. Staff members appointed by the pastor to the council are “ex officio” members of the council.

CL 8. Members of the pastoral council must be:

- **Baptized and confirmed Roman Catholics in good standing with the Church;**
- **Registered and supporting members of the parish;**
- **Grounded in and committed to an understanding of the Church in accord with the principles of Vatican II;**
- **Committed to prayer, study, listening, and dialogue;**
- **Committed to stewardship of time, talent and treasure;**
- **Not currently employed by the parish or parish school or a close relative or in-law of or living in the same household as a parish or school employee;**
- **Not simultaneously a member of the parish finance council.**

SIZE

The size of the council can range from five to twelve members. The size should be small enough to promote a sense of community among the members and yet large enough to reflect the diversity of the parish. The complexity of the council's agenda should also be a factor in determining its size.

SELECTION

Whatever method(s) a pastor uses to choose pastoral council members, the council's selection should reflect the theology underlying Church governance. That is, the process of selection should promote a sense of ownership throughout the parish without creating a sense that the parish has adopted a merely democratic model of governance.

In appointing members to the pastoral council, the pastor may adopt a variety and combination of methods including:

- A communal discernment process coordinated by a facilitator, which is the preferred method;
- Appointments from recommendations made by the existing pastoral council;
- Parish wide nominations and elections, which is not recommended.

TERMS OF OFFICE

CL 9. Terms of office should be three years, renewable once and either

- **Staggered so that council membership can rotate; or**
- **Concurrent so that all members discern onto the council together: thus members learn together, develop into a small faith community, build trust, discern leadership and serve for three years.**

EXECUTIVE STRUCTURE

Every council should have an executive committee composed of the pastor, chairperson, vice chairperson(s), and where applicable, administrative secretary. The task of this group is to develop an overall working plan for the year, which identifies the issues facing the council and plans when the council will be dealing with the issue. The executive committee should meet before each council meeting to prepare the agenda and design processes (e.g., small group work, individual work, reflection sheets) for each meeting. The executive committee needs to be sure that prayer

and study are a significant and regular part of the council's agenda. The executive committee also appoints chairpersons of task forces. The important responsibilities of this committee may require additional training and resources, which are provided by the Office of the Vicar for Clergy.

Roles and Responsibilities

PASTOR

The pastor presides at (but does not usually chair) all pastoral council meetings and actively listens to the council's deliberations. The pastor assists the council in developing consensus around a particular issue by sharing information, providing his own perspectives and identifying common elements or areas of agreement that seem present in the council's discussion. As minister of governance in the parish, the pastor authorizes any final course of action. He should set the context for the council's discussion by sharing Church teaching and/or setting the parameters for acceptable alternatives. The pastor is the convener of the executive committee and is ultimately responsible for ensuring the council's effective operations.

CHAIRPERSON

The chairperson, selected by the council membership, is central to the effectiveness of the pastoral council. The chairperson is responsible for:

- Organizing and coordinating the agenda and processes of the council;
- Chairing and facilitating the meetings of the council (the chairperson may delegate facilitation of portions of the meeting to other members);
- Encouraging members and committees of the council to fulfill their specific responsibilities and delegations; and
- Establishing an ongoing process of evaluation of the council's effectiveness.

The chairperson must be a servant leader of the group. He or she should be the facilitator of the council, encourage inclusion and participation, keep the meeting on track, be sensitive to conflict, and help resolve conflicts positively.

VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The vice-chairperson serves on the executive committee, assisting the chairperson and assuming the duties of the chair in her or his absence. The vice-chairperson may also facilitate designated agenda items during the meeting. The council may choose to have two or more vice-chairpersons depending on the size of the council and the complexity of its agenda. Expanding the executive committee in this way allows for more participation in the leadership of the council.

ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY

The administrative secretary prepares summaries of the meetings of the council, maintains the membership roster, and ensures the preparation and dissemination of correspondence. Many parishes have chosen to have a non-member volunteer to serve in this capacity, which allows all members of the council to participate fully in council proceedings.

MEETINGS

The pastoral council should determine its annual meeting calendar prior to the fall of each year, being sure to schedule enough meetings throughout the year to achieve the purpose of adequate consultation. Adequate time should be devoted to council orientation, council formation (prayer, community building, etc.), as well as council business. Some councils hold special meetings for internal planning (setting annual council goals and objectives), formation (retreats, opportunities to strengthen the ministerial identity and spirituality of the council), and education (study of Church documents, skill development relative to council work). The pastor must decide whether all meetings or only some of them will be open or closed.

For the council's operations to be effective and satisfying, it is important for council members to develop an understanding of the components of a successful meeting. Components include: prayer, faith sharing, listening, clear meeting objectives or outcomes, a realistic agenda and timeframe, consideration of how agenda items will be handled, adequate preparatory material made available in advance, and periodic evaluation of meetings.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

To foster the spirit of community and the development of mutual trust among its members, a parish pastoral council should establish one or two occasions each year for non-business events

such as retreats and social gatherings. Through active participation in these events, council members learn to know, value, and trust one another as they serve the common good of all.

Parish Finance Council

CL 10. Each parish must have a finance council as stated in *CIC*, c. 537.

According to the Code of Canon Law, each parish must have a finance council (*CIC*, c. 537). The parish finance council is composed of Catholic faithful who offer advice to the pastor in the administration of the parish's temporal goods.

PURPOSE

The finance council is a consultative body that provides the pastor with advice concerning the stewardship of the parish's fiscal resources. It assists the pastor by:

- Conducting long-range financial planning with regard to funding operational and capital needs in the parish;
- Developing and overseeing a parish budget process which results in an annual parish budget. This process should involve the participation of those responsible for parish programs. It should be so designed that it addresses the parish's priorities and goals as determined by the pastor and parish pastoral council;
- Providing financial analysis of current fiscal status reports;
- Providing fiscal analysis of proposed goals, strategies, programs and administrative aspects of parish life.

While the finance council has significant responsibility for the stewardship of parish financial resources, it is not the role of the finance council to recommend directions, priorities, or programs other than those related to its delegation: namely, fiscal stewardship. For this reason, the other consultative structures must be in place for the finance council to fulfill its role responsibly and effectively.

CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP

The purpose of the finance council is to provide the pastor, the parish pastoral council, and other leadership bodies with professional financial analysis. For this reason, it is important that the finance council membership should be as balanced as possible (e.g., by gender, age, race, and ethnicity) and composed of people

who have had experience in the areas of business, finance, administration and accounting. Staff members appointed by the pastor to the council are *ex officio* members of the council.

CL 11. Members of the finance council must be:

- **Baptized and confirmed Roman Catholics in good standing with the Church;**
- **Registered and supporting members of the parish;**
- **Grounded in and committed to an understanding of the Church in accord with the principles of Vatican II;**
- **Committed to prayer, study, listening, and dialogue;**
- **Committed to stewardship of time, talent and treasure;**
- **Not currently employed by the parish or parish school or a close relative or in-law of or living in the same household as a parish or school employee;**
- **Not simultaneously a member of the parish pastoral council.**

SIZE

The council should be large enough to include a broad representation of expertise, but not so large as to inhibit planning and the development of recommendations. Membership of five to seven persons is recommended.

SELECTION

Council members should be solicited through an open search process that begins with an identification of membership needs, followed by recruitment, an application process, interviews, and a selection or discernment process. The pastor makes the final decision concerning the method of selection.

TERM OF OFFICE

- CL 12. Terms of office should be three years, renewable once. Pastoral considerations such as an ongoing building project may benefit from the stability of having some members renew for additional terms.**

Other Consultative Structures: Commissions

Other parish consultative structures such as commissions for stewardship, school, faith formation, and social justice operate analogously to those just mentioned. Liturgical commissions are analogous to the liturgical

commission for the Archdiocese as called for in the Second Vatican Council's Document on Liturgy (*SC*, 44).

Whereas parish pastoral councils are responsible for all directional and strategic planning, in some parishes, particularly larger parishes, strategic planning for specific areas may take place through commissions. In this case, it is recommended that several commissions be constituted, corresponding to the areas of spiritual life and worship, stewardship, Christian formation, and human concerns/social ministry. Parishes with parish schools must have a school commission. Unlike parish committees that are involved in specific programs or ministries, these commissions engage in strategic planning and policy development in their specific areas in response to parish priorities and goals.

The size and membership of a commission will depend upon the skills needed by its members. The terms of office are similar to those of the pastoral council.

Function and Membership of Commissions

Because of the specialized focus of a commission, each commission should determine its own meeting schedule in response to the complexity of its agenda. One commission may determine it will only focus on one issue for the year and will conduct its work over several meetings. Other commissions may require regular monthly meetings. Every attempt should be made to schedule meetings in response to the need rather than having regular meetings for which there is little substantive agenda.

Membership on the commissions should be balanced between those with special expertise and general parish membership. The pastor may preside at each commission but more often will delegate a parish staff person or a parishioner to act as his liaison. The commission can elect its own chairperson, although for new commissions a temporary chair may be appointed by the pastor. Other members should be sought through an open search. This process would begin with an identification of membership needs, followed by recruitment, an application process, interviews, and a selection process by the commission itself, the parish council, or the pastor.

Parishes without Commissions

For any number of reasons, especially parish size, a pastor may not establish any or all of the above mentioned commissions. In parishes without commissions, strategic planning is conducted by the parish pastoral council. Care should be taken by the pastoral council to ensure that the areas of the parish's mission for which commissions would ordinarily provide assistance to the pastor (e.g., worship, formation and education, stewardship, and social outreach) are adequately developed and evaluated on a regular basis.

Existing parish committees may become involved in strategic planning and policy recommendations in assistance to the pastor and pastoral council. For instance, a parish liturgy committee which normally assists the pastor in planning for weekend liturgies may initiate policy recommendations. They may, for example, recommend significant alterations of the worship space to make it more welcoming and accessible or to better conform to Church norms. The week-to-week work of committees rarely requires significant consultation; however, when the task of strategic planning is undertaken, much broader consultation is required to foster ownership and commitment. The following commissions are usually required for the good of parish life:

Faith Formation Commission

The coordination of catechesis is not merely a strategic factor, aimed at more effective evangelization, but has a profound theological meaning. Evangelizing activity must be well coordinated because it touches on the unity of faith, which sustains all the Church's actions (*GDC*, 272).

NATURE OR PURPOSE

The purpose of the Faith Formation Commission is to assist the pastor/pastoral leader “to ensure that the parish will offer faith formation to all in the parish, either directly or in cooperation with one or more parishes” and that a parish faith formation plan is developed and implemented (*FFH*, 1–2).

THE FAITH FORMATION COMMISSION'S ROLE INCLUDES:

- Assessing parish needs for faith formation;
- Advising the pastor/pastoral leader and their delegates regarding faith formation needs, and;
- Ensuring that quality faith formation programs are implemented in the parish.

COMPOSITION

- The commission should strive to represent the diversity of the parish and wider local church.
- It is preferable to have some members of the commission who possess experience in offering faith formation programs, parenting, and/or qualification as an educator.

SPECIFIC ROLES

Pastor:

Usually an *ex officio* member of the Commission.

- The pastor regularly attends a meeting and/or appoints a delegate to act as an *ex officio* member and liaison to the pastor.
- The pastor reviews recommendations from the commission.
- The pastor ensures the parish school collaborates and participates in the development and implementation of the parish plan for faith formation.

Pastoral Associate:

The pastor may entrust the ministry to a pastoral associate who could be responsible for the Commission. Responsibilities vary from parish to parish. The pastoral associate or other staff person assigned to work with the Commission shall serve as an ex-officio member.

Pastoral Assistant:

The pastor may entrust the ministry to a pastoral assistant who could be responsible for the Commission. Responsibilities vary from parish to parish. The pastoral assistant or other staff person assigned to work with the Commission shall serve as an ex-officio member.

Commission:

The Commission members are called to work collaboratively and supportively with the pastor, designated parish staff and other consultative bodies. They should:

- Be familiar with Church documents related to catechesis;
- Be familiar with “Archdiocesan Parish Faith Formation Policies and Guidelines”;
- Act in an advisory role to the pastor and/or his delegates in recommending general policy and plans for faith formation.

RESPONSIBILITY

Planning:

- The pastoral plan for faith formation should be consistent with Archdiocesan Parish Formation Policies and Guidelines.
- The faith formation plan should be consistent with the parish mission statement and live out goals and priorities of the parish.
- Faith formation planning incorporates both the parish and parish school.

Policy Development:

- The Faith Formation Commission recommends policies to the pastor that give general direction for faith formation in the parish.

AUTHORITY

The commission serves the pastor and staff as a consultative body. The commission recognizes the decision-making authority entrusted to the pastor and makes recommendations.

RELATIONSHIP WITH STAFF AND OTHER COUNCILS/STRUCTURES

The faith formation commission is entrusted with supporting and sustaining the faith, life, and development of the community and responsible to parish staff and leadership in the following areas:

- Education of the faith;
- Formation for prayer;
- Liturgical catechesis;
- Moral formation;
- Community life; and
- Invitation to mission.

Liturgy Commission

NATURE OR PURPOSE

- The Liturgy Commission assists the pastor in achieving the goal of full, conscious, and active participation of the people at the Eucharist, as stated in the *Constitution on Sacred Liturgy (SC, 14)*.
- The overall purpose of the Liturgy Commission is to advise and support the pastor on the spirituality and prayer life of the parish community.
- The Liturgy Commission under the direction of the pastor may have oversight of the formation of parish liturgical ministries.

COMPOSITION

- Pastor or Parochial Vicar;
- A diverse group that reflects the composition of the parish;
- The appropriate staff as assigned by the pastor or priest moderator.

SPECIFIC ROLES

Pastor:

Promotes the liturgical instruction of the people and also their active participation in the liturgy both internally and externally.

Pastoral Assistant

The pastor may entrust the implementation of archdiocesan policies and parish guidelines for quality liturgy and training/formation of liturgical ministers.

Commission:

Advises the pastor, supports the parish's liturgical staff, and serves the parish by staffing committees, such as, liturgical music, liturgical art and environment, and the oversight of the formation of liturgical ministers.

Parishioners:

Are to fully engage in the dialogical prayer at the Eucharist and all other sacramental rites. The baptized come together to give God thanks and praise in the midst of the Church.

RESPONSIBILITY

Liturgical commissions may be responsible for the following:

- Directing the various liturgical committees according to the intent of the Church.
- Developing parish liturgical guidelines specific to the parish.

AUTHORITY

The commission serves the pastor and delegated staff as a consultative body. In making recommendations the commission recognizes the decision making authority entrusted to the pastor.

RELATIONSHIP WITH STAFF AND OTHER COUNCILS/STRUCTURES

Archdiocese

- The relationship between the archdiocesan Liturgical Commission and the parish liturgical commission is to assist and support priests especially in the training and formation of liturgical ministers.
- Consultation is to take place with the Liturgy Office in building and/or renovation of all worship space.

The liturgical commission under the direction of the pastor is entrusted in supporting and sustaining the communal prayer life of the Church (i.e. all sacramental life). As needed it relates to:

- Faith formation;
- School commission;
- Ethnic and cultural communities; and
- Its own liturgical committees.

School Commission

NATURE OR PURPOSE

The overall purpose of the school commission is to advise and support the pastor and principal in the operation of the parish school. School Commissions may be responsible for the following:

- Assessing the needs of the school community;
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the school in performing its educational and formational missions;
- Recommending policies and conducting strategic planning for school operations;
- Collaborating with the pastor and principal in educating the parish as a whole about the importance of the school, while building a sense of connection with the overall parish mission;
- Collaborating with the pastor and principal in educating other parishes about the school's mission;
- Working collaboratively with the pastoral council and other consultative bodies.

COMPOSITION

- A diverse group that reflects the composition of the parish and the school;
- A non Catholic parent may be eligible to serve.

SPECIFIC ROLES

Pastor:

The pastor provides leadership to the commission based on his knowledge of the parish community, the relationship of the school's mission within the parish's mission, and familiarity with the parish's financial circumstances.

- The pastor may attend and participate in commission meetings.

- The pastor approves local school policies.
- The pastor is the employer of the principal, responsible for hiring, supervision, evaluation, and contract renewal.

Principal:

The principal operates as the spiritual, educational and managerial leader of the school.

- The principal administers the school in accord with archdiocesan policies.
- The principal attends school commission meetings as a non-voting member, while serving the role of executive officer.
- The principal identifies policy needs and assists the school commission in developing policies.
- The principal monitors and administers policies.

Commission:

The commission members are called to work collaboratively and supportively with the pastor and principal.

- School commission members must become familiar with church documents relating to the mission of Catholic education and Archdiocesan policies relating to the operation of parish schools.
- Commission members act in an advisory capacity to the pastor and principal in matters of general policy recommendations and ongoing strategic plans for the school.
- The school commission will fulfill these functions in collaboration with the pastor and principal and within the context of parish priorities and goals.

RESPONSIBILITY

The school commission is responsible for the following:

Planning:

- Establishing a mission statement for the school;
- Establishing goals for the school;
- Establishing future plans for the school.

Policy Development:

- Recommending policies that give general direction for the school to the pastor and the principal.

Finance:

- Developing a plan and means to finance school programs, including tuition, development and fundraising;
- Allocating resources according to the budget;
- Monitoring the budget.

Public Relations:

- Communicating with various public groups or interested persons about the school;
- Listening to the needs and concerns of the school community through appropriate forums set up for this purpose;
- Recruiting students;
- Promoting the school to the parish and parents.

Evaluation:

- Determining whether commission goals and plans are being met;
- Evaluating the commission's own effectiveness.

AUTHORITY

The commission serves the pastor and principal as a consultative body. In the spirit of collaboration, the commission recognizes the role and authority of the pastor and the principal as his delegate, while the pastor and principal respect the authentic witness and expertise offered by the commission members. All parties work collaboratively to build consensus.

RELATIONSHIP WITH STAFF AND OTHER COUNCILS/STRUCTURES

Archdiocese

The relationship between the parish school commission and the Archdiocese is stated in the archdiocesan education policies, which are available for local school commission members.

Parish Pastoral Council

- The parish pastoral council establishes parish priorities regarding the use of parish resources, personnel and finances. The principal in consultation with the school commission is responsible for clearly and accurately articulating the needs of the school to the pastoral council.

- In consultation with the pastor and principal, the parish school commission should maintain regular communication with the parish pastoral council about the direction of the school, the state of the health of the school, and future planning.

Parish Finance Council

- The school's budget is drawn up according to the parish budgetary financial policies and procedures and long-range financial planning which are established by the pastor in consultation with the parish finance council. The parish finance council is not responsible for determining priorities or evaluating the worth of parish programs and ministries.
- The parish finance council oversees an annual budget development in response to priorities set forth by the pastoral council. The pastor makes the final decision on the annual budget. The principal in consultation with the school commission has the responsibility for the effective use of the parish financial investment (the subsidy) and is accountable for keeping expenditures within budget.

Principal

- The principal is the educational leader and executive officer of the school commission. He or she is the link between the commission and the school with the pastor, staff, students and parents.
- She or he shares information with commission members regarding current educational trends, assessment results, and federal and state programs.
- The principal will keep the commission informed regarding the operation of the school and Archdiocesan policies and procedures.

Parent Club

- The school commission works closely with the officers of the Parent Club in order to understand more fully parental needs and concerns. It works with parental fund-raising groups as part of coordinating the overall financing of programs for the school. It uses the communication mechanism of the Parent Club to report to school families about commission activities.

Note: School Commissions for level one high schools serve in an advisory capacity to the principal of the school and are selected according to the procedures of the school. School Commission for

level two high schools serve in accordance with the policies and procedures of the respective school.

Justice and Peace Commission

[The Church] cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice. She has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper.

Pope Benedict XVI, *God is Love*, 28

NATURE OR PURPOSE

The purpose of the Justice and Peace Commission is to assist the parish in the promotion and implementation of Catholic social teaching. The Commission assists the pastor “to foster works through which the spirit of the gospel is promoted, even that which pertains to social justice” (*CIC*, c. 528 §1).

THE SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMISSION’S ROLE INCLUDES:

- Assisting the parish to be a witness of charity and justice to the larger community;
- Ensuring education of staff, consultative groups, and parish at large regarding Catholic social teaching;
- Engaging in strategic planning, policy development and recommendation in the area of Catholic social teaching in response to parish priorities and goals;
- Serving as a liaison to affiliated archdiocesan initiatives.

COMPOSITION

- Diversity reflecting the parish profile, especially economically, racially and by gender. Youth and young adult representation is highly recommended.
- A direct communication vehicle/link to the councils, such as a Commission member assigned to attend Councils’ meetings or *ex officio* representation from Pastoral and/or Finance Councils.

SPECIFIC ROLES

Pastor:

The pastor provides leadership to the commission based on social justice concerns and knowledge of parish life.

- The pastor is not a commission member. However, the pastor is strongly encouraged to visit Commission meetings, listening and offering information.
- If there is a pastoral staff person with responsibilities in this area, the pastor is the employer of that person, responsible for hiring, contract renewal, supervision, and evaluation.

Pastoral Assistant:

The pastor may entrust the social justice ministry to a pastoral assistant who preferable could be responsible for the commission as an ex-official member. Responsibilities of the pastoral assistance may vary from parish to parish.

Commission:

The Commission members are called to work collaboratively and supportively with the pastor, designated parish staff and other consultative bodies.

Social Justice Commission members support other ministry areas by offering assistance in integrating Catholic social teaching with all parish ministries.

Pastoral Council:

The Pastoral Council and Social Justice Commission should strengthen the parish's efforts in offering and implementing Catholic social teaching. Council and Commission should collaborate in efforts that promote social justice affecting many areas of parish life, such as:

- Stewardship;
- St. Vincent de Paul Society;
- Twinning or sister parish relationships;
- Donations/support for works of charity and justice.

Finance Council:

The Finance Council is the consultative body who provides the pastor and Social Justice Commission with advice concerning parish fiscal resources.

RESPONSIBILITY

Social Justice Commission members must become familiar with key USCCB and Vatican documents in the area of Catholic social teaching. The commission, acting on the parish's mission and pastoral priorities, will develop an annual plan for implementing Catholic social teaching in the parish. This may include:

- Promoting the inclusion of Catholic social teaching in all areas of faith formation and education, liturgy and prayer life, and parish stewardship of resources;
- Linking to local Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) funded organizations;
- Collaborating with the local Catholic Community Services agency and non-parish organizations that share the Catholic approach to social justice;
- Using resources and programs of, or supported by, Catholic Relief Services, as well as CCHD, Pro-Life Secretariat, Social Development and World Peace and other offices of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops;
- Supporting Church advocacy efforts such as the Legislative Network of the Washington State Catholic Conference;
- Promoting and educating about the various Special Collections that support the social mission of the Church, locally, nationally and globally;
- Collaborating on an ecumenical and inter faith basis around social justice issues, especially with advocacy for the poor and/or marginalized.

AUTHORITY

The commission serves the pastor and staff as a consultative body. The commission recognizes the decision-making authority entrusted to the pastor and makes recommendations.

RELATIONSHIP WITH STAFF AND OTHER COUNCILS/STRUCTURES:

The Social Justice Commission should be on the same level as other commissions in the parish and its relationship to the Pastoral Council, Finance Council, staff and pastor should be the same. Catholic social teaching should be seen as affecting all areas of parish life. The Commission should work with other commissions where areas of mutual responsibility are identified.

- “Social Justice” is one possible name for this type of commission. Other possible titles for such a commission, e.g. Human Concerns, Social Outreach, Outreach, Justice and Peace, Social Ministry.

Stewardship Commission

NATURE OR PURPOSE

The purpose of the Stewardship Commission is as follows:

- To assist the parish in promoting stewardship as a way of life among parishioners;
- To engage in strategic planning, policy development and recommendation in the area of stewardship in response to parish priorities and goals;
- To ensure education of staff, consultative groups, and parish at large regarding stewardship;
- To form community committed to stewardship as a way of life, as a witness to the larger parish community.

COMPOSITION

The Stewardship Commission is a group

- That reflects the diversity of the parish;
- That includes representation from Pastoral and/or Finance Councils (recommended);
- That understands the USCCB document *Stewardship As a Way of Life*.

SPECIFIC ROLES

Pastor:

The pastor provides leadership to the commission based on stewardship concerns and knowledge of parish communities, parish circumstances, and parishioners.

- The pastor may attend and participate in commission meetings.
- If there is a pastoral assistant for stewardship, the pastor is the employer of that person, responsible for hiring, contract renewal, supervision, and evaluation.

Pastoral Assistant for Stewardship or Pastoral Assistant for Administration:

The pastor may entrust the ministry to a pastoral assistant for Stewardship or Pastoral Assistant for Administration who could be responsible for the commission. Responsibilities vary from parish to the parish.

Commission:

The commission members are called to work collaboratively and supportively with the pastor, designated parish staff and other consultative bodies. Stewardship Commission members support other ministry areas by offering insights and various ways of incorporating stewardship into parish ministry.

Pastoral Council:

The Pastoral Council and Stewardship Commission should work closely to strengthen the parish's efforts to live out stewardship within the parish.

Finance Council:

The Finance Council is the consultative body that provides the pastor and Stewardship Commission with advice concerning parish fiscal resources.

RESPONSIBILITY

Commission members must become familiar with the USCCB's *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response—A Pastoral Letter on Stewardship*. The commission, living out the parish's mission and pastoral priorities in that context will develop an annual plan for promoting stewardship in the parish. This may include:

- Supporting the annual campaign for renewal of parishioners' commitments to give of their time, talent, and treasure;
- Encouraging the incorporation of appropriate stewardship emphases in the liturgy and prayer;
- Encouraging the incorporation of education about stewardship in all areas of faith formation, including the parish school and religious education programs and in adult religious education efforts;
- Encouraging evangelization efforts as well as hospitality and welcoming by the parish;
- Advocating for outreach efforts by the parish;
- Encouraging the parish to live out its stewardship life through effective participation in the Annual Appeal and Special Collections;
- Promoting and educating about Planned Giving as another aspect of our Stewardship.

AUTHORITY

The commission serves the pastor and delegated staff as a consultative body. In making recommendations the commission recognizes the decision-making authority entrusted to the pastor.

RELATIONSHIP WITH STAFF AND OTHER COUNCILS/STRUCTURES

The Stewardship Commission ranks with other commissions of the parish in their relationship to the Pastoral Council, Finance Council, staff and pastor. Moreover, since stewardship is implied in all areas of parish life, stewardship commissions should collaborate with other commissions rather than implement ideas or plans on their own.

Other Consultative Structures: Committees

Like all councils and commissions, parish committees play a very important part in the life of the parish, providing parishioners opportunities to live out their baptismal call to serve. Like commissions, committees focus their attention on a particular ministry. However, unlike councils and commissions, committees seldom attend to questions of what the parish should do such as policy setting and strategic planning. Instead, committees concern themselves with doing the work of the parish.

Committees usually consist of members who know their particular area of ministry well and work cooperatively to use their knowledge to help the parish better serve the people. Like all the people of God, committee members are called to prayer, service, and a deeper life of faith. An example of such a committee is the Parent Club.

Parent Club

NATURE OR PURPOSE

The overall purpose of the Parent Club is to facilitate, encourage, and ensure ongoing community building by providing activities, fundraising events and service to the parish school. The club is a vehicle supporting communication between home and school, offering a mechanism for parent education and serving as a resource for political action when needed.

COMPOSITION

- All parents of children in the school
- School staff

SELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE/BOARD

- Parents are nominated/selected by Parent Club membership to fulfill leadership roles within the club (i.e.: chair person, vice chair, secretary and treasurer).
- Chairs of various committees within the club also make up the membership of the committee/board (e.g., scrip and auction).
- An effort should be made to select individuals who have the time and gifts necessary to fulfill this role. Additionally the executive committee/board should reflect the diversity of the community.
- In determining the size of the committee/board, membership should ideally total no fewer than seven and no more than thirteen.

SPECIFIC ROLES

The Parent Club is a vehicle through which parents can provide support and service to the parish school.

- The Parent Club works within the framework of the parish school and collaborates with the principal before decisions are made.
- The Parent Club is responsible for organizing and conducting fund raising activities that support the school.
- The executive committee/board works closely with the school commission to fully understand the needs and concerns of the school.
- Disbursements from income raised by Parent Club are to be determined by the pastor in collaboration with the principal, the school commission, and the Parent Club members.

RESPONSIBILITY

Communication

- Keeps parents informed about the Parent Club activities, projects and/or events;
- Provides social opportunities for parents to form community;
- Provides a forum for parent education.

Service to the School

- Provides volunteers for school needs;

- Provides revenue to the school through fundraising efforts.

Education

- Provides a mechanism for parent education on current topics of interest to parents.

Advocacy for the school

- Promotes the school to the parish and parents;
- Provides letter writing, phone calls, and/or visits to legislators when needed for issues that might concern the school.

Evaluation

- Determines whether Parent Club goals and plans are being met;
- Evaluates the Parent Club's own effectiveness.

AUTHORITY

The Parents Club is established by the pastor and school principal in accordance with archdiocesan policy.

RELATIONSHIP WITH STAFF AND OTHER COUNCILS/STRUCTURES

Principal

- Attends all Parent Club/executive committee/board meetings;
- With delegation by the pastor and in collaboration with the Parent Club, approves disbursements of club income.

School Commission

- Officers of both groups need to keep one another informed about the functions of each group. The school commission should seek parent input in designing and implementing a long-range plan and work with the fundraising committee of the Parent Club in coordinating the overall financing of programs for the school.
- The Parent Club should communicate to the school commission parent needs and concerns that could help in designing a long-range plan or could possibly require a policy.

IV. PARISH PASTORAL PLANNING

CL. 13. Parishes are to build models of planning and staffing that are theologically and ecclesially sound, consistent in application across the Archdiocese, collaborative in vision, and consistent with the vision and values of the wider church (FFH, 17).

The Planning Process

The pastoral planning process draws upon concepts and skills used in organizational development, organizational structures, and research. Pastoral planning is distinguished from corporate and civic planning in that it integrates theological reflection into the planning process, bringing the light of the Gospel and our tradition of faith to the specific situation. Understanding the roles and relationships of parish ministers and consultative structures in pastoral planning, clarifying the areas to which planning can be applied, and utilizing the steps of effective decision-making will promote effective church governance (see Appendix B).

Directional and Strategic Planning by Consultative Bodies

Directional planning results in statements of mission and direction. It seeks answers to questions such as: Who are we? What is our unique identity within the context of the diocesan and universal Church? How does who we are and what we do as a parish reflect the goals of *encuentro*? How well do we promote communion? Where are we called to go? What are our priorities? Directional decisions concern the broad mission and goals of the parish in the context of the larger Church. Directional planning requires being familiar with and faithful to Church teachings and the mission of the larger Church and being willing and able to listen to the people of the parish.

Strategic planning focuses on specific issues or areas of concern. Strategic decisions are those that result in the commitment of major personnel and financial resources. Strategic decisions usually take months or years to achieve.

For example, directional planning may result in a parish priority of “Evangelization of Alienated Catholics.” Through strategic planning, parish leaders would study various methods and approaches, analyze potential personnel and financial resources, and determine a general strategy, such as “making our facilities accessible to persons with disabling conditions,” or “conducting a major parish census.” Strategic planning is most successful when it takes place within the context of established parish priorities, goals, and policies.

It is primarily the responsibility of the parish pastoral council to assist the pastor in directional and strategic planning. Consultation with the parish

membership, leadership, and staff by the parish pastoral council is essential to the integrity of the process. As the pastor consults with the council, so the council itself is called through shared responsibility to consult with other parish leadership and parishioners in general in its planning processes. The pastoral council must ensure that systems are in place to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of goals, priorities, policies, and resource allocations. These systems should lead to a recurring planning cycle resulting in new priorities and goals every three to five years.

In some parishes, particularly larger parishes, commissions will advise about major, strategic initiatives for their area of ministry, operating under the broad direction defined by the pastoral council. For instance, to promote the parish's priority of honoring diversity, a spiritual life and worship commission might develop a policy to include persons with disabilities in liturgies.

The *Code of Canon Law* makes special reference to the finance council. The council's primary function is to provide the pastor with advice concerning the stewardship of parish fiscal resources. It assists the pastor by developing a parish budget process, providing financial analysis of proposed goals, strategies, and programs, and by conducting long-range financial planning with regard to funding capital and operational needs in the parish. While the finance council has significant responsibility for the stewardship of parish financial resources, it is not its role to recommend directions, priorities, or programs other than those related to its delegation: fiscal stewardship.

Administrative and Operational Planning by Parish Staff and Committees

Administrative and operational planning focuses on converting strategies and policies into programs and action. Planning in these areas involves program goals and objectives, program design, personnel administration and evaluation, and budgeting. Administrative planning develops, organizes, and manages the programs and human and financial resources necessary to carry out strategic decisions. Operational planning deals with the actual "hands-on" day-to-day operation of ministries and programs.

PARISH STAFF

The parish staff, hired and supervised by the pastor or his delegate, is responsible to the pastor or his delegate for developing and implementing ministerial programs and services that respond to the priorities and directions of the parish in their areas of responsibility. Some pastoral staff may be entrusted with the responsibility for pastoral administration and management. While parish consultative groups such as the pastoral council and the finance council may advise about the effectiveness of a given program, it is the responsibility of the pastor or his delegate to hire,

supervise, evaluate and determine compensation for staff members. It is the responsibility of the staff to collaborate with the pastor to evaluate program goals and objectives.

PARISH COMMITTEES

Parish committees take responsibility for the “hands on” ministry in a parish. Membership should include those parishioners who feel called to the specific ministry entrusted to the committee. Through their work, they experience God’s presence in each other and in the ministry they do and feel connected with the larger church community. Committees live out the planning done by councils and commissions, often in mutual consultation with the staff assigned to that ministry. In small parishes, committees may have multiple responsibilities.

Summary

Distinctions among planning structures provide important insights into the kinds of planning activities that are to be undertaken by those who participate in parish governance. The pastor is charged by the Archbishop with the responsibility for governance of the parish and therefore with developing a parish planning process. In each instance, the parish should be guided by the archdiocesan vision statement that sets out goals and priorities.

The parish pastoral council, the finance council, and commissions (and in some situations, staff) share a primary responsibility with the pastor for directional and strategic planning. The parish staff, finance council and committees have a primary responsibility for assisting the pastor in administrative and operational planning. Quite often, particularly in smaller communities, individuals or entire groups may have responsibilities in a number of areas of pastoral planning. In such cases it is even more important that these distinctions be clear to ensure that the appropriate focus of the group is maintained. Each area for planning is essential to the overall health of the parish and therefore the integrity and importance of each should be respected.

V. CONSULTATIVE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Effective Church governance and pastoral planning depend upon effective decision-making, a process that can be carefully thought out or left to unfold haphazardly. It is essential to pay attention to the decision-making steps and to the people who should be consulted and how they should participate. Attention to these aspects will generate commitment and avoid conflict when decisions are reached.

To avoid raising unrealistic expectations, it is important to note that some issues, such as official church teaching and church law, (e.g. liturgical practices) are not subject to a decision-making process on either the parish or Archdiocesan level.

People's experience of inclusion in the decision-making process can often times be far more important and have more far reaching consequences than the actual decision. No matter in what area pastoral planning is applied, the same steps in the decision-making process should be followed.

According to Sharon Euart, RSM,

If one understands ecclesial decision-making to be a process utilizing a broad range of gifts rather than only a moment of "jurisdictional" choice making, that is, saying yes or no, the opportunities for the involvement of laypersons in such decision-making are far broader than may appear initially. Such an understanding might help shed light on the often-forgotten aspects of ecclesial decision-making and respond to the questions and tensions about consultation versus decision-making. Most of all it might revitalize our consultative structures with an enhanced understanding of shared responsibility and its role in the governance of the church (*Origins* 35:2, May 26, 2005).

Steps in Decision-making

Decision-making involves four steps: Evaluation/Reflection Recommendation, Choice and Authorization and Action. A description of each step of the process and of their relationship to one another is described in Appendix C.

Distinction of Roles in Decision-making

While the steps in decision-making are the same in all areas of pastoral planning, the characteristics are quite distinct in different roles. In directional and strategic planning, decision-making processes are characterized by collaboration, consultation, and consensus-building by consultative structures. Particularly in the evaluation and recommendation phases of decision-making, participation should be the guiding principle.

While this can be time consuming, greater commitment is attained and less energy is expended in the authorization and implementation stages.

Once a consensus is attained and directions are determined, decision-making in the administrative and operational phases is characterized by delegation of responsibility to appropriate bodies or persons such as staff, committees, organizations and/or individuals. In administrative and operational planning, decision-making processes are characterized by delegation. Frustration will occur in groups if the principle of subsidiarity is violated and when the characteristics of directional and strategic decision-making steps are applied to administrative and operational steps (for example, purchasing copy machines, choosing a color to paint the gym or the best way to stripe the parking lot).

Models of Decision-making

A variety of models represent different attitudes toward decision-making within our culture:

POLITICAL MODEL

In a political system, decision-making is characterized by majority rule and a system of checks and balances. Such a model prevents the consolidation of centralized power by any one group. On the other hand, it does not work toward a unified commitment. Such a model promotes competition because of the desire to decentralize power. This model is characterized by winners and losers.

BUSINESS MODEL

A business decision-making model is traditionally centralized and hierarchical, with policies and directions determined at the top. However, regarding decisions that impact terms of employment, a model of negotiation is frequently followed. In this model, both management and labor take positions and then bargain or make tradeoffs until, ideally, some compromise is reached. In this model, both parties theoretically win and lose something. However, because both parties will attempt to develop stronger bargaining positions for the next round of negotiations, the model does not finally work toward unity.

CIVIC MODEL

Because membership and participation are the highest values in most civic organizations, the most active members are usually the ones who make decisions about direction and priorities. This

model, too, falls short of ensuring the inclusion and unity of all members of the community.

CHURCH MODEL

While each of the models mentioned above has its own strength and may be appropriate in a certain context, the mission of the Church calls all to share responsibility according to their appropriate role and delegation. Therefore, within the context of faithfulness to the teachings of the Church, parish decision-making about direction and priorities should favor the “Church” model which will promote communion and a commitment to the Gospel and our faith tradition. This requires a posture of servant leadership on the part of parish leadership, seeking to understand the needs of the community and building consensus around particular directions. Moreover, in order to honor the diverse cultures in parishes, pastoral leaders and people should encourage an awareness and sensitivity to the different ways by which cultures make decisions.

While the pastor has ultimate authority for authorizing all decisions, he must take particular care to authorize a course of action in such a way that the unity of the parish is promoted. There may be situations where the parish pastoral council has reached a consensus, but the pastor does not concur. Although in no way obliged to accept their recommendations, the pastor should give strong consideration to supporting the council’s recommendation, especially when there is a consensus, unless there is a compelling reason, which, in the pastor’s judgment, is overriding. Here, the pastor must weigh the relative importance of pursuing the course of action he would prefer versus the impact on the community of acting contrary to the consensus. What is especially needed in such situations is a clear identification of issues involved, as well as clear communication between the pastor and the parish pastoral council.

Discerning God’s will is not easy and reaching consensus is often a time consuming process. Time spent building consensus about the major priorities and directions for the parish can ultimately save time as the commitment generated facilitates the administrative and program decisions that follow. Working toward consensus is much more characteristic of directional and strategic planning. However, there may be occasions when the pastor and parish staff determine that a consensus would be important around certain administrative or program issues.

To be a discerning community, then, is to be a community of prayer. This is a particular challenge for councils and commissions that may meet only monthly or less frequently. None

the less, these organizations are challenged to be examples for the larger parish: The members of the council/commission, even though composed of individuals from diverse backgrounds and with diverse opinions, should spend significant time praying together and through prayer attempt to discern the will of God for themselves and for the parish community.

Discernment

Ultimately, the Church's model of governance and decision-making is in service to the parish community by discerning the will of God and carrying out the mission of the Church in accord with Church teaching. No specific decision-making process will guarantee true discernment, but every organization and process should include time for prayer and openness to the Spirit speaking through the group discussion and personal reflection. Ladislav Orsy, S.J. in "Toward a Theological Evaluation of Communal Discernment," defines communal discernment:

Communal discernment in its best and purest form is the articulation of a contemplative insight into the working of God's grace in a community... Community discernment should be an ongoing process. The actual time of discernment is no more than an intense period in the continuously evolving life of the community.

Discernment, an ancient gift from God for building up the community, is decision-making focused on God's will, on prayer for learning God's will, and on the community. Discernment can be a process for individuals who are making significant life decisions, but in this context it is communal discernment—communities and groups working together for the good of the whole. Since no one has all the gifts, discernment takes time for listening: listening to each other and listening to God through prayer, reflection, dialogue, and communal discernment.

Prayer drives discernment while goals and values are the core. If the community's goal is to live out the mission of Christ and his church as God called Him and us, then prayer and discernment are the heart of parish decisions. Each of the steps of decision-making invites the question, "What is God willing us to?"

Consensus

A consensus model of decision-making implies the need for discernment and reflects the spirit of Church governance and organization called for by the Second Vatican Council. It requires a different attitude, a new way of thinking, on the part of those who participate in the process. In the evaluation step it is

important that those participating be familiar with Church teaching on the topic. It is important that each person formulate and express her or his own perspective, each person agreeing to suspend judgment so she or he can actively listen to what each person is sharing. In moving from evaluation to recommendation, time is spent by the group trying to identify areas of agreement and disagreement, as well as new alternatives that have emerged through the sharing. Individuals in the group then need to move away from their own first preference and begin to examine which alternatives are most viable and have the greatest commitment.

Consensus does not imply unanimity (that is, everyone's first choice), but it does indicate substantial commitment to the chosen direction (that is, a direction to which everyone is sufficiently committed). In working towards consensus, various process tools are available to assist groups in determining which alternative has the greatest underlying commitment. In the end, however, it is the group that must decide if, in fact, there is enough consensus to move in a particular direction. The process can be time consuming but the commitment generated can be significant. No group is able to reach consensus on every issue. In the end, it may be impossible to reach a consensus. In that case, the group needs either to stand behind the potentially divisive decision or decide that it would be better to defer the decision until a consensus can be reached.

Summary

No matter which model is used for consultation and even when all parties are committed to working by consensus, conflicts can arise over personalities, leadership styles and final decisions. In the spirit of Matthew 18:15-19, the church is committed to prayer, respecting each person and discerning God's will. Voting may be an option for issues with little conflicting emotion. Consensus assures prayer, that each person is heard, and that the group supports the final conclusion on issues that could be divisive and need time, thought and reflection. Discernment can be personal (as in a vocation choice) or communal (as in membership on the Pastoral Council) and also requires prayer, time, and sharing. Tools for consensus and discernment are available from the Office of the Vicar for Clergy.

VI. INTEGRATING PARISH CONSULTATIVE STRUCTURES

As it is the responsibility of the Archbishop to create structures for the Archdiocese, so it is the responsibility of the pastor to determine the consultative structures of the parish. The pastor should carry out this

responsibility mindful of the provisions of canon law, Archdiocesan guidelines, and the history of the parish's organizational structures. In modifying or enhancing parish organizational structures, the pastor should consult parish leadership.

Each parish will vary its consultative structures to respond to the unique identity of the parish. No matter what structures are used, it is important that the work of these groups take place in a coordinated and integrated manner in the spirit of prayer, awareness of God's presence, and trust. Integration provides for better communication, enhanced efficiency, and a greater spirit of collaboration among all those involved in the work of consultative bodies. Integration can be achieved in the following ways:

- By creating levels of consultative bodies;
- By having groups relate to positions in the executive structure; or
- By developing a planning process in which all groups work collaboratively given their roles and responsibilities.

Whatever integrating mechanism is used, the principal of subsidiarity should be maintained. Sharing of responsibility demands sharing of authority in proportion to the delegated responsibility. When a potential decision requires the support of the whole parish, all the appropriate parish leadership must be involved. However, when an issue falls within the scope of a delegated responsibility, with limited impact on any other aspect of parish life a recommendation can be made directly to the pastor by the responsible group. Obviously, the pastor needs to provide guidance to the various consultative structures regarding which matters should be brought before one of the councils or commissions.

Integration through Levels of Consultative Structures

Integration of parish structures can take place through levels of accountability, through executive structure, or through a planning process.

Organizational integration can be realized by placing commissions and councils in a hierarchical relationship to each other with various levels of accountability (e.g., commissions subordinate to the pastoral council). This is the most traditional way of integrating the groups. It is easily understood and easily communicated.

This method of integration, however, has drawbacks of placing some councils and commissions in subordinate roles to others and thereby minimizing the sense of empowerment the participants feel in carrying out the mission of the parish. With this method, pastoral council members are often assigned as liaisons to various commissions to ensure communication, with the result that the role of staff is less defined.

In addition, unless there is trust in the competence and ability of a commission, very often issues are passed up through the hierarchy to the

pastoral council, so that issues which were already adequately examined by the subordinate group are needlessly re-stated and re-heard.

Integration through the Executive Structure

Another way of achieving integration is by having all the councils and commissions relate directly to the pastor or his delegated staff person. The pastor and staff ensure coordination and communication among the various structures. For instance, the pastoral council would relate to the pastor, the Christian formation commission would advise the pastoral assistant responsible for religious education, the social justice/human concerns commission would advise the justice and peace coordinator, etc. This method does not subordinate any council or commission but views them as working collaboratively together with the pastor. This method requires excellent communication and coordination among the pastor and his staff as well as trust between the consultative and executive structures.

Although all Church governance is based on an attitude of trust and a theology of communion, this method requires from the pastor and staff an even greater spirit and model of service. If trust is not present, the groups will perceive themselves as being “run by the staff.” This model of integration also requires a very clear understanding of the distinctions between the consultative role of the councils/commissions and the executive role of parish staff. On the other hand, where it has been effective, this model can be a vibrant witness of shared responsibility for the whole parish.

Integration through a Planning Process

Integrating the work of consultative structures can take place through a planning process where each group is seen as having a unique role and responsibility toward a common goal: an integrated parish plan for ministry and administration. Using this method of integration, an overall planning process is developed with the responsibility of each group established and clear timeframes determined. Periodic meetings of the leaders of these bodies and other parish organizations are set. Systems for communication are developed and the leaders of the various councils and commissions meet regularly to coordinate their work.

In using this method it is not necessary to set up hierarchical relationships among groups. Because there is a common focus—the ongoing planning cycle—there is not such a burden on the pastor and staff to serve as integrating factor. This model, however, requires experience and expertise and therefore may initially require outside assistance. On-going training for the members of councils and commissions, and particularly for new members, is essential.

VII. CONSULTATIVE STRUCTURES IN EXCEPTIONAL SITUATIONS

For some parishes in the Archdiocese, the structures described in the previous guidelines may be inappropriate. Some parishes have special needs or unique qualities, which mitigate against having such structures. For example, many rural missions and some smaller parishes have too few people involved in leadership to support such an organizational structure. Other communities have found other more effective structures for expressing shared responsibilities. However, it is expected that all parishes have pastoral and finance councils.

Rather than following in detail the guidelines for consultative structures in this document, these communities should study the policies and guidelines presented in the first section and, in the spirit of communion, create meaningful structures for their community's life. In order to continue to build on our experience, it is of paramount importance that these communities communicate with the Archbishop about the structures that are used.

VIII. CONSULTATIVE STRUCTURES DURING PASTORAL TRANSITION

The parish staff, pastoral council and other structures provide much needed stability for the parish during a change of pastors.

Pastors are strongly encouraged to recognize and respect these structures and to resist altering them or parish policies significantly, at least in the first year, except in extraordinary situations.

Parishes are exhorted to be flexible in adapting to the leadership style of newly appointed pastors. The parish's transition team in collaboration with the pastor, staff and the members of the consultative structures of the parish should work collaboratively during times of re-organization with the mission of the parish as the primary value in structuring the parish.

CL 14. A transition process, provided by the Office of the Vicar for Clergy, is required whenever a parish or faith community experiences a transition in pastoral leadership.

Purpose of the Transition Process

The transition process serves the following functions:

- To celebrate and give thanks for the ministry of the outgoing pastor;
- To welcome and orient the incoming pastor;
- To communicate with and involve the larger faith community;
- To assist the community in moving forward following a difficult or sudden pastoral transition.

Role of the Transition Team

During the time of a pastor's transition, the Office of the Vicar for Clergy will work with the outgoing pastor to form an ad-hoc transition team. The transition team consists of members selected from both the formal and informal leadership of the parish.

The parish's pastoral council in collaboration with the parish staff, the finance council, and commissions will work with the Archdiocesan Office of the Vicar for Clergy to gather together as a group that reflects the diversity of the community in order to develop and implement an effective transition plan.

APPENDIX A: A VISION OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY—THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF ARCHDIOCESAN AND PARISH CONSULTATIVE STRUCTURES

Trinitarian Life-in-Communion

In the vision of the Vatican Council, the church, in Christ, is “in the nature of a sacrament—a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men” (*LG*, 1). Sharing the life of the triune God through God’s Spirit, the church seeks to preserve the gift of unity through the bond of peace. As St. Paul counseled the Corinthians, unity presumes and mediates diversity: “There are different kinds of spiritual but one Spirit, there are different forms of service but the same Lord, there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone” (1 Cor. 12:4-5). Rooted in the Trinitarian life of three persons and one God, the church is a sign of the life that is shared through love in ways that are both equal and diverse. The vision of a communion of three persons and one God grounds the church’s way of being in the world. This especially shows in her respect for the dignity of each person, the importance of subsidiarity, and the need for consultative leadership and shared responsibility for mediating the common good.

God’s Self-Communication through Grace

Grace is the principle underlying Christian life, action, and mission.

To understand the Church implies an understanding of the theology of grace. Grace is both God’s self-communication to humanity and the effects of that communication. This theological understanding of grace is grounded in the New Testament perspective that the human community and the entire world is oriented toward Christ and sustained by Him.

The grace of Jesus Christ and the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit are present throughout the entire life of the Church. Thus grace is the principle and the power underlying Christian life, action, and mission. The grace of God, not earthly wisdom, guides its conduct. It is through grace that inclusion of all God’s people is possible. Grace also enables the people of God to assume roles and responsibilities, offices, and functions in the Church.

It is by grace that you have been saved, through faith; not by anything of your own, but by a gift from God; not by anything that you have done, so that nobody can claim the credit. We are God’s work of art. (Eph. 3: 7-10)

The Mission of Jesus: Sacrament of God-With-Us

Jesus has been called the “primal sacrament,” the Word of God in the flesh, the sign and instrument of God’s love and saving grace in the world. Through his ministry of teaching and healing, Jesus brought people to life and gave them reason to hope that God was with them. In the parables and miracles of Jesus the kingdom of God erupts onto the scene of everyday life in surprising ways. In the “signs” that he works, Jesus testifies that he is the one “sent from God.” In his ministry, Jesus commissioned disciples not only as witnesses but also as workers, people who assisted him and worked collaboratively with him so that all would have a shared responsibility in proclaiming the good news and bringing people to life. The church serves as the body of Christ in our time, a sign and instrument of God’s love and saving grace here and now.

The Mission of the Church, the Mission of Jesus

The mission of the Church, and therefore of the parish community, is to be a living sign of the self-communication of God. It is to be an incarnate expression of the mysterious reality of God’s presence, love, and transforming power, which lies hidden in human life.

The Church fulfills its role in the world through the celebration of this mystery of God’s presence and action in our lives, through a clear articulation of doctrine and theology, through its community life and, most importantly, through the transformation and conversion of our individual and social lives.

The mission or the work of the Church is to carry forward the very mission of Jesus Christ himself. Indeed, the missions are one and the same, for at its deepest level the Church is mysteriously identified with Christ, who said, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (John 20:21). All of our efforts as Church in the Archdiocese of Seattle should be patterned upon the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ and the Gospel shared by the Roman Catholic Church as a whole.

The earthly mission of Jesus was threefold: to proclaim the Good News of God’s saving love for all people, to establish a prayerful community of believers, whose many members are motivated by the same Spirit, and to give practical expression to the Gospel’s law of love by serving the needs of others.

Baptism is the vocational sacrament for all members of the Church. At baptism each member of the Church assumes responsibility to carry forward this threefold mission of Christ in partnership with other Church members. Some of the baptized are called to serve the community as ordained ministers with special responsibility to preach the Gospel, celebrate the Eucharist and other sacraments, and to lead the Christian faithful. Others, collaborating with the ordained, also carry out the Church’s mission of teaching, pastoral leadership, and sanctification.

Individual talents and circumstances differ; not everyone is called upon to fulfill this fundamental responsibility in the same way. The Church invites each person to contribute to the common mission of the Church according to the gifts that each has received (Romans 12:6-9). Through collaboration and respect for their shared responsibility, all of the baptized, lay, religious, and clergy, strengthen the bonds of communion.

The Parish: The People of God in Communion with God
and with One Another

A theological context for parish consultative structures begins with an understanding of the unique character of the parish.

As it is impossible for the Archbishop always and everywhere to preside over the whole flock in his Church, he must by necessity establish groupings of the faithful; and among these, parishes, set up locally under a pastor who is delegated to share in the leadership and responsibility of the Archbishop, are the most important, for in some way they represent the visible Church constituted throughout the world (*SC*, 42).

For most Catholics, the most immediate experiences of the redeeming presence of God in Jesus Christ are through the family and the parish. It is within the family that the seed of faith is first planted, nourished, and sustained for many people. The parish community, as an extension of the family, is the primary means for providing resources for individuals and families to find community and live out the mission of the Church. As stated in *A Future Full of Hope*, “Most Catholics experience community primarily in the parish or mission, where we join friends and neighbors in prayer, celebration of the sacraments, and various social projects and other activities.” (*FFH*, 15)

However, the parish does not exist solely for itself or its own members but is called to minister to all those around them where they live. No parish is an island; no community of believers may pursue its mission in isolation from the universal Church. Rather, the individual parishes, which make up our Archdiocese are linked together in mutual interdependence under the diocesan bishop. The responsibilities of each parish extend beyond itself, to other diocesan parishes, and to the Catholic Church throughout the world. In the Catholic Church in Western Washington, all parishes are united with the Archbishop as a single communion of churches in this Archdiocese. In turn, the dioceses of the world, through their bishops in communion with the Pope, the successor of Peter, form the Roman Catholic Church as a whole.

Parishes are called to be means of Christian transformation enabling people to live their lives in the world as the mission given them by Christ. A newer reality, which is also a return to the reality of the early Christian Church, is the nature of parish as a community of communities.

The Roles of the Christian Faithful in Consultative Structures

In Catholic theology and tradition, the hierarchy and the laity have specific, complementary and interdependent roles. The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity from the Second Vatican Council states:

In the Church there is diversity of ministry but unity of mission. To the apostles and their successors Christ has entrusted the office of teaching, sanctifying and governing in His name and by His power. But the laity are made to share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ... Their apostolate is exercised when they work at the evangelization and sanctification of all people; it is exercised too when they endeavor to have the Gospel spirit permeate and improve the temporal order, going about it in a way that bears clear witness to Christ and help forward the salvation of men (*AA*, 2). Participators in the function of Christ, priest, prophet, and king, the laity have an active part of their own in the life and action of the Church (*AA*, 10).

The layperson, through baptism, is called to share actively in the work of Christ. To fulfill this role, the Holy Spirit gives to the faithful special gifts (1 Cor. 12:7), “allotting to everyone according as He will” (1 Cor. 12:11). Thus may the individual “according to the gift that each has received, administer it to one another,” and all of the baptized become “good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10). It is from the receiving of these gifts that each believer has the right and the duty to use them in the Church and in the world for the good of all and for the building up of the Church (*AA*, 3).

It is the role of the hierarchy to make visible and believable the reality of God’s presence and love so that the entire Church membership can carry out the Church’s mission. The Archbishop, with his priests, seeks to make the Church a clearer and more believable sign of God’s presence, love and transforming power. They accomplish this by nurturing the realities of God, grace, and truth already present to and in people and helping to bring these realities to their fullness. In the words of the Second Vatican Council Constitution on the Church, bishops are asked to be “teachers of doctrine, ministers of sacred worship and holders of in government” (*LG*, 20).

The pastor is a priest entrusted by the Archbishop with the obligation to fulfill the role of servant leader in a special way for faith communities entrusted to his care. The pastor preaches the Word of God, guides the faithful, and unites the parish community through divine worship (*LG*, 28). He serves as the central leader in the life and development of the parish. The pastor’s role is an empowering one, expressed in its threefold mission of teaching, governing, and sanctifying.

The Church is the sacred sign of God’s presence. A Church faithful to the tradition is one in which the responsibility for the mission of the Church is

shared by the entire body, not just the bishop or clergy in isolation from the faithful, nor the faithful in isolation from the bishop or clergy. The pastor has the ministry of empowering the parish community to carry out its task. The *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* asks pastors to “recognize and promote the dignity and responsibility of the laity in the Church” (*LG*, 37). Consequently, pastors share responsibility for carrying out the mission of the Church through collaborative forms of *decision-making*. The whole body must be involved in the task to which it is called according to respective roles and responsibilities. In the absence of a pastor, the Archbishop may appoint a deacon or a lay ecclesial minister to assume responsibility for the unity of a community.

Authority and Shared Responsibility

Two principles that receive emphasis in the 1983 Code are: 1) the authority entrusted to the hierarchy; and 2) the call for shared responsibility. This emphasis reflects the documents of the Second Vatican Council and in particular *Lumen Gentium*, the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*.

The authority of the hierarchy and the call to shared responsibility are primary values that are linked to servant leadership and consultation.

Regarding the authority of the pastor, the 1983 Code of Canon Law states:

The pastor is the proper pastor of the parish entrusted to him, exercising the pastoral care of the community committed to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop, in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share, so that for that same community he carries out the functions of teaching, sanctifying, and governing also with the cooperation of other presbyters or deacons and with the assistance of lay members of the Christian faithful, according to the norm of law (*CIC*, c. 519).

Canon 204, which precedes a list of rights and duties common to all the Christian faithful (*CIC*, cc. 208-223), states:

The Christian faithful are those who, inasmuch as they have been incorporated in Christ through baptism, have been constituted as the people of God. For this reason, made sharers in their own way in Christ’s priestly, prophetic, and royal functions, they are called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world, in accord with the condition proper to each.

According to their particular gifts, their state of life, and their office in the Church, Christ’s faithful worship God in spirit and truth, proclaim the Gospel and care for the needs of their brothers and sisters in charity. Within this context, the laity are called to assist the pastor in the pastoral care of God’s people and in the stewardship of the temporal goods of the Church (*LG*, 37; *AA*, 10; *SC*, 42).

A Leadership of Service and the Nature of Consultation

In the day-to-day living out of these two primary values, the authority of the hierarchy and the call to shared responsibility, misunderstandings and conflict can arise unless other values are embraced, namely, servant leadership and consultation.

Clearly, the responsibility for the mission of the Church is shared by the entire body with bishops and priests called to nurture the community's ability to be that sacred sign of God's presence in the world. In the same regard, laity who participate in parish leadership roles are also challenged to be servant leaders, enabling and fostering the participation of all parishioners in the mission of the Church. Pastors and lay leaders must always focus on using the responsibility entrusted to them to enable all parishioners to participate more fully in the life and mission of the parish.

Servant Leadership

So important is the ministry of service that on Holy Thursday, when the Church remembers the initiation of the sacraments of Eucharist and Orders, the central reading is taken from John's Gospel, the description of Jesus' washing his disciples' feet (Jn 13:1-17). The account of the Last Supper found in Luke carries a similar message:

...the greatest among you be as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. For who is greater: the one seated at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one seated at the table? I am among you as one who serves. (Lk 22:26-27)

In business and government, leadership is often expressed by the ability to assert one's power and influence; pastoral leadership, by contrast, is a ministry of service. The *Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops*, promulgated by the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, May 1973, states:

Authority is exercised in the best way—and this is something for which the bishop works and to which he trains his assistants—when, while insisting on the observance of law to safeguard truth and justice, the bishop at the same time stimulates and fosters corporate sharing of burdens of labor among the sacred ministers as well as the religious and laity, all in their own way (37).

Consultation

A theological implication of shared responsibility is that the laity share with the pastor responsibility for guiding the mission to which God calls the Church. In order for the Church to have the fullness of God's light and guidance, the laity need to be involved in *decision-making* through processes

of consultation. Consultative bodies are a primary means of participation of the laity in the exercise of ecclesial authority.

Consultation, in the context of Church, is not a question of either radical democracy or constitutional monarchy. Instead, consultation and consultative bodies establish a relationship of communion whereby the Church, clergy and laity, attempt to listen to the Spirit who is leading the Church and speaking to her through gifts and experience, as well as through office and ordination.

According to Pope John Paul II, consultation and shared responsibility “should not be misunderstood as a concession to a secular ‘democratic’ model of governance but as an intrinsic requirement of the exercise of episcopal authority and a necessary means of strengthening the bishop’s authority.” (2004 *ad limina* address to the bishops of New Jersey and Pennsylvania)

These principles speak to the need for a different attitude or perspective when exercising authority and participating in Church governance. They challenge the entire Body of Christ to a new understanding of and belief in a theology of grace: that God is present and active in human life and that God sustains the Church as guide and helper. These principles call all pastoral leadership to a spirit of selflessness. They call all the Christian faithful to be responsible for the mission of the Church.

Diocesan and parish structures do not enter into consultation on core central truths of our faith or the clear teachings of the magisterium. Instead, the process of consultation essentially seeks the most effective way to make the Gospel and our legacy of faith come alive in today’s world through shared decision-making.

Summary

For the pastor, the staff, and all the members of the community to work effectively together for the building up of the church, the following are required:

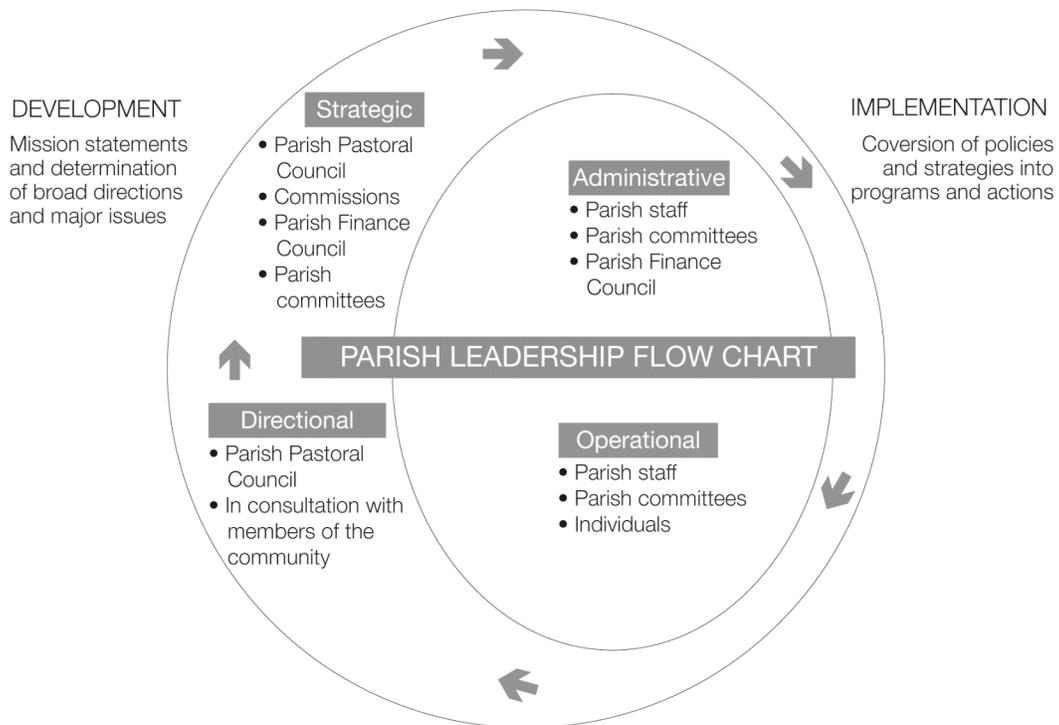
- Belief in the power of the Holy Spirit and the presence of grace;
- Belief that we are all called to share responsibility for the mission of Christ and the Church;
- Commitment to build consensus whenever possible; mutual trust; and
- Mutual trust.

APPENDIX B: PASTORAL PLANNING—PARISH LEADERSHIP FLOW CHART

While pastoral planning results in goals, policies, and priorities for the use of resources, the process can be applied to short-term programs as well as broad three to five year goals. Pastoral planning can be used by an individual in organizing her or his work for the month or by a pastoral staff as they plan programs for the year. In general, using the decision-making model, pastoral planning takes place in several areas as indicated in the following graphic:

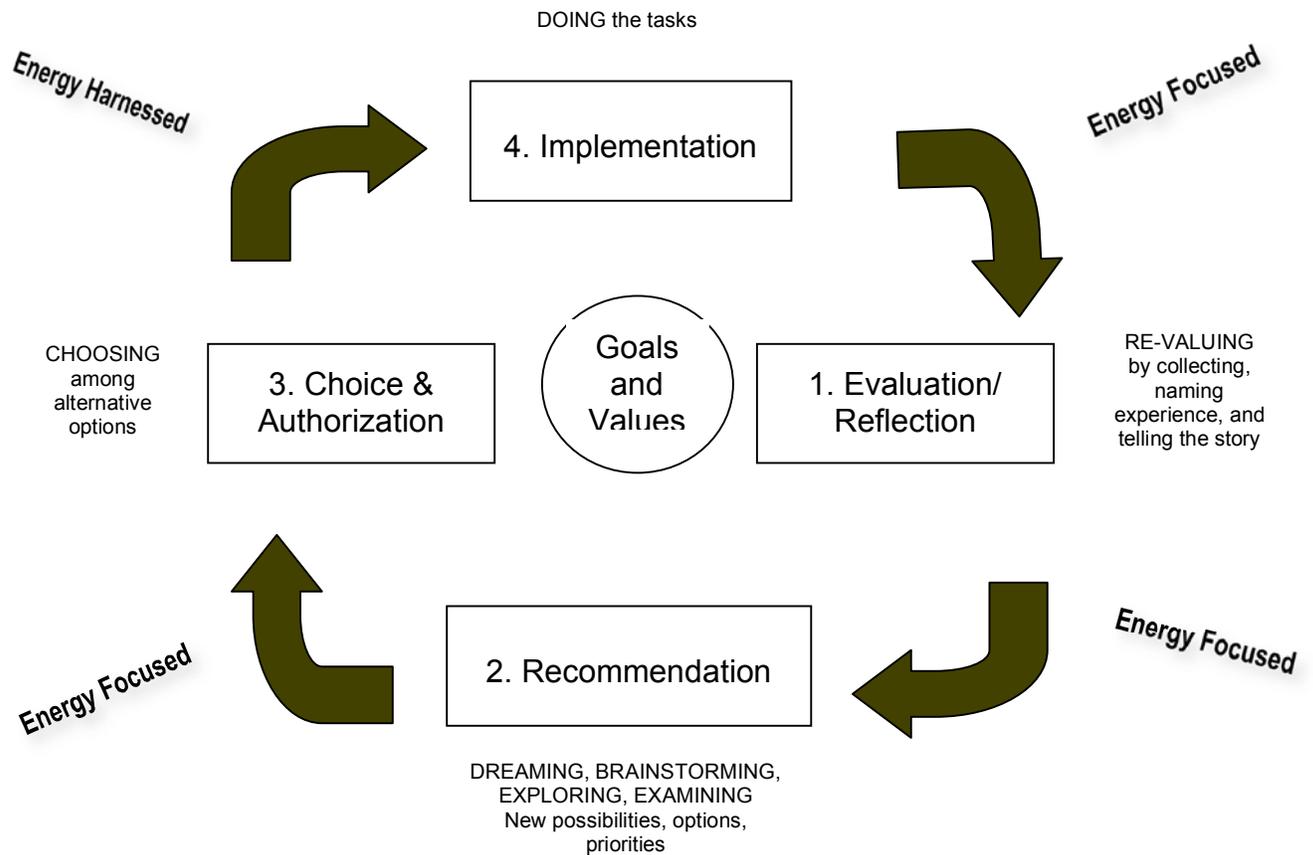
- Setting broad direction through the development of a parish mission statement;
- Choosing goals and strategies that are keyed to the mission statement;
- Establishing effective administrative structures and procedures; and
- Planning operations (programs).

PASTORAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT THROUGH PARISH STRUCTURES



Consultative structures (e.g., parish pastoral councils, commissions, etc.) are focused on development—directional and strategic planning. The executive structures of the parish (e.g., pastoral staff, committees, etc.) are focused on implementation—administrative and operational planning.

APPENDIX C: EMPOWERMENT CYCLE FOR BUILDING COMMITMENT



Principles:

- Collective commitment builds to the extent that people share in the roles of the empowerment cycle.
- Commitment dissipates when any step is bypassed or people are unclear about a particular agenda item.
- The process leader brings formalization to the informal processes of the body.

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Evaluation

Decision-making begins with evaluation. Evaluations of the parish, the pastor, staff, consultative leadership, activities, liturgies, etc., are always taking place by those involved in parish life. Such evaluations are usually

informal, random, unorganized, and unshared. In an effective decision-making process, an intentional and formal process of evaluation is undertaken. The first step in evaluation is to define the subject of the decision-making process. What is the issue, the question that needs to be answered? An effort is then made to identify objectively what the present reality is and what is happening now.

An effective parish planning process will include the following elements:

- A focus on values – how is who we are and what we do as a parish a reflection of *encuentro* and communion with the Lord?
- A review and possible revision of the current mission statement;
- Identification of the current reality (what is happening now) – trends, feelings, perceptions, assets, resources, finances, current ministries, organizational chart, and physical plant;
- Analysis of parish history and how it influences current reality;
- Evaluation of previous goals and objectives;
- Situating the parish issues within the context of the local civil community, the Archdiocese, and the wider church.

It may be helpful to ask, “What are the feelings and intuitions about what has been learned?” “Is the issue the same as originally perceived, or are new issues emerging which should be addressed?” This part of the evaluation process includes identifying trends, feelings, and perceptions: the experience of the reality described. It also includes analysis of what assets and resources are available to the parish.

Recommendation

Once an evaluation has been conducted, the next step is to develop recommended ways of responding to what has been discovered. This process begins by generating alternatives. Alternative ways of addressing issues can be found by researching what other parishes and communities have done in responding to similar situations. Original alternatives that meet the unique needs of the situation also need to be considered.

For a parish planning process these questions should be asked:

- Have the necessary needs assessments been done? Have we listened to the parish, to leadership, to the marginalized, the inactive, the local community, the Archdiocese, the larger church? Have the implications for various alternatives been explored? Have the merits and risks of each been fully understood?

- What is the level of commitment for each of the options? Have the parishioners participated in the discussion? Have the options been prioritized: Have the staff and parish leadership been involved?
- In light of our current reality, our history and our dreams, what is most important?

Once a wide set of alternatives has been generated, a critical review is conducted. This review should include a thorough examination of the benefits, risks, and implications of pursuing each course of action. Each of the alternatives is weighed in light of its potential impact for promoting identified values or hindering them.

Authorization

Once alternative recommendations have been developed and critically reviewed, conclusions must be drawn about which course of action is to be followed. Canonically, the pastor exercises the authority vested in him by the Archbishop to authorize the course of action to be taken. If all steps in the decision-making process have been followed, this step should be the easiest. When a conclusion is authorized, it should include the delegation of responsibility for implementing the actions called for. Information should be provided about the resources available to those who will be responsible for the action.

For a parish planning process these questions should be asked:

- Are the recommendations clearly understood?
- How will the goals be lived out? Is the recommendation SMART: that is, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Responsibilities identified and Time bound
- Are the values and risks of choices presented clearly understood?
- Are the recommendations for goals consistent with the core values and mission of the parish? Are the necessary resources, time, personnel and money available for the implementation of the decision?

Once authorized by the pastor, the goals can be promulgated, communicated and celebrated by the community. Objectives and strategies are finalized.

Action and Implementation

Action follows authorization. Those who are responsible for the action should have a clear understanding of what is being asked and its relationship to the overall purpose and goals of the parish. Action is

facilitated if there is careful attention to schedules and timelines and if there is regular and visible support of those responsible.

For a parish planning process these elements ought to be present:

- Do the implementers have the information, resources and authority necessary to carry out the goals?
- Is there dialogue between the developers and the implementers? Is follow up and feedback designed into the process?
- Are the strategies and objectives appropriately evaluated yearly and as completed?
- Do the implementers receive recognition for their accomplishments?

Ongoing evaluation is an integral step in pastoral planning.

Additional resources, materials and support are available through the Office of the Vicar for Clergy.

APPENDIX D: DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Accountability** The obligation to carry out responsibility and to exercise authority in terms of established standards or assigned tasks.
- Collaborative** To work together as a joint effort. A term used analogously to collegiality as expressed in the relationship of the Pope and the bishops.
- Commission** A group that develops recommendations concerning strategic plans and policy for a specific area of parish life.
- Committee** A group involved in implementation of parish ministries and programs that flow from parish priorities and strategic plans.
- Communio** The church is a universal community of communities in which each member participates, worships, and bears responsibility to witness the Gospel.
- Consensus** A process of decision-making in which the members of a group work to reach substantial, though not necessarily unanimous, commitment on an issue.
- Deanery** A geographic grouping of parishes designed to facilitate communication among the parishes, enabling the parish priests and representatives to voice the needs and concerns of the people of the Archdiocese. The 167 parishes and missions in the Archdiocese of Seattle are grouped into ten deaneries.
- Discernment** A process which promotes a community's ability to seek the will of God in the life of the community. Communal discernment is not distinct from consensus, but adds prayerful reflection and study to the process.
- Diversity** All the ways we are different. Includes: Internal - values, customs, history, personality, beliefs, place of origin, learning style, world view, sexual orientation, various types of disability, hobbies, habits, social & economic status, etc. External: physical attributes, visible, physical disabilities, dress, mannerisms, etc.
- Encuentro** The intentional effort to bring people together to encounter the Lord and build up the Body of Christ involves sharing lived experiences, understanding those lived experiences in light of Gospel values, and taking action to advance the common good.
- Goal** Statement of a desired end, stated three to five years hence. Goals should be written in specific and challenging terms so that they are recognizable when reached.

Mission Statement The statement of the group's reason for existence, its purpose and philosophy.

Objective A sub-goal to be accomplished in one year or less. It has the same criteria as a goal.

Participative Sharing in, taking part in.

Participative Leadership Leadership which calls forth involvement and ownership from those sharing responsibility as plans, issues and problems are addressed.

Pastoral Staff The group responsible for collaborating with the pastor in implementing the programs and policies of the parish. Usually this term refers to paid staff, but, in a wide sense, it can refer to volunteer staff.

Policy A guide for actions and decisions that articulate values and principles of the organization.

Priority A preferential ranking of specific pastoral needs or goals.

Shared Responsibility The principle that each member of the Church has the right and duty to assist the Church, offering time and talent so that its mission among humankind will be effective. The principle of shared responsibility received great emphasis during the Second Vatican Council.

Subsidiarity A principle of authority whereby decisions are entrusted to the appropriate body and not assumed by a higher authority. Issues are dealt with and policies are established at the lowest proper level of responsibility and competency.