

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS AND COMMISSIONS GUIDELINES

Vision . . .

Planning . . .

Leadership . . .



Diocese of Lansing
Office of Pastoral Planning
300 West Ottawa Street
Lansing, Michigan 48933
July 2010



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LANSING

Office of the Bishop
300 West Ottawa Street • Lansing, Michigan 48933-1577

July 1, 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:

The following revised Diocesan norms govern the establishment and formation of Parish Pastoral Councils in parishes throughout the Diocese of Lansing. Three norms have been added to the current norms and are to be observed in all parishes beginning on July 1, 2010.

The rationale for Parish Pastoral Councils is identical with the reality of Christ and the Church. Their authenticity and effectiveness depend on fidelity to the mission of Christ and the Church.

The foundation for Parish Pastoral Councils is clearly elaborated in *Christifideles Laici*, the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II in which he quotes Pope Paul VI:

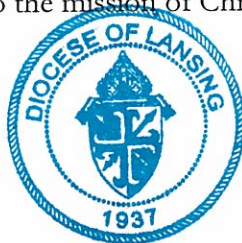
“The church is a communion. Communion speaks of two dimensions:

- 1) life-giving participation; the incorporation of christians in the life of Christ;
- 2) the communication of that life of charity to the entire body of the faithful.” (n. 19)

Pope Benedict XVI, in his May 26th 2009 Ecclesial Convention of the Diocese of Rome, posed this question, “To what extent is the pastoral co-responsibility of all, and particularly of the laity, recognized and encouraged?” He calls for the improvement of “pastoral structures in such a way that the co-responsibility of all the members of the People of God in their entirety is gradually promoted. Pope Benedict states that this “demands a change in mindset concerning the laity,” and that lay people “must no longer be viewed as ‘collaborators’ of the clergy but truly recognized as ‘co-responsible,’ for the Church’s being and action...”¹

The spirit of ‘co-responsibility’ is reflected in the Code of Canon Law in regards to the obligations and rights of all the Christian faithful being “free to make known to the pastors of the Church their needs, especially spiritual ones, and their desires.” (Canon 212, §2) It is directly linked with Canon 536, §1 concerning the Parish Pastoral Council which states, “...[the Parish] Pastoral Council [which enjoys a consultative vote, (§2)] is to be established in each parish. In this council, which is presided over by the pastor, Christ’s faithful, together with those who by virtue of their office are engaged in pastoral care in the parish, give their help in fostering pastoral action.”

May all members of Parish Pastoral Councils be guided by the Holy Spirit so that they may faithfully fulfill their co-responsibility to the mission of Christ.



Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Earl Boyea
Bishop of Lansing

¹ In *L'Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, 3 June 2009, pgs. 3-4.



PLEASE NOTE

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PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS and COMMISSIONS

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Foundation in Church Documents and Scripture

FOUNDATION IN CHURCH DOCUMENTS and SCRIPTURE

A. CHURCH AS THE 'PEOPLE OF GOD'

The Second Vatican Council (1961-1965) defined 'Church as the People of God' specifically in *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. This updated definition of church led to the development of new vehicles for a shared responsibility. It changed the methods of operation within the local churches from the traditional hierarchical method to a shared responsibility method. In his commentary on *Lumen Gentium*, Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J. stated:

. . . the Constitution devotes an entire chapter to the description of the Church as the 'new People of God'. This title, solidly founded in Scripture, met a profound desire of the Council to put greater emphasis on the human and communal side of the Church, rather than on the institutional and hierarchical aspects which have sometimes been over-stressed in the past. . . . While everything said about the People of God as a whole is applicable to the laity, it should not be forgotten that the term 'People of God' refers to the total community of the Church, including the pastors as well as the other faithful.¹

B. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MISSION OF JESUS AND THE CHURCH

1. The role of the laity in the mission of the Church is identified as the lay apostolate, and the value of shared responsibility in the Church is clearly stated in *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity.²
 - a. . . . the laity, too, share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own role to play in the mission of the whole People of God in the Church and in the world. n 2
 - b. Incorporated into the Christ's Mystical Body through baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through confirmation, they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord himself. n 3
 - c. To fulfill the mission of the Church in the world, the laity have certain basic needs. They need a life in harmony with their faith, so they can become the light of the world. n 13
2. This call to active participation by the laity in the mission of the Church also has foundation in Scripture:
 - a. Each one of you has received a special grace, so like good stewards responsible for all these different graces of God, put yourselves at the service of others. *1 Peter 4:10*
 - b. The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me.

¹ Avery Dulles, S.J. in Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, Documents of Vatican II. Walter M. Abbott S.J., Ed., pp. 24-25.

² Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, in Documents of Vatican II. Walter M. Abbott S.J., Ed., pp. 491-492, 505.

He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favor. *Luke 4:18-19*

The mission of Jesus is clearly defined in this passage from the Gospel of Luke and in turn defines the mission of every local church. Those in parish leadership need to ask the questions:

- ▶ Who are the poor in our parish? How do we bring good news to them?
- ▶ Who are the captives in our parish? How do we bring them liberty?
- ▶ Who are the blind in our parish? How do we help them recover sight?
- ▶ Who are the downtrodden in our parish? How do we set them free?

Postscript to these questions: "Why, then, do you stand here all the day idle?"

Matt. 20:6

3. Reflecting the theological vision of the kind of Church which Christ intended to establish, the following introductory canon speaks of Church as the 'People of God'. The Code of Canon Law clearly states:
Christ's faithful are those who, since they are incorporated into Christ through baptism, are constituted the people of God. For this reason they participate in their own way in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ. They are called, each according to his or her particular condition, to exercise the mission which God entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world.³ Can. 204 §1
4. In September 1995 on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity and the 15th anniversary of Called and Gifted⁴, the United States Catholic Bishops, reflecting on the these documents, prepared in hope for the third millennium. As a result, the Committee on the Laity issued the exhortation titled: Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium. In the chapter, "The Call to Mission and Ministry", a paraphrase from the exhortation, *Christifideles Laici n 20*, is cited to bring focus on the vocation and mission of the lay faithful in the Church and in the world. It states:
Through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist, every Christian is called to participate actively and co-responsibly in the Church's mission of salvation in the world. Moreover, in those same sacraments, the Holy Spirit pours out gifts which make it possible for every Christian man and woman to assume different ministries and forms of service that complement one another and are for the good of all.⁵

³ The Canon Law: Letter & Spirit, p.115.

⁴ Called and Gifted: The American Catholic Laity

⁵ Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium, p.15

C. CALL FOR THE CREATION OF PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS

1. A preliminary reference to council formation is found in *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity
In dioceses, as far as possible, there should be councils which assist the apostolic work of the Church either in the field of making the gospel known and men [sic] holy, or in the charitable, social, or other spheres. To this end, clergy and religious should appropriately cooperate with the laity.⁶ n 26

2. To further develop the concept of parish pastoral councils, the United States Bishops' Committee on the Parish issued a statement in 1980 titled: The Parish: A People, A Mission, A Structure⁷ which reads in part:
Parish leadership challenges everyone to recognize and accept responsibility to both the Gospel and the total experience of the Church, which is tradition. This pastoral leadership encourages the fullest possible collaboration of clergy, religious and laity, men and women, in their common mission. To accomplish all this, the leadership develops appropriate structures which will allow for participation in the decision-making process, as well as in the various ministries of the parish. n 30

. . .the parish council remains the most promising way to make sure such participation occurs. . . . It must be grounded in faith and worship; it must be formed and trained for its responsibility; . . . The council has very clear functions: to develop the correct understanding of the parish's mission and to formulate policies. . . . n 31

3. The Code of Canon Law gives a definition of a parish and later introduces the concept of a pastoral council for each parish. Vatican II shifted the overall juridical emphasis from the previous purely territorial basis of a parish to the people who constitute the parish community, especially centered around the Eucharist.
A parish is a certain community of Christ's faithful stably established within a particular church, whose pastoral care, under the authority of the diocesan bishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor.⁸ Can. 515 §1

If, after consulting the council of priests, the diocesan bishop considers it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in

⁶ *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, p.515. Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, p. 515.

⁷ "The Parish: A People, A Mission, A Structure," in ORIGINS 10:41 (26 Mar 1981) p. 645.

⁸ Code of Canon Law, p. 285.

each parish. In this council, which is presided over by the parish priest, Christ's faithful, together with those who by virtue of their office are engaged in pastoral care in the parish, give their help in fostering pastoral action. Can. 536 §1

The pastoral council has only a consultative vote, and it is regulated by the norms laid down by the diocesan Bishop.⁹ Can. 536 §2

4. Called and Gifted in the Third Millennium paraphrases content from *Christifideles Laici*¹⁰ and writes:
The ministries which exist and are at work at this time in the Church are all, even in their variety of forms, a participation in Jesus Christ's own ministry as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep, the humble servant who gives himself without reserve for the salvation of all. n 21

5. Challenge for the Future: Collaboration is at the heart of the ideal pastoral council. Therefore:
The new evangelization will only become a reality when ordained and lay members of Christ's faith understand their role and ministries as complementary and their purposes joined to the one mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. His prayer at the Last Supper must be our prayer, 'That all may be one.' Collaboration in ministry is a way to realize that unity.¹¹

⁹ Code of Canon Law, p. 298.

¹⁰ *Christifidelis Laici*, n. 21.

¹¹ Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium, p.18.

Norms for the Diocese of Lansing

**DIOCESE OF LANSING
NORMS FOR A PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL**

1. Each parish in the Diocese of Lansing will have a parish pastoral council.
2. The parish pastoral council is consultative and collaborative.
3. The parish pastoral council is the primary and established means for pastors/pastoral coordinators and parishioners to respond to the pastoral mission of the Church and listen to the needs and hopes of the parish.
4. The parish pastoral council collaborates with the pastor/pastoral coordinator to create a vision for the parish community and designs a planning process to bring this vision to fruition. *“Without a vision, the people perish.” Proverbs 29:18*
The council will:
 - write a parish mission statement based on a review and understanding of the mission of a parish and the pastoral needs and concerns of this distinct parish. (See Section A)
 - develop a pastoral plan that responds to the pastoral needs of the parish community and the wider community in which the parish is located. (See Section B for the Diocesan Pastoral Plan from which a parish can design its own unique pastoral plan)
 - determine the method(s) for implementing the goals and strategies of the pastoral plan
 - assist the pastor/pastoral coordinator in the implementation of the parish pastoral plan
 - evaluate the progress of the parish pastoral plan annually
5. The parish pastoral council is representative of parishioners of all ages, cultures, races, and abilities. Goal 1 of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan (Section B) encourages parishes to become inclusive, receptive, and committed to spiritual and social development with emphasis on respecting and valuing diversity within the community.
6. The principles of collaboration should be applied as the parish pastoral council meets. (Section C) Relying fully on the Holy Spirit, the parish pastoral council will seek consensus in prayerful discernment. (Section D)
7. New members for the parish pastoral council are selected by lot according to biblical tradition cited in Acts:

We must therefore choose someone who has been with us the whole time that the Lord Jesus was traveling round with us, . . . he can act with us as a witness to his resurrection. Having nominated two candidates, . . . they prayed, ‘Lord you can read everyone’s heart’. Show us therefore which of these two you have chosen to take over this ministry and apostolate . . . they then drew lots for them.

Acts 1:21, 23-26

(See Section E for a sample selection process and time-line.)

8. The parish pastoral council provides an orientation for new council members.
9. Councils will abide by a charter governing internal operations. It is essential that each parish carefully prepare a charter in accord with diocesan norms with a plan to review on a regular basis.
(See Section H for information that should be included in the charter)
10. The agenda for parish pastoral council meetings must include:
 - prayer (see Section F for sample prayer services)
 - continuing formation for council members (suggestions are in Section G)
 - approval of the minutes from the previous meeting
 - adoption of the meeting agenda
 - unfinished business (update on each unfinished item)
 - new business (discussion of each new agenda item)
 - reports from the pastor, parish staff, councils, commissions, and/or ministries
 - preparation for the next meeting
 - ▶ date/place of meeting
 - ▶ prayer leader
 - ▶ formation leader/topic
 - ▶ agenda items

The current agenda and minutes of the previous pastoral council meeting should be mailed to council members at least ten days prior to the scheduled meeting.
11. Minutes of parish pastoral council meetings must be kept in the parish archives. The minutes must include each of the items outlined in Norm #10 (*above*) and must be posted in a prominent place for review by parishioners.
12. In those situations where parishes are merged with one or two worship sites, one parish pastoral council and one finance council shall exist.
13. In those situations where a parish has been maintained as a chapel, one parish pastoral council and one finance council shall exist.
14. In those situations where parishes are clustered, the parishes remain as separate parishes. Two parish pastoral councils and two finance council shall exist.

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Diocesan Pastoral Plan

DIOCESE OF LANSING PASTORAL PLAN

GOAL 1



Form parishes into communities of faith which are inclusive, receptive, and committed to spiritual and social development.

GOAL 2



Commit to our mission of evangelization by sharing the joy and promise of the Gospel with inactive and alienated Catholics and the unchurched.

GOAL 3



Provide vibrant, lifelong faith formation opportunities which enable us to live the Gospel.

GOAL 4



Nurture ministers and leaders in the life of the Spirit and the vision of the Church to use their gifts to serve the needs of all.

GOAL 5



Respond to the Gospel's call to social justice and outreach through education and coordinated assessment and a response to the needs of our communities.

GOAL 6



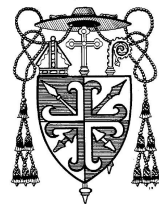
Foster and enhance spirituality and worship which will deepen our relationship with God and the Church.

GOAL 7



Strengthen the ongoing relationship of youth, college students, and young adults with the Church.

Promulgated on November 15, 2001
Most Reverend Carl F. Mengeling
Bishop of Lansing



DIOCESAN SEVEN-GOAL PASTORAL PLAN

GOAL 1: Form parishes into communities of faith which are inclusive, receptive, and committed to spiritual and social development.



1.1 Provides community activities to stimulate participation in the life of the community.

Strategy A: Form parish communities that welcome all persons into the social, educational, and liturgical life of the community.

Strategy B: Ensure every person will have a specific experience of being invited, welcomed, and nurtured into the parish community.

1.2 Respect and value the diversity within our communities.

Strategy A: Encourage activities and events inclusive of all ages, cultures, races, and abilities.

Strategy B: Recognize and respond to the gifts and needs of all, especially those who are involuntarily excluded from full participation.

Strategy C: Commit to continual pastoral care of all who come to our parish communities.

GOAL 2: Commit to our mission of evangelization by sharing the joy and promise of the Gospel with inactive and alienated Catholics and the unchurched.



Strategy A: Claim the Great Commission (Mt. 28) as “servants of the word” in the work of evangelization.

Strategy B: Design and implement a systematic plan for evangelization.

Strategy C: Assign personnel who will be responsible for promoting the mission of evangelization.

GOAL 3: Provide vibrant, lifelong faith formation opportunities which enable us to live the Gospel.

3.1 Create comprehensive continuing adult education and formation opportunities.

Strategy A: Develop a pastoral plan for adult faith formation which is rooted in Scripture, the teachings and history of the Catholic Church.

Strategy B: Provide programs to clarify Church teaching about complex moral issues.

Strategy C: Ensure that adult faith formation utilizes a wide range of adult learning styles.



- Strategy D: Include continuing adult faith formation at every diocesan and parish gathering of adults.
- Strategy E: Designate a qualified adult faith formation director.
- Strategy F: Establish an adult faith formation committee

3.2 Offer quality religious education programs which engage children, youth, parents, and families.

- Strategy A: Ensure that the religious education curriculum contains all the teachings of the Church.
- Strategy B: Ensure that all program directors, catechists, and pastoral workers in the religious education program are faithful witnesses to Christ and the teachings of His Church
- Strategy C: Encourage and assist parishes in the implementation of family faith formation.
- Strategy D: Provide alternative schedules and models for religious formation of youth.

3.3 Promote Catholic school education which is accessible, available, and affordable.

- Strategy A: Uphold high standards in the education and formation of Catholic school students.
- Strategy B: Integrate evangelization into Catholic school programs.
- Strategy C: Incorporate the parish school into the life and mission of the parish.
- Strategy D: Develop a marketing campaign to promote Catholic schools as an important mission of the Church.
- Strategy E: Establish and fund an educational endowment for diocesan Catholic schools.
- Strategy F: Identify sources to fund the operation of diocesan Catholic schools.
- Strategy G: Conduct a feasibility study about the location of Catholic schools where they will be accessible and available.

GOAL 4: Nurture ministers and leaders in the life of the Spirit and the vision of the church to use their gifts to serve the needs of all.



4.1 Clearly define present roles and create new roles in the Church to service the pastoral and spiritual needs of people.

- Strategy: Establish a diocesan human resource office to attract, support, and retain professional ministers at all levels throughout the diocese.

4.2 Effectively deploy clergy to improve sacramental and pastoral ministry.

- Strategy A: Relieve priests from diocesan, regional, and parish responsibilities that may be filled by others.

- Strategy B: Develop an understanding of parish leadership that is collaborative and complements the leadership responsibilities of the pastor.
- Strategy C: Acknowledge that clergy cannot do everything and encourage parishioners to accept their baptismal call to service.

4.3 Increase leadership among the laity through formation, education, and active service.

- Strategy A: Emphasize through formation and education that spiritual growth in the likeness of Christ is the heart of ministry and leadership.
- Strategy B: Continue and/or initiate certification, on-going formation, networking opportunities, and ministry support groups for various lay and professional ministries.
- Strategy C: Utilize multiple educational institutions, diocesan central office personnel and financial resources to form and educate people for ministry.
- Strategy D: Recognize the inter-dependence of all people by increasing opportunities for lay ministry and leadership among those of varying ages, genders, ethnic groups, education, and disabilities.

4.4 Promote and support vocations to priesthood, diaconate, consecrated life and the call to ecclesial lay ministry.

- Strategy: Commission the Department of formation to develop a multi-faceted diocesan-wide vocations campaign for the 2003-2008 fiscal years.

GOAL 5: Respond to the Gospel's call to social justice and outreach through education and coordinated assessment and response to the needs of our communities.

- Strategy A: Make the needs and independence of the poor and vulnerable a priority.
- Strategy B: Offer educational tools that will assist individuals and families to integrate the principles of Catholic Social Teaching into their daily lives.
- Strategy C: Integrate Catholic Social Teaching into all parish life: liturgy, spirituality, education, formation, social ministry, and other parish activities.
- Strategy D: Provide appropriate social justice outreach education and formation to parish and diocesan volunteers and staff.
- Strategy E: Increase awareness of social justice and outreach by direct involvement in services to the poor and vulnerable.
- Strategy F: Educate and advocate for local, state, national, and international social justice issues.
- Strategy G: Develop a plan to address collaboratively the needs of the poor and vulnerable.



GOAL 6: Foster and enhance spirituality and worship which will deepen our relationship with God and the Church.



6.1 Provide reverent liturgy that invites full and active participation.

- Strategy A: Foster education and formation opportunities which promote full and active participation in the liturgy.
- Strategy B: Stress the Sunday Eucharist and that Sunday itself is experienced as a special day of faith.
- Strategy C: Provide enrichment courses in homiletics.
- Strategy D: Promote quality music in the liturgy.
- Strategy E: Provide education and formation for liturgical ministers.
- Strategy F: Establish parish worship commissions.

6.2 Offer opportunities for personal and communal spiritual renewal.

- Strategy A: Offer opportunities that educate and form the faithful in the call to holiness, spirituality, and prayer.
- Strategy B: Foster and sponsor events that encourage ongoing conversion.
- Strategy C: Promote a variety of communal prayer and devotions.
- Strategy D: Ensure that the teaching in our parishes persuasively and effectively presents the practice of the sacrament of reconciliation.

6.3 Challenge people to a life of faith in action.

- Strategy: Instill a conviction that we continue the Eucharistic celebration by making visible the radical demands of the Gospel message in our daily lives.

GOAL 7: Strengthen the ongoing relationship of youth, college students, and young adults with the Church.

- Strategy A: Ensure continuity in serving youth as they move into their young adult years and beyond.
- Strategy B: Hire qualified leadership for youth and young adult ministry.

7.1 Engage youth, college students, and young adults through ministry and creative programming.



- Strategy A: Develop ways to evangelize youth, college students, and young adults with the Church.
- Strategy B: Advocate for youth, college students, and young adults through prayer and education of the parish community.
- Strategy C: Establish Catholic youth and young adult councils to plan regular inter-parish activities.
- Strategy D: Promote awareness and use of the Michigan Catholic Conference registry program of graduating seniors from public and parochial high schools.

7.2 Engage more adults in ministry with youth and young adults.

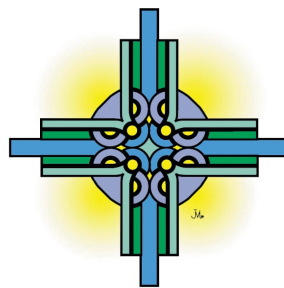
Strategy: Develop guidelines for parish and inter-parish collaboration to recruit and form volunteers.

7.3 Engage youth and young adults in the life of the parish.

Strategy: Establish a commission for youth and young adult participation in the life of the parish.

7.4 Nurture and develop the leadership potential of youth and young adults.

Strategy: Promote opportunities and levels of responsibility to youth and young adults to experience leadership.



COMMON STRATEGIES

1. Make stewardship a priority and commitment for the diocese, regions, and parishes.
2. Develop an assessment tool based on the seven goals to address parish life.
3. Assist every parish to develop a plan to improve communication.

Collaboration

A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON COLLABORATION

by Sharon Wimple and Marinell High

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In the mission of the Church, we must embrace the concept of collaboration if we are to continue to grow in faith through the Church. While collaboration can bring many blessings, it also carries its share of difficulties. However, as in all good and productive processes, the amount of work involved is overshadowed by the amount of reward received. It takes courage to move beyond the known and the accepted and to move to new ground that may be unsure and unfamiliar to us. The good news is that we are led in this collaboration by the Holy Spirit and that allows us to bring about the Kingdom of God in new and creative ways.

The Diocese of Lansing is at a crossroads where we must choose the path that will best serve the worship, formation, and community of our people. Parish structures are changing – some growing smaller and less vibrant, others growing larger and more energetic. Staff for parishes is also changing with more lay people taking on leadership roles while our clergy continue to decrease in number. The question to be asked is how will we choose the right path for our people and then, once chosen, how will we implement that path? What will be the center of that process? We have chosen the path of collaboration, a term that means many things to some people and very little to others. In order to fully take part in collaboration we must first explore how it fits in with our faith so that this better understanding of collaboration as a faith way of life will assist in implementing the concept.

Collaboration is a relatively new term but it is based in Scripture and is integral to the work of the Church. When Jesus sent the twelve out on their first mission he sent them in “two’s” to preach and to heal (Mark 6:7-13) establishing their work as a collaborative effort and not the work of one person alone. We are not intended to do God’s work by ourselves, but in community with other believers.

We cannot begin to collaborate effectively, to even understand the true meaning of collaboration, until we understand the concept of *communio*. Our world is very “me” oriented. We think inward more often than we think outward, and we tend to keep things for ourselves whether they be our gifts and talents or our possessions. A big step on the path to understanding *communio* is to understand what Pope John Paul II states in *Novo Millennio Ineunete*, 43 about gifts: “A spirituality of communion implies also the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly, but also as a ‘gift for me’. A spirituality of communion means, finally, to know how to ‘make room’ for our brothers and sisters, bearing ‘each other’s burdens’ (Gal 6:2) and resisting the selfish temptations which constantly beset us and provoke competition, careerism, distrust and jealousy. Let us have no illusions: unless we follow this spiritual path, external structures of communion will serve very little purpose. They would become mechanisms without a soul, ‘masks’ of communion rather than its means of expression and growth.” Bishop Wilton Gregory made this statement about *communio*: “We are a *communio*, created by God, in which we each belong to God and to one another in love. Brought here together by Christ’s love, by love are we thus bound.” (ORIGINS, Vol 33, no. 24) It is our baptism that brings us to this *communio* and because of this *communio* we are called to service of one another. If we are not willing to acknowledge this existence with God and with one another then we will not be able to enter into true collaboration that is intended to further the Kingdom of God.

We hear about collaborative efforts in Luke 5:1-11 when Simon, instructed by Jesus to lower his nets, has a catch so large that it requires the assistance of others to pull it in. Simon asks

those in the other boat to assist him. We all know that at the end of this passage Jesus tells Simon and the other followers that they will become fishers of men and women. Surely, Christ is telling us that no one person can fulfill the many roles of ministry today. If we attempt to do our ministry all alone then our nets will surely tear and we will lose people just as Simon would have lost a day's catch of fish had he not asked for help. All are called to find the metaphor that can be understood by the ministers of today. The secular understanding of collaboration can be seen rooted in this scriptural passage. Not only is collaboration a good business model, it is the model Jesus used throughout his ministry. It is the model of the early church. It is the model of emerging and developing cultures out of necessity. Are we not called to do the same? Working together and building on the strengths and gifts of the people our church grew and survived through time.

St. Paul addresses this issue quite clearly in 1 Corinthians 12:27-28: "Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it. Some people God has designated in the church to be: first, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers; then mighty deeds; then, gifts of healing, assistance, administration, and varieties of tongues." St. Paul tells us that God has given no one person all the gifts to do his work, but rather has spread those gifts out among all the people so that the work of God is collaboration and not an individual accomplishment. Pope John Paul recognized this reality and speaks of it in *Novo Millennio Ineunete*, 46: "The unity of the church is not uniformity, but an organic blending of legitimate diversities. It is the reality of many members joined in a single body, the one body of Christ."

Once the need for collaboration is acknowledged the difficult task begins: difficult because this is a new way of thinking and a new way of behaving. While collaboration is based in the gospels, it has not been the normal method of functioning within our Church in recent history. Archbishop V James Weisgerber puts it this way "First of all, we must realize that this is a new time: As Church, we have never been here before. It's not as though we once knew how to be Church and have forgotten. This is a new time, and we must break new ground. Jesus warned us about the temptation of trying to put new wine into old wineskins!" (*Origins*, pg 170) If the past ways of being Church, that once met the needs of the church, have outgrown their usefulness, new ways must be embraced. Ronald Rolheiser often speaks of an Epiphany as a moment of discovery, of light, a new way of seeing. Old ways are transitioned into openness to new ways, not a digging in heels resistant to change. As the people of Jesus' day and those seeking the newborn King, we too are called to the same openness to truth. Unfortunately, there are signs of less church membership, youth involvement, Mass, and Sacramental participation. The collaboration that we need as individual parishes, regional groupings, and diocesan structures differs based on the structure in which we are working. Our collaborations must not be limited only to the parish in which we minister or the region to which we are assigned or even the diocese to which we belong. Collaboration needs to be infused into every aspect of ministry. This task is not easy to accomplish no matter how dedicated one is to the idea or how fully one believes in it. Because we are human, because we have egos, we do not see the gifts of others as well as we should or as we would like. The idea of asking others to assist us or changing the way things have always been done is not a comfortable position for some to be in.

Parish boundaries and identities can get in the way of effective regional collaboration. Those who are in ministry, whether as ordained or as lay workers in the field, may find themselves clashing in areas surrounding the daily practice of faith, attitudes toward authority, or other numerous personality oriented issues. Whether we are speaking to the collaboration of ordained and lay ministers, parish to parish collaboration, or parish and diocesan collaboration, we must always keep in mind that we are all, together, part of the Body of

Christ. This is an absolute foundational piece of collaboration. We can do far more as a group than we can alone. Ministry is not done in isolation. This is not a request for a change in doctrine but a request to look at how we live our faith lives in view of all the changes of the past few decades and our constantly fluid and changing world conditions. There must be a seeking to look through a lens that allows us to see opportunities for meeting the needs of the faithful in bold new creative ways.

In the face of the reality of numbers of available priests, collaboration is necessary for our survival as a people of God. We can no longer look to one person to lead in all the facets of living out the faith. How realistic is it for one person to possess every gift and to be responsible for each aspect of parish or diocesan life? Again, St. Paul reminds us there are many members belonging to the Body of Christ equipped with the many needed gifts. If we are freely given the gifts needed, what is the impediment? Collaboration invites all the gifts to work in concert with one another.

Before Vatican II and in the years immediately following, the influx to the priesthood was great and the norm for the number of priests per parish was two or three. Now we have parishes that have no priest in residence, but are part of a cluster of parishes that share one priest to cover all of their sacramental needs. Some of our parishes may have 1,500 families and only one ordained minister to take care of them. Ordained permanent deacons are serving parishes sacramentally and professionally trained and commissioned lay ministers serve in leadership and staff positions. We are becoming teams of ministers out of necessity, but we need to become teams of ministers because of our individual calls, gifts and talents. Working in *communio* and collaboration needs to become the mandate under which we function. We MUST learn to utilize the gifts of all the faithful in order to move forward as Church and to build the kingdom of God.

Joan Ebbitt, MSW, CSW, presented these traits of good collaboration at a recent conference: "Communication and Learning to Working Together":

- Creativity - the breaking out of old habits
- Communication on all levels
- Respect for all people/honor diversity
- Vision - seeing beyond the obvious. It is necessary to take risks at times.
- Energy
- Flexibility
- Partnership - do not assume anything. Verify and check things out.
- Have fun! - collaboration should be a joy, not a chore.

The Church is working for the common good of all. Each member has a role. It is one matter to say that we need to collaborate, it is another to carry it out. Actions and modeling this form of leadership will affirm its place in the life of the Church and the faithful.

What will this collaboration look like? Just as in the time of Jesus, this way of being Church came easier for some than it did for others. There are regions in our diocese that already practice good collaboration. Other areas have encountered difficulties and resistance to change. It is the nature of change.

Collaboration begins with well formed and open leadership. Leadership that is joy-filled will attract others by their joyful living and serving. Not a phony happiness, but a joy that comes from service. This joy does not always mean things will run smoothly, but there is a visible sign of faith seen in the leader, even in the struggle. At times, collaboration is seen in the

struggle more clearly than in easy times. World events of the past years have demonstrated to us the necessity for and possibility of good collaboration. Leaders are not always the ones in the front of the assembly or perceived as parish leaders, regardless of the title. Many of our leaders work silently behind the scenes.

Leaders for the future of the Church must be forward thinkers and people of vision. The Vatican II Council believed that everyone – clergy, vowed religious, and laity – can work together to further the mission of Jesus.

Just like all the fish in the net are not the same kind of fish, neither are the people commissioned by Jesus to be fishers of people. Ministers have many faces. We are living in a global Church. We have people whose daily bread is not made from wheat and yeast but from corn, rice, barley, or rye. They may not even experience a baked product but may eat rice or potatoes. How can one way of ministry serve all the needs of our diverse and beautiful Church? Our world and understanding of other cultures is rapidly changing. This even affects our diocese. These insights may help those in ministry to understand and direct actions and efforts to meet the needs of the faithful.

We need to listen and be open to the questions. Jesus was. We need to listen to the hearts of people. The questioner has already listened deeply in order to be able to ask to know more. Silence can be more feared than questioning as it can point to indifference. In questioning there is an energy and interest to build upon where silence does not lend itself this opportunity.

The Church has transitioned greatly in the past seventy-five years. We have come from an immigrant church to a pre-Vatican, geographical, parish model to a post-Vatican II Church where boundaries do not always identify clusters of the faithful.

If we are to collaborate effectively it is essential that we take the time, money, and energy to fully acquaint ourselves with the concept and to immerse ourselves in this practice. Collaboration is not a slick answer to a problem. It is, in itself, hard work, a process, a way of being Church. Once we are involved in collaboration and it becomes a part of who we are and how we function, then the hard work pays off. Our reward is more effective leadership, more satisfying and productive ministries, a people of God who are connected and are given opportunities to grow in their faith. The burden of ministry shifts from the shoulders of a few to the shoulders of many and the burden becomes a joy.

Before the time of Vatican II, we were an institution of layers made up of clergy, religious, and laity. Clergy and laity were not coworkers in the vineyard, not laborers side by side. Vatican II placed the emphasis on the dual quality of the priesthood: the ordained and the universal. The ordained, both priests and deacons, are called to specific sacramental responsibilities while all the baptized are called to ministry of service in a variety of areas of Church. Documents of Vatican II call for consultative boards of lay and ordained for parishes and dioceses; liturgical documents give the laity a role in liturgy; and catechetical documents stress the responsibility for catechesis. These responsibilities lie not only with the ordained but with the laity as well and are clear indications that the spirit of the Council calls us to work side by side. Collaboration calls for everyone to acknowledge and respect what the others bring to the table and to understand that each participant has a value to be added to the mix. If we are unable to do this we likewise will be unable to collaborate effectively. We must embrace the concept of *communio* and collaboration or we will not accomplish anything except create a great deal of chaos and frustration. The mending of the "torn

fabric” of our present day and age does not appear to always respond to past methods.

Pope John Paul II said it well, “I dare to summon the whole Church bravely to cross this new threshold, to put out deeply into the net ...” . The whole Church was invited over two thousand years ago and the invitation continues to call us.

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AUTHORS

Marinell High is DRE at St Joseph Parish, Dexter and currently serves on the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the Bishop’s Coordinating Commission. *Marinell is a commissioned Lay Ecclesial Minister.*

Sharon Wimple is the Director of Pastoral Care at the Dominican Life Center in Adrian. *She is a member of the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the Bishop’s Coordinating Commission.*

Finance Council



GUIDELINES FOR PARISH FINANCE COUNCILS

Diocese of Lansing

The importance of having a Finance Council in each parish is clearly stated in the Code of Canon Law. It reads:

In each parish there is to be a finance committee to help the parish priest in the administration of the goods of the parish . . . It is ruled by the universal law and by the norms laid down by the diocesan bishop, and it is comprised of members of Christ's faithful selected according to these norms. **Can. 537**

It further explains that the existence of this committee does not detract from the parish priest's standing as the one who acts in the name of the parish. However, such a committee provides the parish priest with valuable insight and advice, so that he may act more effectively in the interests of the parish.¹

Based on the ruling in Canon Law, the Diocese of Lansing has established the following norms for Finance Councils in each of the diocesan parishes.

- 1. Each parish of the Diocese of Lansing has a Finance Council. The name of the body is the parish finance council.**

An active Parish finance council in each parish assists in administering the temporal goods of the parish.

- 2. The parish finance council is consultative in nature.**

The Parish finance council possesses a consultative voice in administering parish finances. Budgets are to be prepared by the individuals who are responsible for expenditures in the specific areas. The role of the council is to review these budgets in total. When reductions are needed the council can recommend areas or guidelines for making changes. They are also to evaluate the reasonableness of the estimates used in projecting income and expenses.

The parish finance council receives direction as to parish priorities from the parish pastoral council.

- 3. The parish finance council has the two-fold responsibility to:**
 - serve the Pastor/Pastoral Coordinator and the parish as primary consultants in any financial matter requiring the bishop's approval
 - assist the Pastor/Pastoral Coordinator in:
 - making administrative decisions and policies in the care of parish finances including parish budgets and annual reports
 - financial planning, fund raising, and development

¹ Canon Law: Letter & Spirit: A Practical Guide to the Code of Canon Law, pg. 299.
Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995.

The pastor/pastoral coordinator convenes the parish finance council so that he/she can share with them the responsibility for the prudent administration of parish financial affairs. Together they assist in formulating policies and procedures for the effective management of parish assets. The council recommends short-term and long-range financial plans in conjunction with parish pastoral council planning. For financial actions requiring the bishop's approval, the bishop will expect a signed resolution supporting the activity.

4. **The parish finance council is appointed by the Pastor/Pastoral Coordinator with recommendations from the parish pastoral council. Not more than two persons may serve simultaneously on both the pastoral and finance councils.**

The parish finance council is envisioned as a body of parishioners who possess the charisms essential for their task at hand. Among these desired charisms are:

- ▶ spiritual maturity and love of Christ
- ▶ special competence in financial matters and/or prudent judgment
- ▶ willingness
 - ▶ to offer their time and talent as a Christian service
 - ▶ to assist the pastor/pastoral coordinator in the development and management of the parish's financial resources

These abilities are foundational for the work of the finance council so they can effectively pursue the basic mission of the parish to spread Christ's gospel of love.

Other requirements for membership on the parish finance council include being:

- ▶ a practicing Catholic
- ▶ not a parish employee
- ▶ willing and able to share the responsibilities of administering the temporal goods of the parish

The parish finance council requires a minimum of five (5) members in addition to the pastor/pastoral coordinator. If a parish employs a professional staff person as business manager, he/she should serve as an ex-officio member.

5. **Definite terms are to be established for parish finance council membership.**

It is recommended that a minimum of two or three years per term be specified. In any case, two consecutive terms are considered the maximum time to serve in this capacity.

6. **Prayer is an integral part of parish finance council meetings.**

Shared reflection and prayer are essential for council members to effectively fulfill their responsibilities. Given the responsibility of being good stewards, the finance council is expected to make the best recommendations concerning the use of resources compatible with the mission of the parish. Being open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit will have a positive influence on the recommendations made by the council.

7. The parish finance council provides initial formation for new members and educational and spiritual growth opportunities for all members.

An orientation program allows new members to become familiar with the requirements of the council. They are to be assured that they are being appreciated for their contributions to the administration of the parish. A continuing program of study and experience, such as a day of reflection, deepens an understanding of the unity between the spiritual and the temporal.

AGENDA ITEMS

A council member, parish staff, parish committee, or parishioner may request an item be placed on the agenda. This request is to be presented to the pastor/pastoral coordinator along with any pertinent background information regarding the item.

Agenda items are identified as:

- information (may include updates on activities that are coming up in the parish life.)
- discussion (include items brought to the table where the pastor is looking to gain insight into areas of ordinary administration.)
- decision

Decision items are those calling for a recommendation from the council to the pastor/pastoral coordinator.

COUNCIL OFFICERS

It is recommended that officers for the parish finance council include:

President: The pastor/pastoral coordinator is the presiding office of the council. This role is assigned by virtue of his/her authority in the parish.

Chairperson: A member of the council is elected annually by the council to chair the meetings and appoint committees as needed.

Vice-Chairperson: A member of the council is elected annually by the council to chair meetings when the chairperson is unable to attend.

Secretary: The secretary provides an accurate record of minutes and sends notification of the scheduled meetings to members seven days in advance. This notification includes minutes of the previous meeting, the agenda, and any documentation relevant to the agenda. The secretary also handles any communication from the parish pastoral council.

Executive Committee: The executive committee consists of the president, chairperson, and vice-chairperson. They prepare the monthly council agenda and provide leadership to ensure that the council is faithful in to its responsibilities.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

The parish finance council provides an annual financial report for the previous fiscal year and makes it available to all registered parishioners. This report should be designed to clearly and accurately record the receipts and expenditures incurred for parish operations during the specified fiscal year.

Education Commission



GUIDELINES FOR PARISH EDUCATION COMMISSIONS

Diocese of Lansing

INTRODUCTION

Parish education commissions and boards of education for inter-parochial schools are an integral part of the Church in the Diocese of Lansing. Among the important reasons for their existence are:

1. To promote the concept of lay ministry

Participation in the ministry of Catholic education, whether in Catholic schools, parish religious education programs for all age levels (including adult education), or ministry to youth, is one way individuals can participate in the life of the Church in a significant way. This is the primary reason for having education commissions and school boards which provide concrete means for people to contribute to Catholic education and thereby build the kingdom of God.

2. To develop ownership and stability for the future

Participation in the life of an organization brings with it an increase of pride and ownership. People appreciate recognition of their expertise and are eager to offer their services as members of commissions and boards. Such bodies can, with well-developed plans and policies, provide stability when parish and program administrators are changed.

3. To offer financial advice

Given the financial difficulties that often face many parishes, the talents and interests of many people are needed to address the issue. It is no longer possible, nor is it desirable, for the administrator to shoulder the total responsibility for the life of the program. Neither should the pastor/pastoral coordinator feel that the financial challenges of the parish are his/hers alone. Administrators need assistance, and boards/commissions can be a positive force for dealing with the financial needs of today and planning for the future.

4. To develop and defend policy

Policies give general direction to administrators. They communicate what should be done, not how it should be done. Commission and board members have the responsibility to work with administrators in the development of policies and to defend local policies, as well as to ensure that diocesan policies are implemented at the local level.

5. To serve as a source for good public relations.

Involvement, information, and commitment will provide commission and board members with the opportunity to be positive voices on behalf of the Catholic school, parish religious education programs, and parish youth ministry programs which they represent.

6. To provide parents/guardians with a voice in their children's education

Parents, as the primary educators of their children, need a formal, systematic forum to participate in decisions affecting them.

7. To provide programs for adult parishioners

Adults in the parish need a body responsible for programs to meet their catechetical and educational needs.

8. To encourage strategic planning

Every parish/school needs a group charged with planning responsibilities. The parish education commission and inter-parochial school board should assume this responsibility with respect to religious education, the school, and youth ministry.

**Charitable and Social Justice Activities
Committee**



GUIDELINES FOR CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Diocese of Lansing

PURPOSE

“Love of neighbor, grounded in the love of God, is first and foremost a responsibility for each individual member of the faithful, but it is also a responsibility for the entire ecclesial community at every level: from the local community to the particular Church and to the Church universal in its entirety. As a community, the Church must practice love. Love thus needs to be an ordered service to the community.” *Deus Caritas Est* 20

The mission of parish charitable and social justice activities is the work of the Catholic Church, to share the love of God by performing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy and by promoting the Social teachings of the Church.

The corporal works of mercy call us to give drink to the thirsty, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the homeless, visit the sick and imprisoned, and to bury the dead. The spiritual works of mercy call us to convert the sinner, instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, console the sorrowful, bear wrongs patiently, forgive injuries, and to pray for the living and the dead. *CCC 2447*

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has provided us with seven principles of Catholic social teaching/doctrine to help us understand and carry out the Gospel mandate to love our neighbor. *Mt 22:36* These principles are ordered in a logical sequence that reflects the synthesis of faith and reason. The preeminent and first principle is the Life and Dignity of the Human Person. Once human life is fully embraced, welcomed and protected it is possible to focus on the second principle: Family, Community, and Participation. The family is the basic unit of society and rightly called the domestic church. The third principle builds on the first two, Rights and Responsibilities. Here we learn that in order for human dignity to be protected everyone needs to assure individual rights are protected and that individual responsibilities are fulfilled. Preferential Option for the Poor, the fourth principle, recognizes that the spiritually and materially poor have a special place in God’s heart. The fifth principle, The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers, builds upon the four prior principles. It teaches that we are called to be co-creators with God and that workers are to be treated with dignity. Solidarity, principle six, reminds us that we are our brothers’ keepers. The seventh and final principle is Care of God’s Creation. If we are living the first six principles it will be visible in our proper stewardship of God’s gift of creation.

John Paul II said Catholic Charities “exist for only one reason: to proclaim the Gospel.” He also stated that Catholic Charities “must help the faithful to think and act in full accord with the Gospel, overcoming all separation between faith and life, but must also offer a clear institutional testimony of the saving truth.” *Adlimina* visit of the bishops of Portland, Seattle, and Anchorage - June 24, 2004

ORGANIZATION

In response to the Magisterium and the path laid out by our bishop the Diocese has organized its charitable and social justice activities into two major forms overseen by the Department of Catholic Charities.

First are the Diocesan offices located in the Department of Catholic Charities:

Life Justice: Promotes pro-life issues and coordinates advocacy efforts at the federal, state, and local levels at the direction of our bishop and in conjunction with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Michigan Catholic Conference.

Family Life, Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Catholic Relief Services, Outreach Ministries, Disaster Relief: Marriage preparation and family enrichment, national and local anti-poverty programs, international relief, disasters relief, Befriender, Project Rachel, Bishop's Council on Alcohol and other Drugs, Separated and Divorced, etc.

Multicultural Evangelization: Ministry to ethnic and racial minorities, migrant workers, and transients (33 licensed migrant camps).

Restorative Justice: Ministry to prisons and jails (1 federal, 12 state, 10 county, and youth facilities).

Ministry to Persons with disAbilities: Retreats, CCD, physical accessibility, Braille, Faith on tape, etc.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing: Ministry to deaf and those with hearing problems. Organize Mass, CCD, retreats, trainings, signing, etc.

Natural Family Planning: Train married and engaged couples in Natural Family Planning methods (5 types). Teach introduction course as part of marriage preparation.

Secondly are the local Catholic Charities agencies:

Catholic Outreach (Flint)
Catholic Charities of Shiawassee and Genesee Counties (Flint and Owosso)
Catholic Charities of Jackson, Lenawee, and Hillsdale Counties (Adrian and Jackson)
Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County (Ann Arbor)
Livingston County Catholic Charities (Howell)
Cristo Rey Community Center (Lansing)
St. Vincent Catholic Charities (Lansing)

These agencies provide numerous programs that address the social, physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the poor and vulnerable in our communities. Each agency is part of the Church and performs charitable and social justice activities on behalf of the Diocesan Bishop. As such, they are extensions of the parishes and do what no single parish could accomplish. They are part of larger efforts including: Catholic Charities of Michigan, Catholic Charities USA, Caritas Internationales, and the Vatican Dicastery Cor Unum.

The charitable and social justice activities at the parish are most effective when they mirror the Diocesan structure. Members should be recruited to reflect the Diocesan offices. One or two parishioners should be recruited who have a heart for the work of each office, i.e. Life Justice, Family Life/CCHD/CRS/Outreach/Disaster Relief, Multicultural Evangelization, Restorative Justice, Ministry to Persons with disAbilities, Deaf/HH, or NFP. These individuals act as liaisons to the corresponding Diocesan office.

Each member, especially the leader(s), commits to participate in the ongoing educational and formational opportunities offered through the Department of Catholic Charities. They are also encouraged to participate in convenings organized for parish representatives by Diocesan Charities staff.

Parish charitable and social justice activities should also be linked with the local Catholic Charities agency(ies). Linkages provide parishes opportunities to participate in the charitable and social justice activities of the agencies and the agencies can provide professional support and assistance to parish based initiatives. Close collaboration between parish and agency not only enriches the work of both, it becomes a sign of unity and a source of strength.

ORGANIZING A PARISH COMMITTEE TO OVERSEE CHARITABLE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVITIES

Anyone interested in establishing organized parish based charitable and social justice activities needs to contact the pastor. The pastor can direct those interested to contact the Department of Catholic Charities. Diocesan staff can work with the parish to recruit parishioners to participate in the charitable and social justice work. Once sufficient members have been recruited the Diocese will provide a professional training along with a comprehensive orientation, job description, and organizational structure. Following the initial training, Diocesan staff will meet with the individuals representing particular offices/activities. Diocesan staff will continue to help recruit, form, and support parishioners and to enhance the ability of the parishioners to participate in the salvation of souls.

Parishioners engaged in the organized parish charitable and social justice activities will be introduced to the leadership and key staff of the local Catholic Charities agency(ies). A strong personal relationship will help the parish and agency carry out the Church's charitable and social justice work while helping the agency to better understand and meet the needs of the parish, parishioners, and community.

RESOURCES

Catholic social teaching/doctrine:

Rerum Novarum (On the Condition of Labor) -- Pope Leo XIII, 1891

Quadragesimo Anno (After Forty Years) -- Pope Pius XI, 1931

Mater et Magistra (Christianity and Social Progress) -- Pope John XXIII, 1961

Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth) -- Pope John XXIII, 1963

Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World) --
Vatican Council II, 1965

Populorum Progressio (On the Development of Peoples) -- Pope Paul VI, 1967

Octogesima Adveniens (A Call to Action) -- Pope Paul VI, 1971

Laborem Exercens (On Human Work) -- Pope John Paul II, 1981

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (On Social Concern) -- Pope John Paul II, 1987

Centesimus Annus (The Hundredth Year) -- Pope John Paul II, 1991

Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life) -- Pope John Paul II, 1995

Fides et Ratio (Faith and Reason) -- Pope John Paul II, 1998

Deus Caritas Est (God Is Love) -- Pope Benedict XVI, 2005

Spe Salvi (Saved by Hope) -- Pope Benedict XVI, 2007

Caritas in Veritate (Charity in Truth) -- Pope Benedict XVI 2009

The Catechism of the Catholic Church -- The Vatican, 1992

The Social Agenda -- Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2000

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church -- Pontifical Council for Justice and
Peace, 2005

The Participation of Catholics in Political Life -- Congregation for the Doctrine of the
Faith, 2002

DIOCESAN CONTACT INFORMATION:

Department of Catholic Charities
228 North Walnut Street
Lansing, MI 48933
(517) 342-2465

LOCAL CATHOLIC CHARITIES AGENCIES:

Catholic Charities of Jackson, Lenawee, and Hillsdale Counties
199 N. Broad Street 1000 East Porter
Adrian, MI 49221 Jackson, MI 49202
(517) 263-2191 (517) 782-2551

Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County
4925 Packard Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
(734) 971-9781

Livingston County Catholic Charities
2020 E. Grand River Ave., Suite 104
Howell, MI 48834
(517) 545-5944

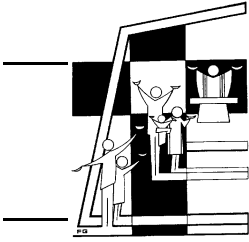
Catholic Outreach
509 North Grand Traverse
P.O. Box 815
Flint, MI 48501
(810) 234-4693

Catholic Charities of Shiawassee and Genesee Counties
901 Chippewa Street 120 West Exchange Street
Flint, MI 48503 Owosso, MI 48867
(810) 232-9950 (989) 723-8239

Cristo Rey Community Center
1717 North High Street
Lansing, MI 48906
(517) 372-4700

St. Vincent Catholic Charities
2800 West Willow Street
Lansing, MI 48917
(517) 323-4734

Worship Commission



GUIDELINES FOR PARISH WORSHIP COMMISSIONS

Diocese of Lansing

INTRODUCTION

“The wonderful works of God among the people of the Old Testament were a prelude to the work of Christ the Lord. He achieved his work of redeeming humanity and giving perfect glory to God, principally by the paschal mystery of his blessed passion, resurrection from the dead and glorious ascension, whereby ‘dying he destroyed our death and rising he restored our life’” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 5).

Christ continues to redeem God’s people and remains present in his Church, especially in its liturgical celebrations. With Christ as our high priest, we celebrate this same paschal mystery and offer thanks to God for the great gift of our salvation. All liturgy, then, is an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. “...Every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of his Body the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its effectiveness by the same title and to the same degree” (CSL 7; canon 834.1).

The word “liturgy” is derived from the Greek word, *litourgia* – “the work of the people.” Our Christian liturgy, however, is really God’s work. We cooperate in God’s work. At his invitation, we gather together to worship him in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24).

And in this worship, we both express and foster faith. “Faith grows when it is well expressed in celebration. Good celebrations foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations may weaken it” (*Sing to the Lord*, 5). Therefore, it is with the utmost pastoral concern that pastors and parish leaders must prepare liturgies that are in accord with the liturgical books and documents, bear fidelity to the rich heritage of the Church, and enable “the full, active and conscious participation of the assembly” (CSL 14, 42).

These goals are best served when dedicated persons are attentive to how liturgy is celebrated. Therefore, each parish should develop and maintain a Parish Worship Commission, who works in collaboration with the bishop and the pastor.

Liturgical actions are not private actions but celebrations of the Church itself, which is the “sacrament of unity,” namely, a holy people assembled and ordered under the bishops; therefore liturgical actions pertain to the whole body of the Church and manifest and affect it, but they affect the individual members of the Church in different ways according to the diversity of orders, functions and actual participation.

- Canon 837.1

THE ROLE OF THE BISHOP

The supervision of the sacred liturgy depends solely on the authority of the Church which resides in the Apostolic See and, in accord with the law, the diocesan bishop (canon 838).

First and foremost, the bishops exercise the office of sanctifying; they are high priests, principal dispensers of the mystery of God and moderators, promoters and custodians of the whole liturgical life of the church committed to them (canon 835.1) The faithful's life in Christ in some way is derived from him and depends on him (SC 41).

THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR

The presbyters also exercise this office; they are in fact sharers of the priesthood of Christ Himself so they are consecrated as his ministers under the authority of the bishop to celebrate divine worship and sanctify the people (canon 835.2)

THE ROLE OF THE PARISH WORSHIP COMMISSION

A Parish Worship Commission's role is advisory. With the bishop and pastor, it:

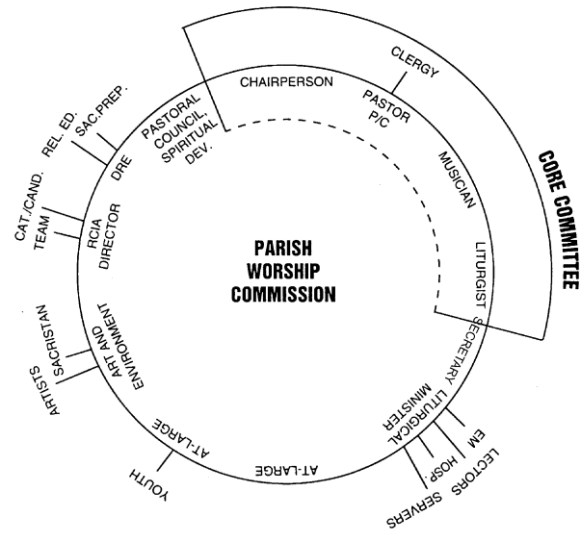
- assesses the needs of the worshipping assembly and regularly evaluates practices to see that those needs are being met.
- advises the pastor, pastoral coordinator, or sacramental minister on liturgical matters and the condition of liturgical spaces.
- provides direction for those who prepare liturgies. Then, under its leadership, others implement plans. The commission itself does not concern itself with installing the Advent wreath, purchasing the red geraniums for Pentecost, nor choosing hymns. Subcommittees may be established which utilize others' musical or artistic gifts.
- provides for the liturgical education of all parishioners, using various methods including speaker series, school and religious education curriculum, bulletin articles, and liturgical commentary, when appropriate;
- promotes the development of competent liturgical ministers (including those who bring the Eucharist to shut-ins) with regular communication and annual evenings of formation;
- with the pastor, it implements liturgical laws, universal norms and diocesan policies and directives (cf. canon 837.1);
- sets goals for the progress of the liturgical life of the parish;
- and helps the parish see the connection between worship and Christian living.

As an entity of the Parish Pastoral Council, it maintains regular communication with other parish commissions.

MEMBERSHIP AND STRUCTURE

The Commission should reflect the community which it serves. Its members, therefore, will be registered parishioners, active in the sacramental life of the Church, and representative of the general parish population.

Since the role of the presider is important in any liturgical celebration, and since one of the chief duties of a pastor is the faithful stewardship of the mysteries of God (SC 19), the pastor (or pastoral coordinator and sacramental minister) are *ex-officio* members of this Commission.



In addition, the Commission should include the:

- Director of Liturgy
- Director of Music
- Director of Religious Education,
- Director of Christian Initiation (or a representative of the RCIA Team)
- Art and Environment chairperson
- Sacristan
- a representative from each of the liturgical ministries, e.g., lectors, ushers, EMHC's, etc.
- a liaison from the parish's Spiritual Development Commission
- a liaison from the Pastoral Council
- and several at-large members, including youth

From these, the Commission will elect a chairperson who will lead meetings. A secretary, too, is elected or appointed; perhaps commission members will rotate the responsibility of recording discussions, evaluations, and consensus.

Initially, the pastor or pastoral coordinator may appoint parish members based on their experience, qualifications and compatibility. Later, the usual process of nomination or application, review, election or selection-by-lots will occur.

A fair, complete, and written job description should be available to each interested parishioner. Terms should not exceed three years with provision made for the orderly expiration of terms in varying years.

FORMATION AND TRAINING

The spiritual and liturgical formation of the commission must be thorough and ongoing. They should be conversant with the Liturgical Year, the Order of Mass, and the liturgical documents and books. Most notably, they should be familiar with the *Lectionary*, the *Sacramentary*, the sacramental rites, the Order of Christian Funerals, the Liturgy of the Hours, and the Book of Blessings.

The parish funds all their formation and training. This includes national conventions, diocesan conferences, and local workshops. In addition, they should have access to a resource library of liturgical books, documents, and periodicals. (Please see the resources in the bibliography that follows.)

MEETINGS

The Commission should meet monthly, though some liturgical seasons may require more frequent meetings. Prior to each meeting, a core committee – consisting of the pastor/pastoral coordinator, liturgist, music director, and chairperson – meets to set the agenda for the meeting.

Prayer should always be an integral part of every meeting. In addition, each meeting's agenda should include ongoing study and formation, a method of evaluating prior celebrations, discussion and future planning. The core committee should be open to the suggestions of the commission as well as individual parishioners (Canon 212 §2).

RESOURCES

The Diocesan Worship Commission, mandated by the Second Vatican Council (SC 45), advises the Bishop and the Office of Worship. It is pleased to act as a model and resource for parish commissions.

The Office of Worship offers on-site training sessions for parish commissions. It will provide a start-up package that includes prayer, reflection questions, a sample meeting agenda, sample budgets, sample job descriptions, and evaluation forms.

“The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time, it is the fount from which her power flows. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made children of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord’s Supper”

– Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 10.

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RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Second Vatican Council

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Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments

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- *Inter Oecumenici*, First Instruction on SC – General Principles for Carrying out the Liturgical Renewal (1964)
- *Treb abhinc annos* – Second Instruction on SC: Adaptations to the Order of Mass (1967)
- *Liturgicae instraurationes*, Central Role of the Bishop in the Renewal of the Liturgy (1970)
- *Varietatis legitimae*, Inculturation and the Roman Liturgy: Fourth Instruction for the Right Application of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy, nn. 37-40 (1994)
- *Liturgiam Authenticam* (Fifth Instruction on the Use of Vernacular Languages in the Publication of the Books of the Roman Liturgy (March 28, 2001)
- *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, Instruction on the Eucharist: On Certain Matters to be Observed or to be Avoided Regarding the Most Holy Eucharist (April 23, 2004)

Papal Constitutions and Encyclicals

- *Fidei Depositum*, On the Publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (October 11, 1992)
- *Dies Domini*: On Keeping the Lord's Day Holy (Pope John Paul II, May 31, 1998)
- *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, On the Eucharist and Its Relationship to the Church (Pope John Paul II, April 17, 2003)
- *Sacramentum Caritatis*, On the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission (2-17-07)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- Part One: The Profession of Faith
- Part Two: The Celebration of the Christian Mystery
- Part Three: Life in Christ
- Part Four: Christian Prayer

Documents Which Accompany the Liturgical Books

- General Instruction of the Roman Missal (2002)
- Lectionary for Mass: Introduction (1969, 1981, 1998)
- Introduction to the Book of the Gospels (2000)
- General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar (1969)
- Christian Initiation, General Introduction (1969, 1974)
- Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (1972; emended 1974; U.S. adaptation 1988; excerpts)
- National Statutes for the Catechumenate (1986)
- Order of Christian Funerals: General Introduction (1985, 1989)
- Directory for Masses with Children (1973)
- Ceremonial of Bishops (1984)
- Dedication of a Church and an Altar, Chapter Introductions (1978, 1989)
- Book of Blessings: General Introduction (1989)
- General Instructions of the Liturgy of the Hours (1971)
- Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest (1988)
- Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest: Introduction (2007)

From the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

- Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship (2007)
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- Order for Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist (1992)
- Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism (1993)
- God's Mercy Endures Forever: Guidelines on the Presentation of Jews and Judaism in Catholic Preaching (1988)
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- Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities (1995)
- Fulfilled in Your Hearing: The Homily in the Sunday Assembly (1982)

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Untener, Bishop Kenneth. *Sunday Liturgy Can be Better*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1980.

RECOMMENDED PERIODICALS

BCL Newsletter	Committee on Divine Worship 202-541-3060 www.usccb.org/liturgy
Pastoral Liturgy (formerly Rite)	Liturgy Training Publications 1-800-933-1800 orders@ltp.org
Pastoral Music	National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM) 240-247-3000 www.npm.org
Today's Liturgy/ <i>Liturgia Canción</i>	Oregon Catholic Press 1-800-LITURGY (548-8749) www.ocp.org
Worship	The Liturgical Press 1-800-858-5450 www.litpress.org

Approved by:
Most Reverend Earl Boyea
Bishop of Lansing
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adapted from a revision by
Most Reverend Carl F. Mengeling
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adapted from an original approved by
Most Reverend Kenneth J. Povish
July 1993

Prepared by:
Office of Worship
300 W. Ottawa St.
Lansing, MI 48933-1577
(517) 342-2480