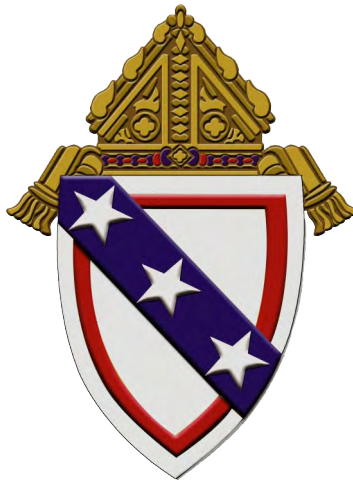


*CALLED
TO
SERVE*



Diocesan Guidelines for
Parish Pastoral Councils

Fourth Edition
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF RICHMOND
Revised May 2010

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end. The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over.

So during supper, fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Master, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well."

Jesus said to him, "Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed, for he is clean all over; so you are clean, but not all." For he knew who would betray him; for this reason, he said, "Not all of you are clean."

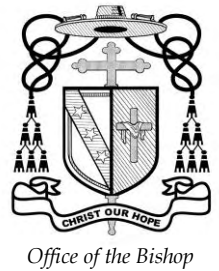
When he had washed their feet, and put his garments back on, and reclined at table again he said to them,

"Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

-John 13:1-15

Diocese of Richmond

Pastoral Office • 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond, Virginia 23294-4201 • Phone: (804) 359-5661 • Fax: (804) 358-9159



My dear friends in Christ,

I am pleased to present the revised Parish Pastoral Council norms, "Called to Serve."

For many years, "Called to Serve" has helped pastors and parish lay leaders in the Diocese of Richmond to form and guide parish lay leadership. I am happy to issue this fourth edition as we continue to move forward on our journey of faith. This fourth edition is operative for all of the parishes of the diocese.

It is my hope that these guidelines will provide you with an excellent tool for developing a skilled and well-formed leadership team for your faith community. These revised guidelines provide suggestions for promoting communication, collaboration and cooperation in the consultative body that serves a valuable advisory role to the pastor. It emphasizes the importance of prayer and spiritual formation as central to the work of your parish council.

I pray that our parishes and parish clusters will continue to thrive in all areas of life - in Word, Worship, Community and Service.

With thanksgiving for all of the gifts you bring to your leadership in the parishes of the Diocese of Richmond, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Our Lord,

+ Francis X. DiLorenzo

Bishop of Richmond

Summer 2010

Preface

Parish councils in every parish of the diocese invite the laity to become active participants in the leadership of the Church. The councils utilize a managerial style, leading to the use of parliamentary procedures, bylaws, and the adoption of constitutions. The document “Called to Serve” is provided to assist pastors in the development of their parish pastoral councils.

As the Church of Richmond grows and develops, “Called to Serve” is revised and updated to serve our current needs. It has been more than a decade since the last revision. “Called to Serve IV” is newly revised to reflect emerging structures of a growing church and to reference newly developed models of parish working relationships.

“Called to Serve” is a document for all parishes of the Diocese of Richmond. It provides principles on which to base decisions and actions. This new edition envisions the parish as a welcoming Christian community that enables all to reflect Jesus in their lives at home and in the broader community, and suggests structures to support the vision.

Collaboration is to be operative. Ultimately, the pastor is responsible for the parish. The challenge is to respect the Spirit's presence throughout the total parish community and the call of the Spirit to collaboration. Because each parish is a unique entity, no one model will fit each one. The leadership of each parish will have to determine how best to organize its leadership body. The guidelines provided in Part II of this guide can be used as a starting point for those parishes that need them. Basic principles are valid for all parishes no matter how each chooses to structure its leadership body. Among these basic principles are the following:

- Members of the parish pastoral council are to be selected by parishioners.
- Those selected must have the approval and be appointed by the pastor.
- Whenever a new pastor is appointed to a parish, the standing councils (both pastoral and finance) cease. It is the responsibility of the new pastor to reconstitute the existing councils or conduct a new election of members within one year of his appointment.
- Parishioners must understand the work/task of the council.
- A collaborative relationship will exist between the pastor and the council.
- In all matters, the approval of the pastor is necessary.
- The council, with the pastor will function as a pastoral, visioning and enabling group.
- Parish ministries of Word, Worship, Community, and Service, continue to be devoted to worship and prayer, peace and justice, Catholic education, parish community life, ecumenical activity, and outreach to the greater community.
- Participation in ecumenical and interfaith opportunities will be supported and encouraged.
- Parish pastoral council leadership will become knowledgeable about other parishes in their LPA (local planning area).
- Parish pastoral councils will be open to emerging forms of partnering as parish cluster relationships develop.

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PART I

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Introduction

“Called to Serve,” the fourth edition, invites council members and their pastors to lead their parishes in these challenging times. We are called to be a Catholic Christian community that is committed to a ministry of service, and we discover new ways to do that as the 21st century unfolds.

Signs of the Times

A parish pastoral council is uniquely called to read the signs of the times - to call the parish and the larger community to ongoing conversion, to put on Christ. As noted in “We’ve Come This Far by Faith,” the Church of Richmond recognizes these signs of the times:

- The frantic pace of life
- A decline in the number of clergy and a sharp increase in the Catholic population
- The tension between the values of our faith and the values of our culture
- The tensions within the Church
- The diversity of our population
- The challenge of new communication technologies
- Terrorism, war and violence. (p4, WCTFBF).

The council has the responsibility to learn about the parish community, to discern its faith life and to help all to respond to needs as they identify those who are materially and spiritually impoverished, those who are oppressed and neglected.

The council should become informed about other parishes within their LPA (Local Planning Area) and be open to collaborative ventures with them.

When parishes are clustered, councils should be open to developing structures to serve all of the parishes within the cluster. Cluster councils might be considered as a viable option. The principles of these council guidelines would apply to the formation of joint or cluster councils.

Advisory Capacity

A parish pastoral council, unlike the parish finance council, is not mandated by Canon Law. The primary role of the parish pastoral council is advisory, making recommendations to the pastor about the spiritual well-being of the parish. As a “visionary” council, it concerns itself with where the parish wants to be in three to five years and not with the administrative aspects of running the parish.

The parish pastoral council does not run the parish, or supervise its daily work. Ultimately that responsibility falls on the shoulders of the pastor. It should be prophetic, calling the community and its leaders to grow in faith together and to respond to the needs of the people.

Structured Leadership

Every parish should have some structured leadership group. No matter how a parish forms and names this group, it should reflect on the following:

- **Vision**
Leaders seek God's vision rather than their own for their community. Visionary people grow through knowledge of Scripture, and reflection on the Word helps them to discern what God calls them to be and to do. They must discern God's vision and do God's work.
- **Focus On Love**
"Love of God" and "love of neighbor as yourself" are primary for a "successful" parish pastoral council. An abundant and inclusive love takes priority over order and structure.
- **Formation in the Catholic faith**
Christian formation is the lifelong process of forming baptized believers in the image of Christ. For council members, formation and spiritual growth should be a priority. A nourishing environment of prayer and reflection should be built into the council's calendar year. Days of reflection, an annual council retreat, actively serving on a parish pastoral council can be a positive formation experience.
- **Gospel Values**
Each decision, each program, each policy that a council considers must be evaluated in the light of the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church. Respectful dialogue is essential.
- **Openness**
God speaks to us in "many and diverse ways" (Hebrews 1:1). Vibrant parish pastoral councils are open to hearing the Spirit speak in the Scriptures and the living voice of the Spirit leading the Church of Jesus. New forms of communication and ways of gathering responses from the entire community should be developed and encouraged.
- **Ministry Beyond The Parish**
Vatican II directs the parish outward beyond its walls, beyond its registered members, to the wider community. The parish pastoral council must hear the cries of the poor, the oppressed, the imprisoned, the illiterate, and the least of its sisters and brothers. (Mt. 25) As Catholics we are gathered to be sent. The council recognizes that kingdom building should be in cooperation with other faith communities to bring the Good News into the communities where we live.
- **The Call To Holiness**
The call to holiness is the call to wholeness. Parish pastoral councils today realize that Christians are called to live lives that are holy and whole, not two separate lives, one "in church" and one "in the world." *"It used to be said that we live in the world and go to church. Evangelization calls us to live in the church and go out to the world."*

-Bishop Walter F. Sullivan., December 1995

Mission

The Mission of the Church

The mission of the Church is entrusted to the people of God, to all its members. Each according to his or her vocation is sent to preach the Gospel in deed and word.

A parish does not exist in isolation from other parishes. The parish is connected structurally and institutionally to the larger Church through the diocese, i.e., the local church, under the leadership of the bishop, and through him, the universal Church. Thus, the parish shares with the universal Church in its mission to proclaim the message of God's love, of Christ's work, of the Reign of God which "is at hand" (Mk 1:15).

Sharing our Vision

- Through baptism, we are made one in Jesus Christ and called to dialogue with this world so cherished by its Creator.
- Firmly rooted in the tradition of the Church, we are not to be silent sentinels guarding a special enclave, but listeners, learners and teachers in a world often beautiful and despoiled, holy and ravaged by sin and violence, rich and blighted by poverty and powerlessness.
- In company with other believers, we seek to be leaven and light, revealing God's presence, participating in God's work, discerning the plan of salvation in the lives of people, particularly the marginalized.
- Faithful to the Spirit of God, we are called to renew the structures of our Church and world and to order our lives:
 - to be a voice of prophecy and a hand of justice
 - to offer inclusive hospitality and unfailing compassion
 - to empower the powerless and to liberate captives
- We believe that the reign of God is "close at hand" when:
 - love grows and hatred diminishes
 - life triumphs and death is vanquished
 - justice increases and oppression declines
 - peace prevails and violence wanes

- "A Shared Vision for the Nineties," Catholic Diocese of Richmond, 1989

Values

Based on our collective experience, the Diocese of Richmond clearly values:

- Worship and Liturgy
 - Transmitting our faith tradition to the next generation
 - Action for justice and peace in the larger society
 - A style of ministry that is both creative and collaborative
 - Lay participation in the mission of the church
 - Inclusion of all people in the church
 - Community
- "We've Come this Far by Faith," Catholic Diocese of Richmond, 2002, 2005*

Mission of the Parish

The parish does not exist for itself, but to participate in the mission of Jesus which is the salvation of the whole of humanity and proclaiming the reign of God has begun. It is called to share responsibility for this mission as it is shaped by its own particular circumstances. A small inner-city parish may have a very different specific mission than a large, suburban parish. Yet, the mission of each is set within the larger context of the diocesan mission statement.

In 1986, "Called to Serve" stated, "the parish is the ordinary structure chosen by the Church to carry out its mission of proclaiming the reign of God has begun. The parish fulfills this mission by being a dynamic community of believers in union with the bishop. This community celebrates its Catholic faith in active worship, lives out its faith in the daily lives of its people and serves people in need. The parish enables all members of the community to grow in their relationship with Jesus and with one another." (p. 3) Their pastor is a vital and essential part of this process. He lives in the community of his parishioners and nurtures the community in both word and sacrament.

Each parish is different - a unique manifestation of the church. The uniqueness stems from its size, locale, history, leadership, people, and its images of church and of God. The parish mission statement will reflect this individuality, while acknowledging its commonality with other parishes and its place in the diocese. Care should be given to developing awareness of the parish in its relationships to others within its local planning area (LPA), as well as its relationship to the diocese.

The parish is where Catholics are first brought into the church as members and where they live out their communion with the Lord and with each other. It is the practical embodiment of the church as the People of God in communion with God. A person's faith, first planted and nourished in the family, is further nourished and sustained through the parish community under the direction of the pastor. Through the parish community, Catholics come to discover their gifts and recognize God's call to use these gifts in the service of others.

“Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, present day Catholics are called to know Christ in the breaking of the bread, and with hearts burning with joy, to share the glad tidings of new life in Christ. Today’s disciples are called upon to faithfully proclaim the Word in this day, in this time, in this place.”

- *We Walk by Faith*, Catholic Diocese of Richmond, 2006

The Parish Pastoral Council

The Parish Pastoral Council

The parish pastoral council continuously develops and articulates a deep and mature understanding of the identity and purpose of the parish. It reflects the unique personality of the parish as it evolves, using the mission statement developed by the pastor and parishioners.

The pastor and parish pastoral council strives to ensure that the parish is carrying out its stated mission and that the pastoral needs of the parish are met. These include Word, Worship, Community and Service. The pastor and council enable and encourage the broadest participation of parishioners in evangelizing, both within the parish and the larger community. It accepts the responsibility of hearing all voices in seeking to discern the will of God in the local community using scripture and the voice of the Church as their guide.

Because parishes are dynamic communities, flexibility is essential in the ministry of the parish pastoral council. Flexibility means "openness to all present reality." People change, council membership changes, staffs change, ministries change, and the larger community changes. For example, we see an increase of other Catholic cultures in our parishes, our growing ethnic and cultural diversity. The continuing implementation of the vision considers:

- The personality and style of the pastor, members of the council, the parish staff, and other parish leaders;
- The ministries that are in place;
- The uniqueness of the parish;
- The relationship of the parish in its cluster or LPA;
- The needs of the larger community.

The parish mission statement contains guiding words, which are kept current, adjusted to reflect changes in the makeup of the parish, the spiritual needs of parishioners, the relationship to other parishes in the local planning area, and the changing needs of the larger community. As always, this mission statement should reflect the best insights of scripture and the living voice of Jesus' Church. Members of the parish pastoral council are expected to model living and working as followers of Jesus who share faith and strive to develop mutually supportive relationships. Therefore, whenever a new pastor is appointed to a parish, the standing councils (both pastoral and finance) cease. It is the responsibility of the new pastor to reconstitute the existing councils or conduct a new election of members within one year of his appointment.

The Call of the Baptized

Faith and Baptism call each Catholic to his or her unique role in the Church and in the world. The role of membership on the parish pastoral council is a call to exercise servant leadership. Through Baptism, all Christians share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal mission of Christ. This sharing calls each person to take responsibility for the mission of the Church in the world. All the gifts necessary to further the mission of Jesus are present in the community of believers. St. Paul states that there are a variety of gifts but the same Spirit, a variety of service but the same Lord, and a variety of works but the same God who inspires everyone. To each person is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (I Cor 12:4-7)



A Parish Pastoral Council Is Called To Be:

Advisory

- A small faith community, advising the pastor.
- Spiritually alive and close-knit without being exclusive.
- Prophetic in the scriptural sense.
- An opportunity for members' ongoing formation and conversion.
- A witness to the Gospel.
- Aware of and living in God's presence.
- Pastoral, that is, dedicated to the whole community.

Open and Inclusive

- Unified in Jesus in its diversity.
- An initiating and enabling source that aids God in transforming the parish.
- An informed and open communication system in the parish.
- Knowledgeable about scripture, contemporary issues, the local community and church.



Essential Characteristics of a Parish Pastoral Council

1. A parish council is advisory to the Pastor.

Members of the council strive to bring the voices, needs and concern of the entire faith community to its work. Under the leadership of their pastor, they work in concert with one another to serve the needs of the whole parish.

2. A parish council is prayerful.

A council is not simply a group of people who pray together, but a group who prays in order to discern the will of God for the parish community. A portion of each parish council meeting should be set aside for quality prayer and formation. Prayer and formation take place within the parish council meetings and at retreats or days of reflection.

3. A parish council is pastoral.

Through Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist all Christians are called to be Christ in the world. The parish council tries to provide appropriate resources and methods to serve the people of the parish as they engage in the mission of the Church.

4. A parish council is representative.

Each council member endeavors to listen to parishioners and then faithfully present their concerns, ideas and questions to the parish council. The parish council is a representative body rather than a body of representatives. The council strives to represent varied aspects of the parish life so that faith needs are met.

5. A parish council is discerning.

The council functions in an atmosphere of prayer and openness to the Holy Spirit in order to become and remain grounded in faith and responsive to the Church's mission. Trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit, council members set aside their individual opinions and prejudices and listen to one another and to other parishioners.

6. A parish council is prophetic.

The parish council must have the courage and foresight to set the direction for the parish community, challenging the parish to grow in response to the gospel. Council members should read the signs of the times and interpret the path the parish should follow on its faith journey, communicating this forthrightly to the pastor. The pastor for his part should respond and not ignore the advice.

7. A parish council is enabling.

The council endeavors to foster the faith growth of individual Catholics of the parish and the broader community.

8. A parish council is collaborative.

The parish council challenges its members, the parish staff, committees, organizations and other groups in the parish to work together. A clear, common understanding of the parish's mission fosters collaborative actions. All parishes must seek ways to collaborate with the diocese, other parishes in their cluster or LPA, their community organizations, and their congregations for the common good of the broader Church.

Operating Principles

Collaboration

Collaboration calls forth mutual respect and an acknowledgment of others' gifts in the completion of a task or project. It involves mutual empowerment and teamwork.

The pastor or deacon and council members participate fully in the process of reaching consensus, determining the best action or recommendation to be taken, while respecting the role of the pastor as the final legitimate decision maker.

Empowerment

Everyone, by virtue of Baptism, has the right and duty to participate in the Church's mission. The council affirms the laity in their family life and careers and in their working and living in the world by providing formation opportunities and support through the activities of the parish. It should seek ways to recognize the shared wisdom and gifts of the laity and to involve them in an adult, responsible way in the mission and ministry of the parish.

Subsidiarity

The council assigns various concerns, issues, and ordinary business to the appropriate committee, group, or individual with the competency to deal with the task or subject and is able to assume the responsibility to do so. The council also recognizes its relationship to the Pastor, and his final authority.

Conflict Management

Conflict is a fact of life and the Church has its share of it. If ignored, conflict can be destructive; but conflict can also be a means of growth. It can be a healthy sign, a source of creative energy. Principles for conflict management emphasize respect for one another's views, openness, patience, and a pastoral attitude. The council is no place for power struggles and control by individuals. Conversation is always preferred to confrontation. If conflict is disruptive to parish life and is unable to be resolved locally, the Office of the Vicar General and the Vicar for Priests may be asked to intervene.

Jesus said to his disciples: "If your brother sins against you go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell the Church. If he refuses to listen even to the Church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector. Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again, amen, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Mt 18:15-20

(See Appendix I and J for additional Conflict Resolution Resources.)

Planning and Policy Development

The council's work is planning, policy development, and evaluation, not administration. The council needs to keep its focus on the spiritual well-being and future of the parish. The pastor, staff, committees, and organizations deal with the administrative specifics.

Matters of administration should not involve the council. When leadership falters in areas of administration, the council does not fill in, but seeks out solutions to the problem by contacting the Office of the Vicar General and/or the Vicar for Clergy.

Relationships

The pastor calls the pastoral council into being. Whenever a new pastor is appointed to a parish, the standing councils (both pastoral and finance) cease. It is the responsibility of the new pastor to reconstitute the existing councils or conduct a new election of members within one year of his appointment. By canon law, the pastor is the president of the council. He may delegate the actual work and functioning of the council to its officers.

The role of the council, together with the pastor is to vision, to plan, and to develop policy for the parish and make recommendations to the pastor.

The members of the parish staff and committees, out of their expertise, resource the council in the visioning process and in goal setting and policy formulation.

Keys for Working Together Successfully

- Clarification of leadership styles that are operative within the group
- Clarification of expectations and of desired changes
- Periodic critique of the climate of the group to surface areas that might be improved



Spiritual Leadership

Christian Leadership

Christian leadership is servant leadership. The leadership example of Jesus is one that truly is loving. He accepts people where they are. He is invitational, a gentle but firm servant. In the words of Jesus, "the Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve and to give his own life in ransom for many." (Mt. 20:28)

Parish Pastoral Council Formation

An effective pastoral council must have a spirit of trust and acceptance among its members. Developing this spirit is not instantaneous. Groups take time to form - and groups usually go through a number of stages. (See Appendix J for insights on group formation.) Welcoming, introductions of all members and orientation to the work of the council help to form a group more quickly. A clear understanding of roles and expectations is important. Additional resources are found in the appendix material of this book. Facilitators who can assist with the formation process can be recommended by contacting the Pastoral Center staff or the diocesan pastoral council.

Collaborative Leadership

No one person or small group of persons holds all the truths in its grasp. A leadership group must consider that the truth can come from anyone. A collaborative style of leadership is more the norm for the People of God than an authoritarian style. This concept suggests more open and flexible leadership structures, where people can be called at different times to provide expertise or a different insight. The Spirit of God works through many people. Parish leaders should draw on the collective wisdom and expertise of parishioners while seeking to implement the parish mission.

Developing Spiritual Leadership

Developing the spiritual leadership of a parish council involves the following factors:

- **Developing a habit of praying together** (See Appendix A)
- **Carrying out the parish mission** - A parish mission statement expresses what the parish is to become and why it exists. It is a living document changing as the parish changes.
- **Learning more about the culture of the community** - Learning about the people, customs and traditions of the parish provides a wealth of understanding about the parish community and the larger community in order to set direction.
- **Learning more about the mission of the Church** - What is the history of the church, diocese, parish, local community? What are the current issues for this community today? What do the Gospel, church documents, etc. have to say that can guide the decisions? Vatican II documents, papal encyclicals, the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the USCCB and NCCB documents provide much for discussion and formation.
- **Developing leadership and group skills** - Councils should understand how groups work (and why some don't). They should develop skills for working as a group, such as facilitating, listening, and planning; and they should discover and utilize processes and procedures to assist the functioning of the group.

Retreat or Day of Prayer

A pastoral council retreat or day of recollection shortly after new members are selected can lay the ground work for a close working relationship in the coming year. Members need to have an opportunity to speak with and get to know each other, and to acknowledge that God is present in a very special way when the council meets.

Retreats provide a needed time for community building and "bonding" as a group. It is especially important to include new members in this formation process. Ideally this experience will be repeated during the year.

Many parishes use a special place away for their council retreat. The diocesan retreat centers are ideal places for reflection and team building. The idea is to move away from the physical property of the parish in order to be truly "on retreat." The Gospel tells of significant times when Jesus used a period of retreat and reflection and these serve as our model. The mountains, the sea, the lakeside, the home of a friend are all settings for retreat. Listed below and also on the diocesan web site (www.richmonddiocese.org) are the contacts for diocesan retreat centers available for days of reflection as well as overnight retreats.

Retreat Centers

Abingdon – Jubilee House Retreat Center

822 East Main Street, Abingdon, 24210-4415. Phone (276) 619-0919.

Hampton – Holy Family Retreat Center

1414 N. Mallory Street, Hampton, 23663-1344. Phone (757) 722-3997.

Lynchburg – Tabor Retreat Center

2125 Langhorne Road, Lynchburg, 24501-1423. Phone (434) 846-6475.

Montpelier – Shalom House

P. O. Box 196, Montpelier, 23192-0196. Phone (804) 883-6149.

Richmond – Mary, Mother of the Church Abbey, Retreat and Conference Center

12829 River Road, Richmond, 23233. Phone (804) 784-3508.

Roanoke – Madonna House

828 Campbell Avenue, SW, Roanoke, 24016-3551. Phone (540) 343-8464.

Smithfield – The Well Retreat Center

18047 Quiet Way, Smithfield, 23430-6411. Phone (757) 255-2366.



Vision

Vision is the prerequisite for leading into the future. It is based on an awareness of the teachings, traditions and experience of both the local and universal Church as they are carried out in the context of prayer and spiritual growth. Shared vision is the process in which we are called together to discern and to witness to God's purposeful activity. Members provide Christian witness as they participate in the blessings of the kingdom. They celebrate the hopes of the kingdom, while engaging in the tasks of the kingdom.

Councils need to express a clear and shared vision in order to participate in God's vision. With a dynamic and intentional vision, the church will be proactive and not reactive to the needs of the kingdom.

Vision gives a sense of purpose and meaning, providing focus, energy, and willingness to risk. It enables the church to point the way into the future that God envisions for all of us.

Discernment is an important part of vision. Four characteristics of discernment are:

- Historical - faithful to the tradition, but innovative in interpreting tradition in light of the current situation
- Communal - takes place within the context of the life of the community of faith
- Experiential - benefits can only be gained through participation in the practice - we are and we become God's people as we engage in the discernment of God's Will
- Dynamic - the more you practice discernment, the more you are empowered to engage in that practice in creative and faithful ways

Discernment requires the skills of listening and hearing, sharing and testing, and studying and reflecting. It also requires processes that allow everyone to share what they believe.

Becoming a discerning body takes deliberate steps:

1. Grounding in Study and Reflection

Through group study of scripture and our religious heritage (history), members can become more aware of God's mission or purpose within human history. This can lead to a better understanding of the Church's role in witnessing to and proclaiming God's redemptive activity.

2. Cultivating a Discerning Community

The process of surfacing and clarifying personal visions as a shared vision is more important than the final product. We must facilitate open, creative, and substantial dialogue among all parishioners. All visions must be brought into dialogue with the biblical witness, or conflict will ensue. A shared vision is a collaboration of praying, dreaming, thinking, and listening to one another. It represents more of an alignment than an agreement.

3. Taking time to build consensus

A vision of the future is thoughtful, faithful and truly shared. This takes time and requires reflection, formation and discussion. A vision must be explored for its implications for the future.

A Vision of Church - God's Vision

A vision of church looks beyond the parish boundaries and calls everyone in the parish or parish cluster to be signs of God's presence in the world. Members should be seeking God's vision for the parish or cluster, not that of any individual or group. The only way to seek God's vision is to involve God. Faithful seeking helps discover God's vision for ourselves and the world.

"Where there is no vision, the people perish."

- Proverbs 29:18

Part II

A Practical Guide for Parish Pastoral Councils



Membership

Membership Criteria

Canon 512 addresses membership on Diocesan Pastoral Councils. The parish pastoral council should adapt Canon 512 to its own situation in its constitution. Active registered members of the parish are eligible for membership on the council.

Based on the emerging Priority Mission of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), goals and objectives have been documented that outline a strategic plan for the Church. Regarding pastoral council member selection, the identified cultural diversity goal and objective, outlined below, shall be incorporated into the member selection process to ensure that council representation reflects the plurality of viewpoints, ethnicity and economic reality of the parish community.

Goal: To include diverse cultures in the life and leadership of dioceses, parishes and other Catholic organizations in the United States.

Objective: Invite all cultures in the Catholic community to collaborate in addressing issues and developing initiatives that affect the whole Church, including people with special pastoral needs (e.g., language, migrant workers, and military).

Also, the members should be aware of the challenges of “these times” in our world, as they relate to the parish mission, the people of the parish, the larger community and social conditions. To assist the pastoral council with these challenges, members shall review in its entirety the Priority Mission of the USCCB. This document can be assessed on the Diocesan website: www.richmonddiocese.org.

The members of the parish pastoral council are chosen by the parish through a selection, election or discernment process. (See Appendix C for possible selections methods). If a representative cross-section of the parish is not obtained through the process, the pastor, in consultation with the council, may appoint two or more people to the council. Young people are important and they should be encouraged to serve on the council. Parish committees may be represented on the council, informing the council of committee work and sharing in the visionary work of the council; or they may take an active role in council affairs by:

- Presenting their goals, programs and needs to the council through their participation in the established parish planning & budgeting process.
- Submitting reports to council as needed, for clarification or to raise new challenges that have surfaced in their area.

Each council should discern which model best serves its parish.

Term of Membership

Length of terms for all council members should be at least three years for effective knowledgeable work. Ideally, one-third of council should either rotate off or be discerned for one additional term.

Role of the Parish Staff

The pastor and the parochial vicar(s) are ex-officio members of the parish pastoral council. Other parish staff members "who share in the pastoral care of the parish by virtue of their office are encouraged to attend council meetings as resource persons. (Canon 536, #1) In the visioning and planning process, the council expresses views on the ministerial efforts of the parish. However, the council refrains from discussion or evaluation of staff performance. Staff hiring, supervision, salaries and termination are responsibilities of the pastor and are not delegated to the council.

Excerpts from Canons 512 and 536, the Code of Canon Law

Canon 512 –

1. The pastoral council consists of Christian faithful who are in full communion with the Catholic Church, clerics, and members of institutes of consecrated life and especially lay persons, who are designated in a manner determined by the diocesan bishop.
2. The Christian faithful who are appointed to the pastoral council are to be so selected that the entire portion of the people of God which constitutes the diocese is truly reflected, with due regard for the diverse regions, social conditions and professions of the diocese as well as the role which they have in the apostolate, either as individuals or in conjunction with others.
3. No one except Christians of proven faith, good morals and outstanding prudence are to be appointed to the pastoral council.

Canon 536 –

1. After the diocesan bishop has listened to the Presbyteral Council, and if he judges it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish; the pastor presides over it, and through it the Christian faithful along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity.
2. This pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop.

(The Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition, Translation prepared under the auspices of the Canon Law Society of America, CLSA, Washington DC, 1983.)

Internal Functions

In order for the council to function properly, individuals and/or groups should be assigned to carry out certain internal activities for the council:

Executive Function

Each pastor together with the parish pastoral council should determine the makeup and responsibilities of its executive committee. Ordinarily, this committee will have three to five members including the pastor, the chairperson, and the vice-chairperson of the council.

- The chairperson should call and chair the meetings of the executive committee.
- The committee develops the agenda for council meetings and conducts such business as the council assigns to it.
- Between regular meetings, when the need arises, the committee acts in the name of the council.

Faith Formation for Council Members

- The parish pastoral council may assign the responsibility for its own faith formation to an individual or group.
- The responsibilities of this person or group include arranging the council retreat and helping council members and others prepare prayer services and/or formation experiences for council meetings.
- Formation of parish pastoral council members should begin as a part of the discernment and selection process.
- An annual retreat or day of recollection shortly after new members come to the group can lay the ground work for developing the spiritual flavor of the group.
- In addition to the retreat, a day of recollection halfway through the council year is extremely valuable.

Selection-Discernment of Members

Each parish pastoral council should establish a process for selection - discernment of new council members. This responsibility includes publicly educating all parishioners to the role of the parish pastoral council as well as planning, scheduling, and implementing the selection process. (See Appendix C for a *suggested* process.)

The council shall provide copies (or access to copies through the internet) of “Called to Serve” and other pertinent information to persons who are to be nominated/selected before the final selection. It shall insure that these persons know what the council role is and what is expected of members. Candidates should be informed about their potential role prior to their selection. New members should be welcomed and made to feel part of the council as soon as they arrive.

Parish Ministries

A parish needs small groups of people with similar interests and skills to carry out the specific work of the parish, along lines set by its mission statement and long-range planning. Whether these groups are called committees, working groups, task forces, ministries or whatever other term -- it is important that their work, area of expertise, and responsibility be clearly stated and understood by the group itself, the council, and the parish community.

The operation of a parish normally includes, but is not limited to the following distinct Ministry areas: **Word, Worship, Community, and Service**. Working committee groups serving these areas include Worship, Christian Formation, Justice and Peace, Community Life, Stewardship and Administration. A finance council is to be operative in every parish as well as a school board where appropriate.

Worship

This committee is responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating parish prayer and worship in accordance with diocesan policies and directives. The importance of liturgical celebrations requires that the pastor as well as other relevant persons participate in planning. Resources for the parish worship committee and personal prayer are available through the Office of Worship. See: <http://www.richmonddiocese.org/worship/index.htm>

Christian Formation

This committee is responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating parish religious formation at all age levels according to the needs of the parish and of the wider community in accordance with the educational policies of the Diocese of Richmond. Resources for parish Religious education committee, parish catechists, and adult formation leaders are available on the diocesan office of Christian Formation webpage: <http://www.richmonddiocese.org/ocf/index.htm>

Justice and Peace

This committee plans, implements and evaluates the social justice ministry of the parish. It helps the parish to meet the needs of the poor and oppressed, both locally and globally; to reflect on the Gospel's social teaching and on the underlying causes of social problems (in collaboration with Christian Formation and Worship); and to transform social structures through legislative advocacy, peacemaking, and other efforts. This ministry encourages parishioners to build a culture of life through their family, work and citizenship. Resources are available to this committee through the diocesan web site and through the Virginia Catholic Conference, and in the document, "Justice: Following Christ in Charity and Justice," the Office of Justice and Peace, Catholic Diocese of Richmond, 2008, and on the internet www.richmonddiocese.org, which contains numerous reproducible resources for parish use. Parish Pastoral Councils are encouraged to use any of these resources in their visioning for parish mission and ministry.

Parish Community Life

This committee is responsible for promoting the spirit of community in the parish. This includes consistent and planned efforts to strengthen relationships among all parishioners to foster a truly hospitable atmosphere. The committee is particularly concerned with reaching out to new and inactive members, and involving them in parish activities.

Administration

This committee is responsible for the smooth operation of the parish and for the care of the parish facilities, including care and upkeep of parish buildings and grounds. Administration should provide support for all the other ministries of the parish. One key task of administration therefore should be encouraging or guiding the stewardship program within the parish (See Appendix G for Parish Stewardship Process). Stewardship of our gifts enables the parish and the ministries within the parish to achieve their goals. The pastor, in consultation with the pastoral council, may assign other functions to this committee as circumstances require.

Formation for Ministry

The parish should regularly seek new people for service on committees while meeting the needs for continuity through experienced members. Orientation of new committee members as well as a process for the development of the knowledge and skills they need to function properly should be provided. Prayer and formation are an integral part of committee meetings. Sharing faith enables committees to exemplify Christian values and to function better. Committee members should take part in an annual retreat and/or day of recollection. The group needs to acknowledge that God is present in a very special way whenever the group gathers. They should devote time to prayer, sharing of Scripture, and faith formation. Getting to know one another and developing a group identity and trust is necessary for an effective relationship. Diocesan resources can be called upon for help in group process and in spiritual formation.

Relationship of Pastoral Council & Committees

In collaboration with the pastor, staff, and council, committees contribute to the vision and work to implement the mission of the parish.

- Each committee develops long-range goals and short-range objectives.
- Members of the committee implement the plan and assure that their work meshes well with other efforts in the parish.
- The parish pastoral council should concentrate on its visionary role and avoid over involvement in details of committee work.
- Communication lines between the committees and the council, and among the committee members, should be clear and effective, but not burdensome.
- Committees should also provide periodic reports of their activities to the parish at large.

Other Ministries

The pastor and the pastoral council may call on individuals or establish ad hoc committees to meet special needs, for example, long range planning and fund raising. When this is done, lines of communication and accountability should be carefully delineated. In most instances, a pastoral council member shall be named to maintain liaison.

School Boards

If a Catholic school is associated with the parish, there should be close cooperation and coordination between the school board(s) and the parish pastoral council. The relationship between the council and the school board should be clearly understood by both groups. Resources for the school board are available through the Office of Catholic Schools. See: <http://www.richmonddiocese.org/ocs/index.htm>

Small Christian Communities

To meet a need in larger parishes, small Christian communities may develop. Groups of approximately 8 - 15 members come together on a regular basis to pray, to share their faith, to support one another, to deepen their understanding of Catholic traditions, and to reach out in service to the larger community.

Where small faith communities are formed geographically, parishioners are identified as members of a neighborhood-based small community. In this form, parish structures develop that help people feel connected to the parish and have a sense of ownership of the parish mission. In other parishes where intentional small faith communities exist, there is emphasis on lectionary-based faith sharing and parishioners choose to join a group. Parish structures in this instance work to help every small faith group recognize itself as a Christian community. Prayer and faith sharing become a part of every gathering — pastoral council, parish committees/ministries and all their supporting groups.

Parish structures where small communities exist take various forms. In geographically structured parishes, the parish pastoral council is made up of faith community leaders, representatives from parish committees, pastor and staff. Where intentional faith communities exist, usually the at-large members are selected or discerned by the total parish.



Ecumenical and Interreligious

Ecumenism - A Parish Priority

To help further the cause of Christian unity, pastors are to appoint a parish ecumenical representative (PER) to provide active leadership for the parish in ecumenical activities so that all parish activities will be done with concern for ecumenism.

"Ecumenism is not an 'appendix' added to traditional church activity ... it is an organic part ... must pervade all that the church is and does." (*Ut Unum Sint*, Pope John Paul II)

Activities of the Diocesan Ecumenical Commission should be supported and communicated to the entire parish so that the whole church comes to understand the importance the church places on building bridges of understanding between Christian denominations.

Interreligious Relationships - A Growing Need

Today, more and more, parishes are faced with the challenges of working for peace and for justice within an interreligious context. The parish pastoral council should be aware of and support the activities of the interreligious community whenever possible in the effort to work for unity. Joint outreach opportunities on behalf of the marginalized and local events promoting works of unity and increased understanding are important works for our time - and for our children, and for our children's children. "It is important to foster relations with the Jewish and Muslim communities on the local level and to raise a level of awareness among Catholics about the importance of interreligious dialogue." (*Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations*, Catholic Diocese of Richmond)

"In our time, when day by day mankind is being drawn closer together, and the ties between different peoples are becoming stronger, the Church examines more closely her relationship to non-Christian religions. In her task of promoting unity and love among men, indeed among nations, she considers above all in this declaration what men have in common and what draws them to fellowship. One is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race to live over the face of the earth.

-*Nostra Aetate*, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions
-Pope Paul VI, 1965

The Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs are coordinated by volunteers, and offer many resources for parish councils and committees to use in developing parish programs and partnerships with other churches and congregations. Parish Ecumenical Representatives (PERs) should foster a deeper ecumenical and interreligious awareness among parishioners; and encourage and facilitate parish participation in ecumenical and interreligious activities in the local community. Parish Pastoral Councils can call on the PER to provide resources for parish programming and to help facilitate those programs. Additional resources are available at: <http://www.richmonddiocese.org/ecumenical/index.htm>

Finance Council Functions

Parish Finance Council

Canon Law directs that every parish shall have a parish finance council to aid the pastor in the administration of the temporal goods of the parish. The parish finance council is separate and distinct from the parish pastoral council. The finance council, however, does not determine which programs to pursue. This is the role of the pastor in collaboration with the parish pastoral council.

The finance council advises on what resources are possible in light of the parish's financial condition. A synopsis of the role of the parish finance council as it relates to the parish pastoral council is found in Appendix E. The diocesan document, "Called to Stewardship," Diocesan Policies for Parish Finance Councils (Third Edition, Catholic Diocese of Richmond, March 2007) can be found on the diocesan web page: www.richmonddiocese.org. Excerpts relating to parish pastoral councils follow:

Establishment of the Parish Finance Council: Canon 537

Every parish shall have a finance council distinct from the parish pastoral council. Established by the universal law of the church, the parish finance council is regulated by the norms of the Code of Canon Law as well as by those issued by the diocesan bishop. The parish finance council is to aid the pastor in the administration of the temporal goods of the parish (p6, Called to Stewardship)

Functions:

- Parish finance council shall see that proper financial records are maintained for all parish assets and liabilities, revenues and expenses in accord with the Chart of Accounts approved by the diocesan finance office.
- The parish finance council will assist the pastor in developing a balanced parish budget for each fiscal year according to the priorities and goals established by the parish pastoral council and approved by the pastor.
- The parish finance council will monitor the finances of the parish by reviewing monthly comparisons of actual revenues and expenditures with the budget, the investments, and the overall financial operation of the parish. Unforeseen expenditures not anticipated in the budget should first be reviewed by the parish finance council. (p8, Called to Stewardship)

Relationship to the Parish Pastoral Council

- The parish finance council is separate and distinct from the parish pastoral council. Ordinarily a person should not serve on both councils simultaneously unless the small size of the parish warrants it.
- The parish finance council will make an informational report on the state of parish finances to the parish pastoral council, noting any major factors or trends that could have a budgetary impact.
- The parish finance council will listen to the priorities for the parish's ministries as set by the pastor in collaboration with the parish pastoral council, and shall be guided by these in helping to develop the parish budget.
- The parish finance council is not responsible for fund-raising but may recommend appropriate means for this to the parish pastoral council and should collaborate in the parish's stewardship effort. (p 9, Called to Stewardship)

Budgeting:

Each year by May 15th, the pastor submits a balanced budget to the diocesan finance office of the projected parish income and expenditures for the fiscal year, July 1 to June 30 (C.1284, #3).

- The parish finance council assists the pastor in developing the budget in accord with the pastoral needs and priorities as recommended by the parish pastoral council in cooperation with the pastor.
- For successful budgeting, existing programs should be evaluated and goals and objectives developed with plans for action to which both income and expense estimates can be matched. A budget is the map for money management which enables the parish to move toward accomplishing its mission. (p13, Called to Stewardship)

Constitution

A parish pastoral council must have a set of operating procedures. This document, often called a constitution, normally includes but is not limited to the following:

A. Name and Purpose

The name and the purpose should reflect the principles enunciated in “Called to Serve.”

B. Membership

The membership would normally include the pastor, the parochial vicar(s) and members selected from the congregation. A statement regarding council membership criteria should be included. Only active, registered members of the parish are eligible for service on the pastoral council.

C. Structures for Parish Ministry

Each parish should define the model by which the vision set by the council will be brought to life. That direction will take different forms within the ordinary activities of the parish, usually through committees or other task bodies. The specific purpose and function of the permanent committees should be defined, as well as the method for appointing members, selecting leadership and setting terms of service. If the committees are not represented on the council, some method of communication and/or interaction should be designated. Each committee is to assist in the development of the vision of the council and to implement that vision in the life and activities of the parish and community, within the area of its competence and purpose. The constitution should also state the administrative and executive functions for the council itself. That is, the constitution should define how members shall be selected for membership; set forth methods and processes for their ongoing faith formation, as individuals and as members of an intentional faith community; provide for the orientation and welcoming of their new members, with special emphasis on community building; and make provision for establishing ad hoc or other special groups/bodies for special tasks.

D. Relationship

The constitution should clearly describe the relationship between the parish pastoral council and the parish finance council, the pastor, the parish staff, parish committees, and the school board(s).

E. Officers

The constitution should provide for the choice of a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and other council officers as are needed, as well as define their duties. It may also permit appointment of a recording secretary.

F. Terms of Membership

The constitution should establish the terms for members, provide for filling vacancies, and policy concerning period of continuous service on the council.

G. Selection of Members

The constitution should establish procedures for the selection of council members. Members' terms should be staggered to maintain some continuity, with a portion of the members selected each year.

H. Amendments

The constitution should contain provisions for its amendment.

I. Meeting Procedures

The constitution should authorize the council to establish guidelines and processes for conducting meetings and other business.

Parish Councils in Clustered Parishes

In the document, “Our Journey of Faith...led by the Holy Spirit,” a pastoral plan for each LPA (Local Planning Area) is described:

“It is important to note that this plan will be implemented over time. Pastors, staff and parish leaders are encouraged to begin working with others in the proposed cluster groups in order to allow parishioners to get to know and learn from each other, even if no pastor assignment or staff changes result or ultimately go forward. This is to encourage people to see a parish as a broader community of faith irrespective of location, and not as a geographically local community.” (p.17, Our Journey of Faith)

This pastoral plan encourages the planning teams of each LPA where parishes are clustered to consider forming coordinating “cluster councils.” Again, no one size fits all. What works well for one group of parishes may not work at all in another. The goal is to develop what works best for each area. In one area, a group of clustered parishes may decide to form one large council to include all of the parishes in the cluster. In another, the decision may be made to have individual parish pastoral councils *and* a separate “cluster council” with representatives of each parish serving on the larger group. Others continue with individual parish councils and create a coordinating committee to serve the entire cluster. As the pastoral plan develops, surely other models of parish pastoral council leadership will develop. The guiding principles contained in “Called to Serve” can be applied to serve the needs of new structures as they unfold. Communication within and between these parish leadership groups will be crucial.

“We can begin with simple things such as informing neighboring parishes when special speakers are coming or events take place. Some may want to even consider joint publication of parish bulletins, which may result in a cost savings. Working relationships that already exist between parishes should continue and serve as examples, even if they are beyond or different from the proposed cluster groups. The Local Planning Areas are encouraged to form “Coordinating Councils” and communicate Mass times and consider scheduling such that not all week-end Masses are celebrated at the same time when more than one church exists in a single city or county.” (p.17, Our Journey of Faith)

Additional resources for parish pastoral councils can be found in the diocesan document, “Our Journey of Faith...led by the Holy Spirit,” a pastoral plan for the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, 2008.

Three resources from that document are contained in the appendix to “Called to Serve”

- A glossary of terms (merged with CTS glossary)
- Definition of a “Ministerially Complete and Vibrant Parish Community” - Appendix O
- Responsibilities of a Pastor/Parish. - Appendix N

Meetings and Decision Making

Meetings

A chairperson, chosen annually by the whole council, presides over council meetings.

Meetings provide the opportunity for council formation as faith communities, and they are the occasions where councils do the visionary reflection and discernment on the parish mission and its welfare.

- The council should meet regularly to continue to grow as a prayerful faith community and to focus on its visionary role.
- Meetings should be announced in advance and all parishioners are welcome to attend.
- Meetings should begin and end promptly as scheduled. (See Appendix B.)
- Council members shall be prepared by having received reports and other materials in advance of the meeting.
- Respectful listening, constructive dialogue and openness to new ideas should characterize council sessions.
- Processes for discussion and decisions should be used to enable all new points to be heard and understood.
- The agenda shall be realistically limited to allow time for prayer, formation, dialogue, and for achieving consensus.
- The agenda should be available to the parish in advance of the meeting.
- Council members may submit additional topics for the agenda at the opening of a Meeting, but for complex issues, the need for advance preparation must be considered.
- Parishioners desiring to address the council shall notify the chairperson in advance of the meeting. Use of a written proposal describing the issue is a helpful tool. (See Appendix H.)
- Minutes of each meeting shall be recorded and retained in the parish files.
- A report on the session should be posted for the parish community to read.
- The council shall conduct periodic evaluations of its meetings.

Decision Making, Consensus Building, and Conflict Resolution Skills

The parish pastoral council is not primarily a decision making body, although some decisions must be made. Discerning God's vision for a parish requires that the leadership group ultimately decide on what God's vision entails. This vision must be articulated and publicized to the parish.

Important decisions should be arrived at by consensus whenever possible. Consensus is a method of decision-making which allows all aspects of an issue and its possible solutions to be heard and dealt with and a group choice made which all members feel is the most operable under the circumstances. The most important feature of consensus building is that all aspects of an issue are allowed to be heard. In some cases, not all will agree. In major decisions affecting the entire parish, parishioners should have the opportunity to be heard. Council members strive to be good listeners on behalf of the whole community, to discern prayerfully the next steps for action, always in concert with the pastor. Good communication skills are essential. (See Appendices H, I, J, K.)

If the council cannot come to consensus after sincere effort, the pastor and/or the council, may present the matter to the bishop of the diocese for resolution.

Appendix A - Prayer Services and Resources for Pastoral Councils

Pastoral council prayer is a unified way of acknowledging our dependence on God and on each other. The prayer service should involve the group in an active and participative way. Praying together helps to develop openness, builds community, and helps us to share our faith.

Sharing faith together is a way for parish groups to build a relationship with God and relationships with each other.

Some helpful resources:

- *Prayer Services for Parish Councils*, Robert D. Eimer, Sarah A. O'Malley, The Liturgical Press, 1995.
- *Seeking His Mind: 40 Meetings with Christ*, M. Basil Pennington O.C.S.O., Paraclete Press, 2002. (Contains an excellent explanation of Lectio Divina - praying the Scriptures)
- *Prayer*, Joyce Rupp, Catholic Spirituality for Adults Series, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 2007 (contains poetry, reflection, questions, and stories for faith sharing with adults)
- *Daily We Touch Him: Practical Religious Experiences*, M. Basil Pennington, O.C.S.O., Image Books, Doubleday, 1977. (Great book, using scripture includes a wonderful chapter on faith sharing).
- *At Home with the Word*, published each year, an excellent resource containing the Sunday Readings, Scripture Insights, and reflection questions. Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago.
- *New American Bible*, daily readings on the USCCB web site at <http://www.usccb.org/nab/today.shtml> A video reflection for each day is also accessible and is great preparation for group prayer.
- *Prayer and Temperament*, Chester P. Michael and Marie C. Norrissey, The Open Door, 11th printing, 2002. An excellent resource for all styles of prayer; contains prayer suggestions throughout and provides a wonderful guide to Lectio Divina. Suggests a wide range of classical music for use in the prayer exercises. A valuable resource for individual or group prayer, using the scriptures as the starting point. Uses understanding of individual personality types throughout.

A Scripture Encounter

- Reflect on God's presence. Close your eyes or bow your head to help recall that presence and our dependence on God.
- Pray that your mind, heart and will are open to the Word of God.
- Read a Scriptural passage, a related passage from the Jerome Biblical Commentary (JBC) and perhaps a contemporary writing that is pertinent to the scripture. Reread, reflect and LISTEN to God.
- Reflect on the scripture and the other material.
- What thoughts, ideas and images come to you? You might write notes.
- What do these things have to do with your life and ministry?
- What ideas are important for the community?

Share the reflection with others in the larger group.

Appendix A-1: Prayer Reflection - Model A

Using the Text of CTS for Prayer\reflection – in a Pastoral Council Setting

(In this exercise, there are 11 readers, 1 prayer leader, but also there could be one member who was asked ahead of time to create the melody line for the sung response, and another to light the candle, etc. A bible, a single candle in a container that can move around the group, or enough candles for everyone to have one, and copies of the service are helpful tools for this reflection. A CD player with the song suggested, St. Therese's Prayer, John Michael Talbot is helpful, but not necessary. Music talent may be right there in your midst! Seek it!).

Leader:

Faith and baptism call each Catholic to his or her unique role in the church and in the world. The role of membership on the parish pastoral council is a call to exercise servant leadership. [Use basin and pitcher with water, poured by a council member as these first two sentences are prayerfully read] Through baptism, all Christians share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal mission of Christ. This sharing calls each person to take responsibility for the mission of the church in the world. All the gifts necessary to further the mission of Jesus (*pause and extend hand out to the entire circle gathered*) **are present in the community of believers**. St. Paul states that there are a variety of gifts but the same Spirit, a variety of service but the same Lord, and a variety of works but the same God who inspires everyone. To each person is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Reader: I Cor 12:4-7

Leader: A Parish Pastoral Council is called to be – a small faith community.

All: 'Jesus lead us, hear our prayer'.
(*Response Sung, chant-like – create your own melody using 7-10 syllables*)

2nd reader: A Parish Pastoral Council is called to be – spiritually alive and close-knit without being exclusive.

All: Jesus, lead us, hear our prayer.

3rd reader: A Parish Pastoral Council is called to be – prophetic in the scriptural sense.

All: Jesus, lead us, hear our prayer.

4th reader: A Parish Pastoral Council is called to be – an opportunity for member's formation and conversion.

All: Jesus, lead us, hear our prayer.

5th reader: A Parish Pastoral Council is called to be – a witness to the Gospel.

All: Jesus, lead us, hear our prayer.

6th reader: A Parish Pastoral Council is called to be – aware of and living in God's presence.

All: Jesus, lead us, hear our prayer.

7th reader: A Parish Pastoral Council is called to be – “pastoral” that is, dedicated to the whole community.

All: Jesus, lead us, hear our prayer.

8th reader: A Parish Pastoral Council is called to be – unified in Jesus in its diversity.

All: Jesus, lead us, hear our prayer.

9th reader: A Parish Pastoral Council is called to be – an initiating and enabling source that aids God in transforming the parish.

All: Jesus, lead us, hear our prayer.

10th reader: A Parish Pastoral Council is called to be – an informed and open communication system in the parish.

All: Jesus, lead us, hear our prayer.

11th reader: A Parish Pastoral Council is called to be – knowledgeable about scripture, contemporary issues, the local community and “church.”

All: Jesus, lead us, hear our prayer.

Leader: *(use reflective song relating to the variety of gifts -and God’s call to the baptized for a closing meditation).*

Suggested, “St. Theresa’s Prayer, John Michael Talbot

Available on CD, “Troubadour” album, Lyrics go like this: Christ has no body now but ours, no hands, no feet. . . . etc. . . . but ours. . . Yours are the eyes that look compassion on the world. . . etc. (You probably know the song already☺)

Conclude the prayer experience with The Lord’s Prayer- and a sign of peace

Note: This service may be adapted to smaller groups simply by selecting any one reader to become the reader throughout. Similarly, many council members can share in the prayer service by each taking a reader part. In encouraging all members to participate during prayer experience of the year, it is important to be sure all have the opportunity to take one part.

Appendix A-2: Prayer Reflection - Model B

Using the Text of CTS for Prayer\reflection – in a Pastoral Council Setting

*(Prepare 7 candle or other symbols, each inscribed with one of the following words: **Prayerful, Pastoral, Representative, Discerning, Prophetic, Enabling, Collaborative** – one word to each candle or symbol. As the reflection is read, have a council member light the candle or place the appropriate symbol on or around your prayer table as each part of the reflection is read until all are placed).*

Leader: *(slowly, and with conviction)* A parish council is **prayerful**.

Council member: A council is not simply a group of people who pray together, but a group which prays in order to discern the will of God for the parish community. A portion of each council meeting should be set-aside for quality prayer and formation. Prayer and formation take place within the parish council meeting and at retreats or days of reflection.

(Pause)

All Respond: Good and Gracious God, fill us with your spirit - enlighten us, we pray.

Leader: A parish council is **pastoral**.

Council member: Through baptism confirmation and Eucharist all Christians are called to be Christ in the world. The parish council tries to provide appropriate resources and methods to serve the people of the parish as they engage in the mission of the church.

(Pause)

All Respond: Good and Gracious God, fill us with your spirit - enlighten us, we pray.

Leader: A parish council is **representative**.

Council Member: Each council member endeavors to listen to parishioners and then faithfully present expressed concerns, ideas and questions to the parish council. The parish council is a representative body rather than a body of representatives. The council strives to represent varied aspects of the parish life so that faith needs are met.

(Pause)

All Respond: Good and Gracious God, fill us with your spirit - enlighten us, we pray.

Leader: A parish council is **discerning**.

Council Member: The council functions in an atmosphere of prayer and openness to the Holy Spirit in order to become and remain grounded in faith and responsive to the church's mission. Trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit, council members set aside their individual opinions and prejudices and listen to one another and to other parishioners.

(Pause)

All Respond: Good and Gracious God, fill us with your spirit - enlighten us, we pray.

Leader: A parish council is **prophetic**.

Council Member: The parish council must have the courage and foresight to set the direction for the parish community, challenging the parish to grow in response to the gospel. Council members should read the signs of the times and interpret the path the parish should follow on its faith journey.

(Pause)

All Respond: Good and Gracious God, fill us with your spirit - enlighten us, we pray.

Leader: A parish council is **enabling**.

Council Member: the council endeavors to foster the faith growth of individual Catholics of the parish and the broader community.

(Pause)

All Respond: Good and Gracious God, fill us with your spirit - enlighten us, we pray.

Leader: A parish council is **collaborative**.

Council Member: The parish council challenges its members, the parish staff, committees, organizations and other groups in the parish to work together. A clear, common understanding of the parish's mission fosters collaborative actions. The parish will then seek ways to collaborate with other parishes, community organizations and congregations to foster the common good of the broader community.

(Pause)

All Respond: Good and Gracious God, fill us with your spirit - enlighten us, we pray.

Close with a reading from the scriptures for the following Sunday.

(You may want to ask the group to pause before hearing God's word - and allow the words they have just experienced to become a part of their hearing. Then it would also be good to allow 15 or 20 minutes for members to share what new things they heard proclaimed).

Appendix B – Frequency of Meetings

Pastoral Council Meetings

The question has been raised, "How often should councils meet?" Before deciding the frequency of meetings, it is best that council members review their purpose, needs of the parish, and the attitudes council members bring to the work. Some councils meet monthly from September through June -and then take a summer break. Others meet less frequently but for Friday evening/Saturday sessions each time they gather. Others meet every other month with special meetings called as needed in the alternate months. The unique reality of each parish and its particular needs is the guiding force. No one size fits all.

Appendix C – A Discernment Process for Selection of Pastoral Council Members

- Form a member selection committee whose task is to provide the parish with basic education and formation regarding the role and purpose of pastoral councils and the qualities expected of members. (display table in the commons, flyer in the bulletin, etc.) Establish a date for the day of discernment and advertise it at least a month in advance.

- Prepare the Parish

Week One

- Flyer in the bulletin- parish structure, role of the parish pastoral council.
- Pulpit talk by pastor

Week Two

- Pulpit talk by chairperson of membership selection committee
- At Masses on week TWO, all parishioners are asked to pray, discern, and name persons whom they feel have the gifts of servant leadership for the council.
- Collect names that same day during or after Mass

Note: For large parishes, if numbers are high, reduce to about 100 by taking only those who have been named "X" number of times. Average acceptance runs 50%.

Week Three

- Letters of invitation are mailed to nominees with a description of the discernment process included. Nominees are asked to respond if they are willing to participate in the process. The only commitment asked for at this point is the willingness to attend the pastoral council day of discernment.

Day of Discernment:

The day begins with welcome, introductions, and prayer. Often the day will include four sessions: Two in the morning and two after lunch. Begin each session in the large group. Each session should include a simple prayer reflection by the discernment facilitator, followed by separating the large group into sharing groups of no more than six persons (eight if the group is large) An icebreaker question for use within the small groups to begin the sharing is helpful. A parish ministry related each person in the group should respond to statement as well. Note: To insure diversity and avoid duplication in the four small group sessions membership of each group is changed each session. Sample questions: What you like best about our parish? Which ministry have you most been involved with? What do you see as issues facing the parish? What do you see as the role of the pastoral council? What do you think needs to change in our parish? At the end of each sharing session, all participants write down the name of someone in that group they feel would be good council members. (Names are tabulated between each session and from the totals a balanced** council is selected.). New members of the pastoral council are called forward. Prayers of thanksgiving and prayers for wisdom are shared. At an appropriate gathering of the parish community all council members are commissioned.

Other options: A variety of ways of selecting the new members from those nominated can be designed. The important part of the discernment process is having *all nominees attend* the day of discernment - if they are considering serving on the council. Prepare for a balanced council by striving for diversity among nominees: age, gender, ethnic diversity are hallmarks of a diverse and inclusive leadership team.

Appendix D - Expectations

Expectations of Pastoral Council Members:

- To be an active member in the parish (in good standing) See Membership Criteria
- To be a person of prayer, one who prays for the parish and for the pastoral council.
- To worship within the parish
- To be aware of all ministries and key personnel in the parish
- To read the parish council constitution; “Called to Serve,” and other appropriate materials
- To be present for the public commissioning of the members of the pastoral council
- To attend the regularly scheduled meetings
- To read the minutes of the past meeting and the agenda of the next meeting prior to attendance
- To participate in the parish pastoral council retreat and the council's prayer and formation experiences
- To be available to assist with ministries
- To be concerned and work for the welfare of the entire parish
- To engage in collaborative/consensus decision making
- To live as a member of a community rooted in faith
- To be aware of the church beyond the parish (diocesan and universal)
- To be visible and identifiable in the parish and to attend major parish activities
- To be open to the needs and ministries of other parishes in your LPA
- To be willing to join in larger efforts of the Local Planning Area as those plans evolve
- To be a good listener and advisor

Pastoral Council Expectations of its Leadership/Executive Committee:

- To consult with the pastor and other members regarding council agenda
- To hold executive committee meetings as needed
- To establish a realistic time frame for council meetings and to determine the appropriate level of discussion of the various issues on the agenda
- To provide the agenda, minutes of previous meeting, and relative supportive materials for the members at least a week before a meeting
- To adhere to the agreed meeting schedule
- To arrive at decisions consensually
- To carry out the selection process as it is prescribed in the constitution
- To arrange for a public commissioning of the council members
- To establish an annual calendar
- To inform the parish about the work of the council

Support Services Expected of the Parish Community

- A suitable meeting place
- Secretarial assistance in typing, copying, and mailing of agenda, minutes, and other material as needed
- Provision of funds for the pastoral council retreat and other usual expenses
- Professional resourcing as needed

Appendix E - Role of the Parish Finance Council

The following sections are taken from “Called to Stewardship,” the diocesan policy for finance councils in the Diocese of Richmond. For a fuller description of the role and relationship of the parish finance council to the parish pastoral council, as well as the parish budgeting process see the complete document which is available on the diocesan website at, www.richmonddiocese.org.

A. Establishment of the Parish Finance Council:

Every parish shall have a finance council distinct from the parish pastoral council. Established by the Universal law of the church, the parish finance council is regulated by the norms of the Code of Canon Law as well as by those issued by the diocesan bishop. The parish finance council is to aid the pastor in the administration of the goods of the parish (Canon 537).

B. Membership:

The parish finance council is made up of members of the Christian faithful selected by the pastor according to the norms of Canon Law (Canon 537). Its members should be conscious they share in the mission God has entrusted to the church. As they hold an ecclesiastical office, they should be in full communion with the Catholic Church and members of the parish they are to serve. An exception can be made for small parishes. (C. 145, #2; 149; 205; 228; and 1282)

The parish finance council shall consist of at least five members of the parish community. An exception may be granted upon request to small parishes on a case-by case basis. Persons are to be selected for their expertise in financial matters, economics, general business management, banking, law, insurance, accounting and financial investment. In addition, members are to have prudence, uprightness and knowledge of the Catholic faith that will enable them to put into practice the message of the Gospel. The pastor, to whom the council gives advice, is not a member of the parish finance council.

C. Selection of Members:

The pastor may consult the parish pastoral council before appointing members of the parish finance council, but parish pastoral council approval is not required. Members of the parish finance council are to have staggered terms of three years, after which the pastor may reappoint them for additional three-year terms.

D. Functions:

The parish finance council shall see that proper financial records are maintained for all parish assets and liabilities, revenues and expenses in accord with the chart of accounts approved by the diocesan finance office. The parish finance council will assist the pastor in developing a balanced parish budget for each fiscal year according to the priorities and goals set by the parish pastoral council and approved by the pastor. The parish finance council will monitor the finances of the parish by reviewing monthly comparisons of actual revenues and expenditures with the budget, the investments, and the overall financial operation of the parish.

Unforeseen expenditures not anticipated in the budget should first be reviewed by the parish finance council. The parish finance council will assist the pastor in compiling an annual report of the parish's finances which is to be sent to the bishop by August 15th of each year. It will also arrange for the publication to the parish of the annual report and of regular reports on the parish's financial status. The annual report must include a statement of financial position (balance sheet) to include all assets, including all cash accounts, investment, building and endowment fund accounts, as well as all parish liabilities and the overall parish net worth.

E. Relationships:

Relationship to the Parish Pastoral Council

The parish finance council is separate and distinct from the parish pastoral council. Ordinarily a person should not serve on both councils simultaneously unless the small size of the parish warrants it. The parish finance council will make an informational report on the state of parish finances to the parish pastoral council, noting any major factors or trends that could have a budgetary impact. The parish finance council will listen to the priorities for the parish's ministries as set by the pastor, together with the parish pastoral council, and shall be guided by these in helping to develop the parish budget. The parish finance council is not to be responsible for fund-raising but may recommend appropriate means for this to the parish pastoral council and should collaborate in the parish's stewardship effort.

Appendix F - Parish Budget Process

Budgeting: (“Called to Stewardship”)

Each year by May 15th, the pastor is to submit to the diocesan finance office a budget of the projected parish income and expenditures for the next fiscal year, July 1 to June 30 (Canon 1284, #3).

The parish finance council is to assist the pastor in developing the budget in accord with the pastoral needs and priorities as set by the parish pastoral council in cooperation with the pastor. A clearly defined budget cycle or calendar should be in place, allowing for the participation of those engaged in the various parish programs (e.g., liturgy, school, religious education, social ministry, etc.) and a process of dialogue and negotiation among all concerned so that the choices made can best serve the needs of the whole parish. Each parish must submit a balanced budget based on realistic and supportable estimates of revenues and expenses.

Budget Process: (“Called to Stewardship,” Appendix 8)

- Successful budgeting requires the planning and prioritizing of programs and ministries.
- Each parish should have one, three and five year programs.
- Program planning for the future is the one sure way to have an effective budget process.
- Future planning is only an estimate of what will happen over the next five years.
- The budget is the plan against which actual performance will be measured and compared.
- It should be clear who is responsible for carrying out each program in the parish.
- These decisions can be made based on what was decided in the programming process.
- A properly constituted budget process will help focus on the intended goals for the Parish
- How the money will be spent to achieve the parish goals and objectives.
- Provides the parish with a tool for monitoring fiscal activities during the budgeting period
- Can be a very helpful aid in efficient management.
- A clearly defined budget cycle should be in place in every parish.
- This cycle should be one that allows for all of the necessary input from parish pastoral council as well as parish finance council.
- A budget calendar is most helpful in a budget cycle and process.
- An accurate budget calendar the parish is likely to produce a well-considered accurate budget, which includes the required information and data from each person and/or committee or ministry involved.
- A budget calendar is produced backwards - The beginning date for parish budgets is July 1 of each year, so that is the last possible date in the budget calendar.
- Dialogue should be present between the parish pastoral council and the parish finance council to properly structure a budget calendar.

The following is a very basic suggested budget process. Two-three months prior to May 15

- The pastoral council and council committees review the priorities developed out of the mission statement of the parish.
- Each committee of the council prepares and presents to the council their programs/plans for the coming year with related dates and costs for each noted. The council makes certain that programs and budgets reflect the priorities that have been developed, and that requests for funding are fully documented.
- The pastoral council forwards all budgets (line item costs) to the parish finance council requesting a budget structured on the submitted figures, with an estimate of anticipated parish revenue, fixed parish expenditures and the amount available for parish programs.
- With this information from the finance council, the pastoral council, in consultation with affected committees, evaluates the proposed parish budget against estimated parish income.
- If goals and hopes exceed parish income, it is the task of the pastoral council to reduce proposed expenditures while respecting priorities that have been set.
- The finance council is then asked to prepare the parish budget using the adjusted figures.

Appendix G - Parish Stewardship Process

Parish Stewardship -- A Formation Process

Stewardship on the parish level is a formation process that assists parishioners in developing and deepening a personal investment in the ongoing mission of the Church. While this investment is personal; it is not a private matter. It involves responsibility and accountability on the part of individuals to the parish community regarding the management and best use of their personal resources -- themselves, their time, their talents and their money.

Individuals are encouraged to recognize that God has entrusted their personal resources to them for the purpose of furthering the progress of God's kingdom among God's people. Parishioners are encouraged to assess and "inventory" their personal resources. They are then asked to decide what portion of those resources will be set aside and put to work for the mission of the Church. The results of that decision are presented to the leadership of the parish, usually by way of a commitment card and preferably in the context of a Sunday Eucharist.

Stewardship commitments, of money and of time and talents, are a practical result of the stewardship process. They are not, however, the primary goal of this process. As a formation process, parish stewardship encourages and fosters ongoing reflection on the depth and scope of one's personal investment as a partner with Jesus Christ and with the parish community in the mission of the Church.

Parish Stewardship Team

Each parish has a team of parishioners whose primary commitment is to help their fellow parishioners develop and sustain their identities as stewards... those to whom the work of furthering the mission of Jesus Christ has been entrusted. They are helpmates to parishioners, providing them with opportunities and resources as well as enabling and encouraging them to be faithful to their stewardship commitments.

This team works with other parish leaders and leadership groups to establish a stewardship process that is responsive to and reflective of the local parish community. Here are the basic elements of a parish stewardship process:

- Establish a scriptural foundation for personal identification as stewards -- partners with Jesus Christ in the mission of the Church
- Provide opportunities for parishioners to become aware of the needs and goals of the parish community
- Provide opportunities for parishioners to commit a portion of their time, talent and money to the mission of the parish
- Assist parishioners to carry out their commitments faithfully and to assess regularly their personal investment in the mission of the Church

Appendix H - Decision Making

A Suggested Method: The Proposal Process

When an issue requires more than sharing ideas during a council meeting to come to consensus, the issue should be presented in the form of a proposal, not a question to be put out for discussion. Questions often take the form of "What do you think we ought to do about...?" An issue raised in this manner usually spends a group's time inefficiently.

Bringing the same issue to the council in the form of a proposal encourages a more focused discussion on the topic at hand. Definitions, a list of pros and cons, and potential ways of resolving or addressing the issue are helpful tools to have on hand as the discussion begins.

A proposal consists of:

- a) Name of the Proposal
- b) Statement of the problem, issue, or goal
- c) Proposed solution- or solutions (the what, who, when, costs, etc).
(input should be obtained from ministries that will be impacted by the proposal.)
- d) Statements of advantages and disadvantages
- e) Follow-up information: name of person/group submitting proposal, phone # e-mail, etc.)
- f) Estimate of time required on agenda (See proposal form below)

Proposals should be sent to the chairperson or executive committee prior to the executive committee meeting. Copies of proposals should be sent to members of council prior to the council meeting in which it will be discussed.

At times it may be necessary for council members to reflect and pray about an issue between council meetings. A written proposal is a helpful tool here as well. Decisions can be made at the next meeting when time allows.

Proposal Form (sample)	
Name of Proposal:	
Statement of Issue or Concern:	
Proposed Solution (s):	
Advantages:	Disadvantages:
Agenda Time Required: _____	
Submitted by _____	Date: _____
Phone: _____	email: _____

Appendix I – The Proposal Process – Listening in Good Order

Prior to the council meeting, all council members receive copies of the proposal and the discussion process that will be used. At the meeting, the chairperson reviews the process to be followed so that the group will understand and respect the steps to be taken, and assures that in following the process all shall be heard in an orderly fashion. Following each step greatly affects the degree of success with the process.

Steps to be taken:

1. Summary of the proposed issue is provided
2. Time is given for any who want to speak FOR the proposal - or specific elements of the proposal. Core ideas may be recorded on newsprint.
3. Time is given for anyone who wants to speak AGAINST the proposal - or specific elements of the proposal. Core ideas may be recorded.
4. Clarifying points are made (assure all voices have been heard and content heard is correct)
5. Presenter will be asked to respond to each idea so that all know he/she and the presenting committee understand the opposing ideas and the feelings of the advocates. The presenter will address whether the new ideas heard can be incorporated into the proposal.
6. Chairperson will give a synopsis of the original proposal with the suggested modifications and will ask all to take time to be open to what they perceive to be God's will as they reflect on what they have heard.
7. Chair TESTS for direction (Use *profile vote* *, *temperature reading* (TR) ** etc.)
If it is found that there are few members who have reservations and/or time is pressing for a decision, the Chair will ask each of those members to clarify their ideas to make sure that they have been heard. If they can "live with" the majority position, support the decision though they have some reservations, which have been heard and respected.
8. Another TR is taken. Depending on the outcome the Chair then asks the presenting group to incorporate changes and implement, - resubmit at a later date, or - discontinue the effort. Chair then asks council members to recognize and appreciate the effort and concern of all.

There is no one way to come to consensus. It is messy business indeed! The scriptures have many examples where we see our ancestors in the faith struggle. The disciples of Jesus struggled to find their way – to be of one heart and one mind, for the journey. The important factors in working to achieve that unity of vision are:

- Make sure the proposal is understood
- See that opposing ideas and feelings are expressed and understood.
- Consensus does not require a unanimous “yes” vote.
- Consensus depends on a sense of community - caring for everyone involved in the decision.
- It is achieved when all the participants in the process agree that they have been heard, are cherished for their convictions, and are, consequently, able to support the prevailing position for the well-being of the community.

* **Profile voting** -Ask members if they: a) strongly agree, b) mildly agree, c) mildly disagree, or d) strongly disagree with a proposal under discussion.

** **Taking a Temperature Reading**, (a TR) - Ask the group "Can you support the proposal as stated/restated? Please respond, 'yes, because...' or 'no, because.'"

NOTE: *A facilitator or leader might be named who has the gifts to work with this process.*

Appendix J - Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution

While conflict is generally thought about in negative terms as something destructive, unhealthy, and to be avoided, conflict can also be creative, healthy, and respectful. The difference is not in conflict itself but in the way that it is managed or resolved.

Conflict Resolution in a Church Setting

In dealing with the tension of conflicts in the Church today, we should draw upon the fruits of the Spirit present within us to grow and obtain insights that can help us to approach the conflict in the spirit of Christ's love. Conflict resolution in church settings is based on faith and trust in the will of God. The "process" has little to do with techniques and much to do with caring and growth.

Note: This process should be viewed as just a beginning. Varying views within the Church have been with us for some time. They will not be resolved in one meeting. The hope is that, out of these beginnings, persons with differing views would be willing to spend some time together reviewing church history, their personal journeys, and perhaps come to respect and support each other. A facilitator trained in conflict resolution can also be helpful. Contact the diocesan office for further information, (804) 359-5661.

Appendix K - Group Development Stages

Groups take time to form before they are fully productive. In nonscientific terms four stages have been suggested. Although these stages are progressive, they are also regressive when a crisis or some traumatic event affects the group.

Storming - This is the initial stage where there is a high level of conflict and little performance. People are not sure what they are supposed to do or how they fit into the group. There may be conflict over leadership and roles within the group. Some leap to extremes, trying to take over and jumping to conclusions. Others hang back and wait, so they are often seen as "do-nothings." The people see themselves as individuals and not really a group. Personal agendas abound.

Forming - The second stage occurs when the group begins to form as a group. Individuals begin to "feel" that they are a group and they give up some of their personal sovereignty so that the group can perform. Conflicts diminish as people get to know each other better.

Norming - The third stage occurs when the group realizes - consciously or unconsciously - that they need to follow some set of values or norms in order for the group to perform well. Conflict over roles may still erupt occasionally, but most are satisfied with their role. There is less individuality (except for some strong persons). Decisions are made on how the agenda and discussion will work, who will be heard and when, and some formalization of procedures are developed.

Performing - The final stage occurs when the group sets aside individuality which inhibits the group's performance. Group members accept the group leadership and accept their own roles. Personal agendas become secondary. The focus has fully shifted from "Where do I fit in?" and "How will I get what I want?" to "How do we get the job done to our best ability?"

Appendix L - Transitions in Parish Leadership

Whenever a new pastor is appointed to a parish, the standing councils (both pastoral and finance) cease. It is the responsibility of the new pastor to reconstitute the existing councils or to conduct a new election of members within one year of his appointment.

Transitions in parish leadership are inevitable in the history of every parish. Careful planning by the pastor and parish communities involved can help to make these transitions smoother. The pastor and the parish pastoral council may choose to appoint an ad hoc transition team to assist the parish community and its leadership to move effectively through the process of transition from one parish leader to another when such occasion arises. It should endeavor to take advantage of services offered by the diocese to assist parishes during times of transition.

Some suggestions for parishes moving through the transition process:

- The diocesan publication, "Guidelines for Transition in Parish Leadership," an outline of which follows, is available to parishes preparing for transitions in parish leadership.
- Workshops can be presented by diocesan teams for interested parishes.
- For further assistance contact the diocesan offices of planning and/or human resources.

"Guidelines for Transition in Parish Leadership"

Content Outline

- I. The Phases of Transition
- II. Principles for Transition
- III. Role of the Transition Team
- IV. Guidelines for Planning
- V. Reading list
- VI. Outline for Parish Profile Development

Transition regarding Parish Finance Councils

Change in Parish Administration:

In the event the pastor of a parish dies, resigns or is transferred, the parish finance council ceases to function unless called upon to do so by the regional vicar or the incoming pastor. It is the prerogative of a newly appointed pastor to either confirm the present membership of the former parish finance council or choose to appoint new members. The pastor's final decision in this matter should occur within one year of his installation as pastor.

In the event the new pastor chooses to appoint new members, he is to do so only after giving proper notification to the previous parish finance council. When a parochial administrator is appointed to a parish because of the incapacity or ill health of the pastor, or for some other cause, the parochial administrator will assume the rights and responsibilities of the pastor in relation to the parish finance council. ("Called to Stewardship,")

Appendix M - Miscellaneous Quotes and Words of Wisdom

"Every baptized person shares in the mission that Jesus gave his Church. Baptism brings different privileges: realizing and understanding our relationship to God, hearing and proclaiming the Gospel message, growing in personal holiness and commitment, and living according to the teaching of Jesus and the Church, in praise and worship of the Father"

(“In Service of the Word”, Commission on Christian Education, Diocese of Richmond, 1976)

"For they (pastors) know that ... it is their duty to be shepherds of the faithful and to recognize their ministries and charisms so that everyone will with one mind, cooperate in the common task" ("The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church", art. 30)

"The faithful who by Baptism are incorporated into Christ, are placed in the People of God, and in their own way share the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, and to the best of their ability carry on the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world" (The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church", art. 31)

“May the faithful, therefore, live in very close union with the other men of their time, and may they strive to understand perfectly their way of thinking and judging, as expressed in their culture. Let them blend new sciences and theories and the understanding of the most recent discoveries with Christian morality and the teaching of Christian doctrine, so that their religious culture and morality may keep pace with scientific knowledge and with the constantly progressing technology. Thus they will be able to interpret and evaluate all things in a truly Christian spirit.”

(Gaudium et Spes, The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Sec.3, # 62, 1965)

"Let pastors recognize and promote the dignity as well as the responsibility of the laity in the Church" and "willingly make use of their prudent advice" ("The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" A. 37)

Christ, high priest and unique mediator, has made of the Church "a kingdom, priests for his God and Father. The whole community of believers is, as such, priestly. The faithful exercise their baptismal priesthood through their participation, each according to his own vocation, in Christ's mission as priest, prophet and king. Through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation the faithful are 'consecrated to be ... a holy priesthood'"

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1546)

While the common priesthood of the faithful is exercised by the unfolding of baptismal grace - a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life according to the Spirit -, the ministerial priesthood is at service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians. The ministerial priesthood is the means by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his Church. For this reason it is transmitted by its own sacrament, the sacrament of Holy Orders. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1547)

“The Church does more than welcome new members, she forms disciples.”

(United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, USCCB, p.6)

“While the church building is important, the worshipping community, “living stones built into a spiritual house” (1Pt 2:4-5) is of greater importance. Nevertheless, church buildings should be dignified enough to reflect the importance of what takes place there. They should be beautiful places that foster prayer and a sense of the sacred.” (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, USCCB, p.174)

“You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” (John 18:37)

Appendix N - Responsibilities of a Pastor - and a Parish

Responsibilities of a Pastor/Parish

The following responsibilities should be addressed in a viable parish community. The ultimate responsibility falls to the pastor, but the pastor may delegate some of the non-sacramental duties to a permanent deacon or another trained lay leader where appropriate.

- Pray daily, especially the Liturgy of the Hours (c. 276)
- Proclaim the word, principally by preaching (c. 528, 1)
- Offer catechetical instruction directly or with others (c. 528, 1)
- Foster works of social justice (c.528, 1)
- Encourage the return of those who've ceased to practice the faith (c. 528, 1)
- Celebrate the Holy Eucharist and all sacraments devoutly (c. 528,2)
- Promote frequent confession and make regular celebration of that sacrament possible (c.528, 2)
- Prevent abuses in the liturgy (c.528, 2)
- Assist in the preparation of couples for marriage, and assist at marriages (c.530, 4)
- Administer baptism and, where appropriate, confirmation (c.530, 1)
- Administer Viaticum and anointing of the sick; administer apostolic blessing where appropriate (c. 530,7)
- Preside at more solemn celebrations of the Eucharist on Sundays and holy days of obligation (c. 530,3)
- Represent the parish in all juridic affairs (c. 532)
- Care for the spiritual goods of the parish according to norms of cc. 1281-1284
- Preside at meetings of the parish pastoral and financial councils (cc. 536 § 1, 537)
- Promote evangelization and outreach (c. 211, c. 529 §1)
- Promote social action and social justice (c. 287 §1; c. 529 §2)
- Oversee finances, and care of buildings/assets; maintain parish records (cc. 532, 535; Cf. cc.1281-1288)
- Ensure communication within the parish and with diocesan offices (c. 529 §2)
- Oversee human resource matters including hiring, supervising, training and development of parish personnel in accordance with diocesan policies (c. 1286)
- In addition, the pastor and parishioners are encouraged to be involved in greater community building to promote ecumenism. (Cf. c. 256 §1)

Taken from "Our Journey of Faith, Led by the Holy Spirit:" A Pastoral Plan for the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, p. 21, 2008.

For by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man. He worked with human hands, He thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, He has truly been made one of us, like us in all things except sin.

-Gaudium et Spes, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, #22

Appendix O - Ministerially Complete and Vibrant Parish Community

The purpose of this description is to provide the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Commission with the criteria to be used as a guide in its parish evaluation process. This information will also be useful to Local Planning Committees in understanding the expectations for a parish.

The Church defines a parish as “a certain community of Christ's faithful stably established within a particular Church (i.e. diocese), whose pastoral care, under the authority of the diocesan Bishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor.” (c. 515) Parishes do not exist for themselves but are established within a diocese in order to facilitate carrying out of the mission entrusted to the Church by Jesus Christ.

The parish is where Catholics are first brought into the church as members and where they live out their faith in communion with the Lord and each other. Through the parish community, Catholics come to discover their gifts and recognize God’s call to use these gifts in the service of others. The Diocesan document *We Walk by Faith* helps to specify that mission by explaining how all parishes are expected to participate in some measure in providing Word, Worship, Service and Community. These are further defined as the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ as handed down through the Catholic Church, celebration of the Sacraments, especially the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist, ministering to the needs of our fellow men and women and living that faith as a community, particularly recognizing and fostering the role of the family, the Domestic Church.

All parish communities in the Diocese of Richmond must be actively engaged in carrying out the mission of Jesus. In order to do so as a ministerially complete and vibrant parish, the community will be evaluated by the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Commission using the criteria listed below.

1. Functional Criteria. According to the diocesan publication *We Walk by Faith* the underlying purpose of a parish is:

- a. A venue in which the saving word is proclaimed “so that all might grow in the love and knowledge of God” (2 Peter. 3:18)
- b. A place for the worship of the One by Whom, through Whom and in Whom we are saved (“We Walk by Faith,” pg. 6);
- c. A means for gathering believers in community (“We Walk by Faith,” pg. 11); and
- d. A springboard for the generous service of sisters and brothers inside and outside the Body of Christ, the Church (“We Walk by Faith,” pg. 18).

2. Structural criteria (What comprises a parish)

- a. A Community of all Catholics who live within the bounds of a parish; are part of the ethnic group for which the parish was established; or any person who does not meet the above criteria, but is a registered member or part of an ethnic group for which the parish has an established ministry.
- b. Pastor (c.519ff).
- c. Staff (paid or volunteer).
- d. A Parish Finance Council (c.537) and Pastoral Council (c.536).

- Our Journey of Faith...led by the Holy Spirit: A Pastoral Plan for the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, December, 2008, pg. 22.

Appendix P - GLOSSARY

Apostolate	following of God's people who live and spread His word
Canon Law	Universal Church law governing aspects of Church life and practice
Cluster	typically refers to two or more parishes that share resources, usually a priest as pastor, but other ministries are shared as well
Cluster Coordinator	is a paid administrative and pastoral position hired by a group of parishes to help manage the day to day workings between two or more parishes, including oversight of staff, liturgical schedules, ministries and facilities. The individual duties may vary from cluster to cluster within the Diocese of Richmond. The individual reports to a pastor.
Collaborative	working together
Collegial	having power equally vested among colleagues
Consensus	a process whereby the members of a group work to reach an agreement or conclusion that all, though not necessarily in total agreement, can still support
Constitution	a document that sets forth mission, function and structure of a parish pastoral council
Consultation	the bringing together of appropriate, informed parties to identify the best possible conclusions to issues
Consultative	councils participate in shaping the best responses to the pastor by providing information and advice on issues concerning parish and its activities
Conversion	ongoing change/transformation in the way one lives out the Gospel message in daily life
DPC - Diocesan Pastoral Council	presided over by the diocesan bishop, is a body which includes clergy, religious and laity specially chosen to investigate matters relating to pastoral activities, to consider them, and to formulate practical conclusions concerning them.
Diocesan Pastoral Planning Commission	is an eleven-member body, appointed by the bishop, to ensure the vitality of parishes and diocesan structures and advise the bishop on the effective and efficient use of pastoral resources
Discernment	a process of determining whether a position or conclusion is in accord with God's will rather than merely the will of the majority. It involves being open to the Spirit as expressed in Scripture, sacraments, tradition and the living experience of the community. It is not distinct from consensus process, rather offers elements enhancing it

Employed in Church Service	Canon 231 - (1). Laypersons that devote themselves permanently or temporarily to some special service of the Church are obliged to acquire the appropriate formation which is required to fulfill their function properly and to carry it out conscientiously, zealously, and diligently. (2). With due regard for canon 230 - (1), they have a right to a decent remuneration suited to their condition. By such remuneration they should be able to provide decently for their own needs and for those of their family with due regard for the prescriptions of civil law. They likewise have a right that their pension, social security and health benefits be duly provided.
Empowerment	providing resources, training, authority to individual(s) in following the Spirit to carry out specific programs and/or activities
Evangelization	being a Christian living and sharing the Gospel message with other individuals – communities
Finance Council	a community of parish servant leaders distinct from pastoral council, who are the advisory body to the pastor on all matters pertaining to parish finances
Formation	the life-long process of growing in one's faith and beliefs to become more Christ-like.
Goal	a relatively long-range target which directs actions and activities of individual/group, falls within the capacity and resources of individual/group to achieve, and specifies how and when accomplishment(s) will be evaluated
Laity	all faithful except those expressly ordained to sacred ministry
Liturgical	relating to or in accordance with prescribed forms of public worship
Local Planning Area	includes specific parishes in a defined geographic area, grouped for purposes of developing drafts of local plans for the diocesan strategic planning process
Local Planning Area Committee	is a group, comprised of members from each of the parishes (including the pastors) and campus ministers in a defined geographic area, that come together to develop the Local Plan for that designated geographic area
Merger	is used to describe the process of two or more parishes joining together to form one new parish community. Typically it will involve selecting a new building site for the combined parishes to celebrate and worship together in the future
Office of Pastoral Planning	is located at the Pastoral Center and staffed by two full-time people whose responsibilities include collecting and analyzing data concerning pastoral trends and providing technical and analytical support to parishes and other diocesan structures; the director of the office of Pastoral

Planning reports to the bishop and serves as staff to, and a member of, the Diocesan Pastoral Planning commission.

Parish a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a diocese

Parish Pastoral Council a community of parish servant leaders whose purpose is to assist the pastor in discerning through prayer and study, how the parish can best carry out the pastoral and spiritual mission of the church on the local level

Presbyteral Council (Priests Council) is an advisory group composed of priests who are to assist the diocesan bishop in his pastoral governance

Senior Pastoral Associate is a paid administrative and pastoral position hired by a pastor or group of pastors to help manage the day to day activities and ministries at a parish or group of parishes, including oversight of staff, liturgical schedules, parish council and finance council, all ministries and facilities. The individual reports to a pastor who is assigned by the bishop.

Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest (SCAP)

In case of emergency on Sunday, when a priest not available due to illness or unforeseen circumstances, the bishop gives permission for the implementation of the ritual, when it is not possible to attend Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. Guidelines for the implementation can be found on the Diocesan Office of Worship web-site at:

http://www.richmonddiocese.org/worship/docs/scap_policy.pdf

Suppress the canonical term used to end the existence of a parish. Commonly known as “closed.”

Vicariate Planning Committees are appointed by the three Episcopal vicars in each of the three

vicariates, which make recommendations to the pastoral planning commission based on their knowledge of their region regarding demographic changes and parish needs

Visionary having foresight, seeing beyond current status/limitations and developing goals to bring to reality what is desired; foresighted, one who provides a picture of what can be in the future

Note: The Glossary of Terms in this Appendix is compiled from the 1996 edition of CTS, p.53-55 and pg.19-20 of the Diocesan Document, “Our Journey of Faith...led by the Holy Spirit:” A Pastoral Plan for the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, 2008, on the diocesan website.

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