

Parish Pastoral Council Handbook

Diocese of Nashville

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Office of the Bishop

DIOCESE OF NASHVILLE

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January 15, 2004

Dear Members of the Diocese of Nashville:

Fulfillment of the mission entrusted by Jesus Christ to the Church for building up of the Kingdom of God in the world calls for the collaboration and the cooperation of all the faithful. On November 18, 1965, the Second Vatican Council issued the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People which in part affirmed:

"In dioceses, as far as possible, councils should be set up to assist the Church 's apostolic work whether in the field of evangelization and sanctification or in the fields of charity, social relations and the rest; the clergy and religious working with the laity in whatever way proves satisfactory. These councils can take care of mutual coordinating of the various lay associations and undertakings, the autonomy and particular nature of each remaining untouched. Such councils should be found too, if possible, at parochial, inter-parochial, inter-diocesan level, and also on the national and international plane " (Apostolicam actuositatem, 26).

During the years since 1965, the parish pastoral council has become a familiar and successful mechanism promoting the conciliar vision of shared collaboration among all members of the Church who by virtue of baptism and confirmation possess the right and the duty to be apostles. In order to promote pastoral action and ministry within the parish and community pastoral councils have been mandated in each of our parishes since 1983 (Statutes for Parishes of the Diocese of Nashville, 5, Order and Values). As a diocese, we continue to experience rapid growth; therefore, the need for parish councils to formulate policies and programs for pastoral action and ministry is as timely and crucial as ever.

To foster the formation and the optimal performance of such councils our diocesan Ministry Formation Services developed a Handbook for Parish Pastoral Councils. That handbook has now undergone a new update and revision that contains sound guidelines which I commend. Let us renew our commitment to Christ and his Gospel as we stand at the threshold of a new millennium, and may the Holy Spirit animate all our pastoral actions and ministries.

Faithfully and sincerely yours in Christ,

Edward U. Kmiec
Bishop of Nashville

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INTRODUCTION

The Second Vatican Council of 1962-1965 did not address the theology of the parish directly. It did, however, treat a variety of issues related to pastoral concerns including: the nature and mission of the Church in the modern world, liturgy, ecumenism, religious freedom, and the role of bishops, priests and laity in the Church. More specifically, the 1983 revision of the Code of Canon Law identified the parish as a "community of Christ's faithful established within a particular Church."

Today, the parish serves as the context for continuing the tradition of the early Church as a faith community who: listens and learns through catechesis - word; gathers for prayer and liturgy - worship; responds to human need - service; and cares for the gifts given - stewardship.

Ideally, pastoral leadership encourages the fullest possible participation of clergy, religious and laity in their common mission. Likewise, parish leadership develops the appropriate means which will allow for collaboration in consultation and planning, as well as in the various ministries of the parish.

Though the ways of participation in the mission of the Church take many forms, the Parish Pastoral Council remains a most promising way to make sure participation occurs. The council will be fruitful if it is grounded in faith and worship, and if it is formed and trained for its responsibility. Moreover, its work will be enhanced if its membership includes those carrying out the actual ministry of the parish.

Parishes within the Diocese of Nashville are a part of a Church in transition. As human and financial resources diminish, innovative ways of networking and collaborating are being discovered. Creative models of Parish Pastoral Councils are being born and nurtured. Cultural and ethnic diversity is an emerging strength. The Diocese of Nashville includes urban and suburban parishes within Metropolitan Nashville. Parishes outside the city vary in size, some very small and some growing rapidly because of expanding industries. And there are missions, small but alive and spirited. Clearly, one model of a Parish Pastoral Council no longer fits.

These new Guidelines address important issues related to the roles and functions of Parish Pastoral Councils. They are best used as a guide in forming councils that are designed to function successfully in very diverse parish situations.

MISSION

Parishes carry forward the work of the Church which continues and makes present the mission of Jesus. All Catholics are called through baptism and confirmation to share responsibility for this mission. In May of 1997, Bishop Edward Kmiec published the Diocesan Strategic Plan: **EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT**. He called the faithful of the diocese to share in a common mission and values.

MISSION

We the people of God of the Roman Catholic Church of Middle Tennessee are called to live and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ by:

Worshipping God in prayer and sacraments
Teaching and preaching the word of God
Loving God and serving our neighbors

Gifted and empowered by the Holy Spirit,
we commit ourselves to this mission
through responsible stewardship of our time,
talent and material resources.

VALUES

As a community of faith, we commit ourselves to the following shared responsibilities:

Fidelity to God and the Church
Solidarity and unity of purpose
Sharing our faith, hope and love
Welcoming and outreach
Witness through charity, service and stewardship
Respect for freedom, truth and life.

Chapter 1
GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 1: THE FORMATION OF PASTORAL COUNCILS SHOULD ALWAYS INCLUDE PRAYERFUL REFLECTION.

Experience within the Diocese of Nashville has shown that the Parish Pastoral Councils that have been effective have possessed a strong realization of the serious need for times of prayerful reflection on the ministry of pastoral service the Council offers the parish. This is especially true in light of the fact that Parish Pastoral Councils are involved in the whole ministerial life of the parish, not just in matters related to administration. It is only in prayer that the members of the parish and of the Parish Pastoral Council can come to a true appreciation of the Council's role as a visioning body.

GUIDELINE 2: THE ROLE OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL IS ESSENTIALLY PASTORAL AND VISIONARY.

The Parish Pastoral Council participates in the responsibility for pastoral ministry and not just the administration of the parish. Its purpose and goals are extensive. It should research the needs, the ideas, the hopes, the life and activity of the people of God, so that the whole parish community can effectively carry out the mission of the parish and fully participate in the ongoing conversion that is central to its life. The Parish Pastoral Council should constantly evaluate the parish in its conformity to the Gospel and those constitutive elements of the Gospel which call for understanding the implications of justice. In this sense, the Parish Pastoral Council shares in the decision making process which assists the pastor in carrying out the leadership role that is his within the parish.

GUIDELINE 3: PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS ARE CONSULTATIVE IN NATURE

The Church encourages pastors to build a sense of community within the parish, and promote the parish's communion with the broader ecclesial communities of the diocese and of the whole Church.

The Parish Pastoral Council assists the pastor in accomplishing these goals by exercising consultative responsibility. Consultative responsibility is rooted in the obligation of all the baptized to pursue the common good of the Church. It is present in the emerging consensus flowing from the combined gifts and multiple experiences of the people of God.

**GUIDELINE 4 MEMBERSHIP OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL
IS TO BE TRULY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PARISH.**

The number of members of the Parish Pastoral Council will vary depending on the parish and its size, character, and needs. Care should be taken to assure that its membership is large enough to assure adequate representation of groups and geographical sections. At the same time, its membership should be small enough to facilitate its functioning with ease.

In all cases the greater number of council members ought to be elected. The Council's constitution should determine whether all or a majority of the members are elected. It can also provide for the appointment by the pastor of some members, or it could make provision for some ex officio members, for example, representatives of parish societies and organizations.

The Constitution of the Parish Pastoral Council should contain a clear description of the selection process. It is important that terms of office be spelled out and that allowance be made for continuity, so that the total membership of the council would not leave office in the same year. It is also highly recommended that successive terms of office be limited to assure that there is a genuine rotation of membership on the Parish Pastoral Council.

**GUIDELINE 5: THE PASTOR IS TO PRESIDE OVER THE PARISH
PASTORAL COUNCIL.**

Canon 536, n.1, prescribes that the pastor presides over the Parish Pastoral Council. In virtue of his office the pastor presides over and ratifies the final decisions and their implementation guided by the universal law of the Church, diocesan statutes and civil law.

While the pastor is actively involved in the decision making process, the Council selects from among its members a chairperson who conducts the meetings. This model expresses the underlying theological principle of collegiality, that is, representative members of the parish forming one body with their pastor in caring for the life and ministry of the parish. The selection of a chairperson stands as a visible sign of shared responsibility. Finally, from a practical point of view, when the pastor is freed from conducting the meeting, he is at the same time enabled to be more attentive to the thoughts, ideas and plans that are being expressed.

GUIDELINE 6: THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL AND THE PARISH FINANCE BOARD ARE INTERDEPENDENT.

The Parish Pastoral Council is responsible for the pastoral life and ministry of the parish (worship, ministry, etc.); the Parish Finance Board, mandated by Canon 537 of the Code of Canon Law, is responsible for parish financial administration. The Parish Pastoral Council is to be representative of the whole parish in its membership; membership on the Finance Board looks to persons skilled in finances, civil law and business (Canon 492).

Despite these distinctions, the two groups are interrelated because both are concerned with the life and ministry of the parish. The Parish Pastoral Council looks to the Finance Board for the resources needed to implement its vision; the Finance Board looks to the Parish Pastoral Council for the development of the vision of the parish. The interdependence can be realized in more than one way.

Example 1: The Finance Board is established canonically as a separate body, but may function as a committee of the Parish Pastoral Council.

Example 2: A representative of the Finance Board attends all meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council to insure that each group is informed of the plans and principles of the other.

GUIDELINE 7: THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL SHOULD INCLUDE ONLY THOSE OFFICERS NEEDED FOR THE EFFICIENT FUNCTIONING OF THE COUNCIL.

The officers serve the Parish Pastoral Council by coordinating its meetings and facilitating the implementation of its decisions. It is recommended, therefore, that there be only those officers needed for the efficient functioning of the Parish Pastoral Council.

GUIDELINE 8: THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL SHOULD ESTABLISH THOSE COMMITTEES OR COMMISSIONS WHICH WILL DIRECTLY ASSIST IN THE WORK OF THE PARISH.

Committees are the usual way in which bodies such as a Parish Pastoral Council research data for their deliberations and implement their vision. Some committees are standing committees, caring for ongoing needs of the council such as selections, membership or finances; others are ad hoc, that is, related to specific concerns. Care should be taken lest committees be established which have no specific function. Standing committees and their specific responsibilities should be included in the constitution. Their function should be reviewed regularly.

GUIDELINE 9: THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL IS LINKED TO OTHER CONSULTATIVE BODIES OF THE LARGER CHURCH.

The Parish Pastoral Council should have consistent contact with the Diocesan Pastoral Council when this is established by the Bishop. This contact is made within the guidelines developed.

GUIDELINE 10: THE CONSTITUTION IS THE DOCUMENT WHICH GOVERNS THE OPERATION OF A PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL.

From all that has been said, it is apparent that the constitution of the Parish Pastoral Council governs its operation. Therefore, it is essential that each parish have a carefully prepared constitution for its Council. The following information should be included in that constitution:

1. **The Name of the Organization.**
The proper corporate name of the parish should always be used rather than an abbreviation (e.g., "The Parish Pastoral Council of the Church of Saint John" is to be preferred to "Parish Pastoral Council of St. John's Church")
2. **The Council's Purpose**
Here, the focus of the constitution would be on the Council's representative nature relative to the parish community in offering counsel to the pastor on matters affecting the life and ministry of the parish community.
3. **Membership**
The constitution should state explicitly how the membership is constituted and, if more than one means is used for establishing its membership, the proportion of elected members to appointed and or ex officio members. It should also express clearly the term of office of each member. It will also have to make provision for vacancies by reason of death, resignation, inability to continue in office or some other cause.
4. **Officers**
The constitution should designate the officers of the Parish Pastoral Council, the manner of their selection, term of office and general responsibilities.
5. **Meetings**
The constitution should specify at least the minimum number of meetings each year and their regularity, as well as the principles governing open meetings as opposed to executive sessions.

6. **Committees**
The constitution should name the standing committees and their responsibilities.
7. **Amendments**
The constitution should describe clearly the requirements to be fulfilled to amend the constitution and by-laws.
8. **By-laws**
By-laws govern the conduct of business of the Parish Pastoral Council, including rules governing elections, the conducting of meetings, etc.

GUIDELINE 11: THE CONSTITUTION OF PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS SHOULD BE PRESENTED TO THE BISHOP FOR CONFIRMATION.

Canon 536 places the establishment of Parish Pastoral Councils under the governmental authority of the Diocesan Bishop. The confirmation process allows him or his delegate opportunity to discern whether or not particular constitutions correspond with these Diocesan Guidelines.

Chapter 2 Parish Pastoral Planning

Parish pastoral planning is a process of analyzing and prioritizing needs and developing goals related to those needs. It includes a process for the implementation of goals within the limits of the purpose and the resources of the organization, as well as a process of evaluation.

Parish pastoral planning is distinguished from corporate and civic planning. It incorporates theological reflection into the planning process, bringing the light of the Gospel and our tradition of faith to the pastoral situation at hand.

Areas of Parish Pastoral Planning

Parish pastoral planning develops goals, policies and parameters for the use of resources. It can be applied to short- and long-term goals. Three types of pastoral planning exist: broad directional planning, development of strategies and the development of effective administrative structures and procedures to implement the plans.

Parish Pastoral Councils focus on directional and strategic planning. The administrative structure of the parish, which includes the pastor, pastoral staff, committees and organizations are focused on administrative planning.

Type of Planning	Purpose	Result	Who
Directional	develop mission	Mission Statement	Parish Pastoral Council
Strategic	choose strategies to promote the mission	Short and Long Terms Goals	Parish Pastoral Council
Administrative	establish administrative structures, procedures and programs or activities	Administrative Objectives	Pastor, staff, committees, organizations

Parish Pastoral Councils: Directional and Strategic Planning

Directional planning results in statements of mission and direction. It seeks answers to questions such as: Who are we? What is our unique identity within the context of the diocesan and universal Church? Where are we called to go? What are our priorities? Directional decisions concern the mission and long range goals of the parish in the context of the larger Church.

Strategic planning focuses more on specific issues or pastoral needs which have broad ramifications (as opposed to administrative concerns). These issues or needs may include areas such as worship, education, community building, service to those in need, etc.

It is primarily the responsibility of the Parish Pastoral Council to assist the pastor in directional and strategic planning. Consultation with the parish membership, leadership and staff by the Parish Pastoral Council is essential to the integrity of the process. As the pastor consults with the Council, so the Council itself is called to consult with other parish leadership and parishioners in general, in its planning process. The Parish Pastoral Council must ensure that systems are in place to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of goals, priorities, policies and resource allocations.

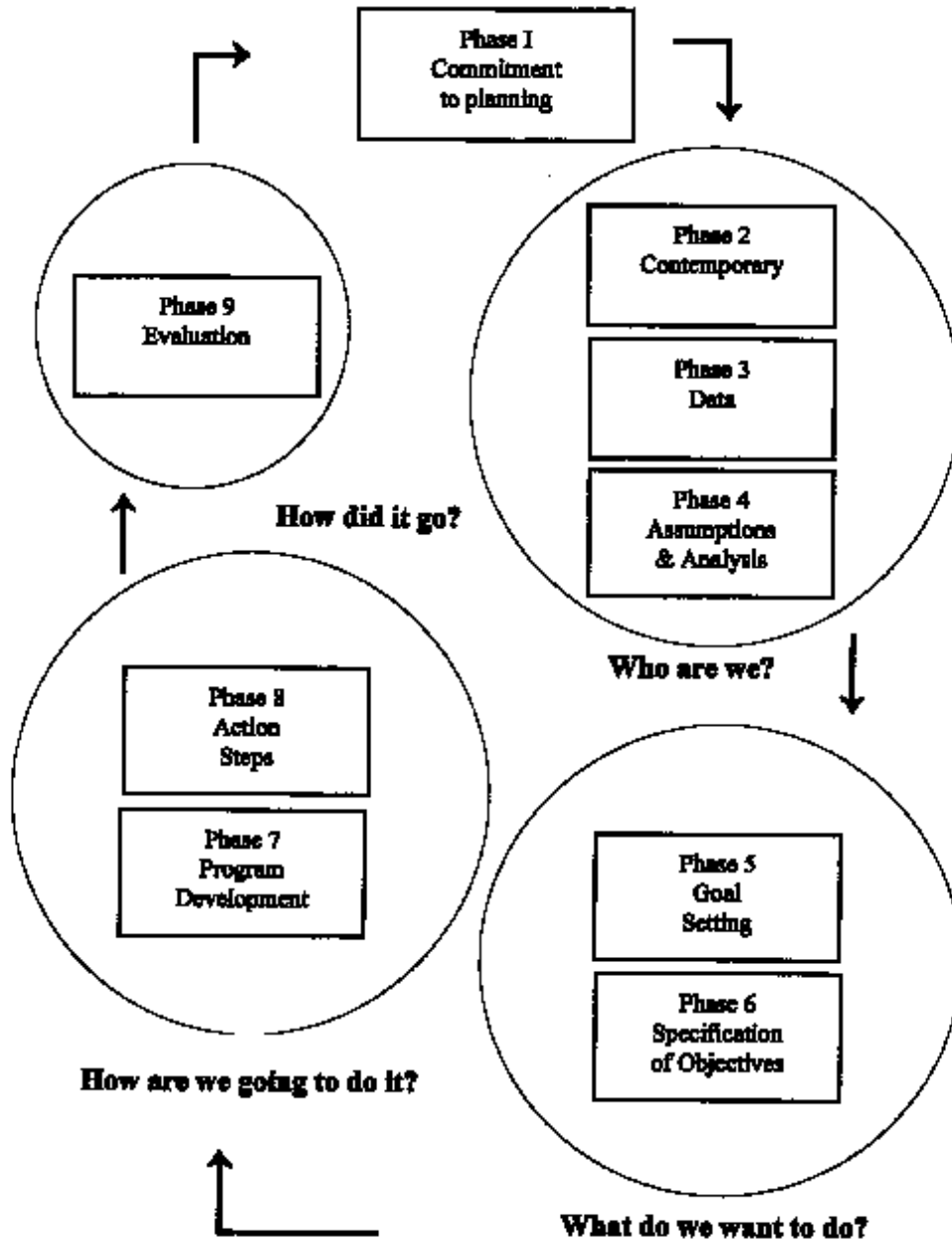
Usually, the Parish Council forms a planning committee to lead any planning process.

Parish Pastoral Staff and Organizations: Administrative Planning for Implementation

Administrative planning focuses on the development of administrative objectives. When objectives are implemented, programs or activities result. Through administrative and operational planning, the staff develops, organizes and manages the human and financial resources necessary to carry out parish goals.

Administrative planning is done by the pastor, staff, organizations or committees and may involve consultation with the Parish Finance Board and the Parish Pastoral Council.

What is Planning?



The Parish Pastoral Council is involved in Phase 1 through Phase 6 of the Pastoral Planning Process. Phase 6 through Phase 8 become the role of the Administrative Structure of the parish. It is wise to involve both the Parish Administration and the Council in Phase 9, the evaluation procedures.

PLANNING PROCESS OUTLINE

KEY ELEMENTS IN PLANNING:

- Mission** Why do we exist?
- Values** What do we stand for?
- Goals** What do we want to do?
- Objectives** How do we get it done?
- Action Steps** Short term actions?
- Evaluation** How do we measure ourselves?

GOALS:

- Name what we want to do, are committed to do
- Set long-term direction
- Change infrequently, but always subject to review
- Expand on, flow from mission
- Lead to specific, action-oriented objectives

OBJECTIVES:

- State how we wish to accomplish our goals
- Are consistent with mission
- Flow from and reinforce goals
- Lead to specific programs and activities
- Change more frequently as they are accomplished or as circumstances change

ACTION STEPS:

- State how objectives will be implemented
- Are descriptive of specific programs and activities
- Flow from and reinforce objectives
- Change frequently in planning, revision and review

EVALUATION:

- Names the person who is responsible for particular action steps
- Has a definite timeline (beginning, status check, completion)
- Measures objectives and action steps
- Is monitored in quarterly review meetings

Chapter 3

Methods and Principles of Operation

In its proceedings, the Parish Pastoral Council is always conscious:

Mission

of the mission of the universal as well as local Church and draws its motivation from this mission.

Collaboration

of working together in a joint effort. In the Church, the belief that every baptized person is gifted and called to ministry is the basis for collaboration (Collaborative Ministry, Sofield and Juliano p. 11). Each member of the Church, has the right and duty to participate in the Church's mission among all people. Shared responsibility flows from the "oneness" which is a part of the nature of the Church. We are united by a common faith, one baptism, and a common mission, namely the mission which Jesus has entrusted to the Church. Shared responsibility means that each person can offer unique insight into God's truth for the direction of the parish in light of the mission and that we share this truth through dialogue. In our time, the Parish Pastoral Council is one of the primary structures in the Church for making shared responsibility a practical reality.

Subsidiarity

of entrusting decisions to the appropriate person or group. Subsidiarity means that issues are dealt with and policies are established at the proper level of responsibility and competency.

Relationship to the Pastor

of its relationship to the pastor. It is diocesan custom that the bylaws should provide for the delegation of his responsibilities to a chair person elected in accordance with the bylaws. Only with the pastor can a parish form a Parish Pastoral Council.

Meetings

that local guidelines specify the number, time and place of meetings. The Agenda Committee plans the meetings and communicates in advance to all council members the agenda items to be discussed. It is important that each member comes prepared to participate and contribute to council meetings. Prayer and formation should be included as part of each meeting's agenda.

In its proceedings, the Parish Pastoral Council is always conscious:

Agenda

that the Agenda Committee prepares the agenda for each council meeting. Ordinarily the agenda for all meetings flows from the mission statement and the goals and objectives. The Council plans creative ways to assess pastoral needs of the community and this assessment is the basis for setting goals and agenda.

that the pastor, any councilor or parishioner may propose items for the agenda to be considered by the Agenda Committee. This Committee may take one of three actions: (1) place the item on the meetings agenda; (2) forward the item to an appropriate group or person; (3) reject the item and notify the proponent with an explanation.

that items should be placed on the agenda with a time frame in mind. It is better to address one or two items fully and to move them toward resolution than to review a long list of items and reports with no conclusions.

that the council's guidelines should specify how and when items may be submitted for Executive Committee consideration.

Focus

that the focus for the agenda is on the mission and goals of the parish, addressing only one or two goals at a time.

Consultation

that consultation is a means for participation of the laity in the Church's mission. The Parish Pastoral Council, a consultative body, provides a structure whereby the members listen to the Spirit speaking through each person. In listening to one another, and through research and study, the Council seeks to arrive at consensus on significant issues in order to develop recommendations for the spiritual growth and pastoral activity of the parish. The Council may choose to consult with people not on the Council, who possess a particular expertise regarding the issue under consideration.

Discernment

that the Council makes consensus decisions through a process called discernment. This process involves prayer and reflection, gathering of evidence, discussion of positive and negative factors and confirmation by the group. The discernment process enables the Council to make consensus decisions.

In its proceedings, the Parish Pastoral Council is always conscious:

Consensus

that consensus is the process of arriving at a decision through open discussion and the resolution of major discrepancies. Without compromising any strong conviction or needs, consensus results in a decision that all members of the group can accept and uphold.

Conflict Resolution

that the Council should set general guidelines for conflict resolution. It is suggested that the guidelines recommended by John Burns be reviewed and considered by the group. (New Practical Guide for Parish Councils, Rademacher and Rodgers, p.15 1.)

Evaluation

that the Council plan for regular evaluation of its meetings, other activities, the work of its committees and its effectiveness as a consultative body. Evaluation processes should at times include participation from parish organizations and staff.

Policy Development

that the Parish Pastoral Council recommend and develop policy. A policy development process may involve:

- research and data gathering/needs assessment
- determining several alternatives
- recommending a policy
- implementation by pastor, staff and organizations
- evaluation

Generally, subsidiarity allows policies to be developed at the appropriate level. Policy making should occur with those possessing the necessary expertise in the particular area of concern. Councils formulate policy of a broad nature, effecting the overall direction of the parish.

Chapter 4

Norms for Parish Pastoral Councils

EXISTENCE

Every parish of the Diocese of Nashville is encouraged to have a Parish Pastoral Council. Canon 536 #1 states, "If, after consulting the Council of Priests, the diocesan Bishop considered it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish. In this Council, which is presided over by the pastor, Christ's faithful, together with those who by virtue of their office are engaged in pastoral care in the parish, give their help in fostering pastoral action."

NATURE

The Parish Pastoral Council is a consultative body which makes recommendations to the pastor regarding the pastoral needs of the parishioners. Canon 536 #2 states, "The pastoral council has only a consultative vote, and it is regulated by the norms laid down by the diocesan Bishop."

PURPOSE

The Parish Pastoral Council exercises shared responsibility for the pastoral life of the parish under the authority and leadership of the pastor. In this context the purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council is to prayerfully engage the people and the pastor in common reflection about the parish's mission and ministry. The Parish Pastoral Council has four basic responsibilities:

- to research the needs, the ideas and the hopes of the faith community;
- to lead a process for identifying the parish mission and involving parishioners in that mission;
- to encourage and support existing ministries;
- to plan for the parish's future by recommending procedures and programs that will fulfill the Church's mission.

AUTHORITY

The pastor, whose leadership calls forth the gifts and talents of parishioners, presides over the Parish Pastoral Council. He fully participates in all the deliberations of the council. He oversees the implementation process and is the final decision maker. In his pastoral role he:

- assures that the scope of the Parish Pastoral Council's concerns reflect the mission of the Church.
- is the spiritual leader, who enables the Parish Pastoral Council to build a community of faith in an atmosphere of trust among council members, making certain that they receive adequate resources, formation and information.

- leads in formulating the agenda.
- shares in the dialogue that leads to the development of those pastoral ministries required in the parish.
- oversees the implementation of recommendations formulated jointly with the Council.

MEMBERSHIP

Members of the Parish Pastoral Council include the Pastor, all priests who minister at the parish, staff engaged in ministry and laity. The members of the Parish Pastoral Council represent the interests and pastoral needs of the parish community.

Membership on the Parish Pastoral Council, except for those who are members by reason of their position, is to be determined in a manner which allows for the participation of the parish community. A discernment process is strongly recommended.

Members of the Parish Pastoral Council, except for those who are members by reason of their position, shall have a limited term.

ROLES

The pastor is the president at all meetings. As pastor, he is the spiritual leader of the Parish Pastoral Council.

The Parish Pastoral Council selects a Chairperson and other Officers from among its members. The chairperson conducts all meetings.

The pastor, chairperson and other members form an agenda committee which meets prior to the Council meeting, to formulate the agenda.

Committees, both permanent and ad hoc are formed as deemed necessary.

The relationship of parish organizations to the Parish Pastoral Council is defined by the Council after consultation with the organization and in light of the mission of the parish.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Each Parish Pastoral Council defines its Operational Procedures after carefully studying the Diocesan Guidelines and analyzing the parish needs and structures. Chapter 5 describes areas usually defined in the Operational Guidelines.

Chapter 5

Operational Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils

Local guidelines give direction and govern the operation of Parish Pastoral Councils. Each parish is asked to prepare guidelines for its Council. The following information should be included in the local guidelines:

Parish Name

The legal name of the parish is to be stated in the guidelines.

Parish Mission Statement

A parish mission statement is the community's description of its purpose and reason for existence. Each parish, because it is a distinct community of the Christian Faithful, has its own sense or spirit of mission which needs to be articulated. The mission statement expresses the underlying principles and values for ministry in the parish and helps to set goals for future planning.

Purpose and Functions

The purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council is to lead the parish in a pastoral planning process which results in goals and objectives. Goals and objectives may change, but should be included in the Operational Guidelines.

Membership

Each parish determines how the members of the Parish Pastoral Council can best represent the interests and pastoral needs of the parish community. The guidelines state explicitly how the membership is constituted, when, how and by whom. The term of office of each member is to be stated clearly and provision made for vacancies.

Leadership

The guidelines designate the leaders of the Parish Pastoral Council, the manner of their selection, their term of office and their responsibilities.

Meetings

The guidelines specify the number of meetings each year and their regularity. Procedures for calling special meetings should be clearly stated.

Agenda

The guidelines explain how items may be proposed for the agenda.

Committees

The guidelines explain the process for forming permanent and ad hoc committees.

Changes to the Guidelines

The guidelines should be reviewed, evaluated and revised on a regular basis.

Chapter 6

The People: Membership, Roles and Relationships

Membership

The Parish Pastoral Council is composed of the pastor, members of the pastoral staff and members of the parish. All priests assigned to ministry in the parish are members of the Council and fully participate in council deliberations.

Criteria for Membership

The Parish Pastoral Council members should have a degree of competency in the skills demanded in a collaborative ministry and an openness to discern and reflect the diversity of the parish community.

Members should be:

- baptized Catholics in good standing with the Church;
- persons who support and enable parish life;
- persons who are willing to participate in ongoing formation.

Councilors bring three qualities to the ministry:

a commitment to prayer, gospel values and growth in personal holiness;
a knowledge of the mission of Jesus, the Church and the parish, its ministries and people;
skills in group process, communication and collaboration.

Size

To facilitate group interaction, Parish Pastoral Councils are generally no larger than fifteen persons, including the pastor.

Selection Process

There are a variety of options for selecting members. The method used for selection should promote ownership throughout the parish for participating in the mission of the parish and promoting the work of the Council.

Two distinct and competing ways of choosing Parish Pastoral Council members predominate at present: choosing them from parish organizations and committees or choosing them from the parish at large. These two methods champion different values. Parishes that favor "at large" candidacy want members with a broad representation.

Parishes that emphasize existing parish groups as sources for members want motivated and informed members.

Both values are important. Regardless of the method of selection, council members serve the entire parish. They are not there to represent only one constituency.

Terms of Office

Terms of office may vary from parish to parish. Ordinarily, a two or three-year term with the possibility of a second term is acceptable. Sometimes it is good to consider a one-year lapse between terms. Terms for members should be staggered to provide for continuity of the Council.

If a council member is unable to complete a term of office, it is appropriate to send a letter of resignation to the Pastor and the Chairperson. If the behavior of a member of the Council seriously impedes the work of the group, the Pastor and the Chairperson should approach the council member regarding the matter and assist the council member to make appropriate changes.

A statement regarding the handling of vacancies should be provided in the operational guidelines or bylaws of the local Council.

It is important that the parish be informed about the procedures regarding terms on the Council and that policies regarding the terms for members are in written form and implemented in a consistent matter.

Responsibilities

The Agenda Committee plans the meetings for the Council.

The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson are responsible for conducting meetings and involving all members.

The secretaries keep minutes and records for the Council and also are responsible for written communications to parishioners and other groups. Each parish determines whether the secretary participates in Council deliberations.

Committees

The Council forms committees as needed, to implement council recommendations in collaboration with appropriate bodies or groups. This frees the Council to continue planning in light of the mission and goals. This also involves more baptized persons from the parish in actively building the parish community.

Committees are groups which are formed to collaborate with pastor and staff in implementing programs or policies, or in studying and evaluating a particular topic. Some committees will be ongoing, such as a liturgy committee and will operate within guidelines almost independently, but will be linked to the Parish Community through their Parish Pastoral Council liaison. These committees may be ministry oriented. Other committees will be temporary, ad hoc groups organized for a specific purpose or task. It is wise to avoid an extensive number of committees.

When appointing a committee, the Parish Pastoral Council clarifies a job description, delineates responsibilities, suggests a timeline, and defines reporting and evaluative procedures. Upon completion of its work or the expiration of its timeline, the committee is closed by the Parish Pastoral Council.

Every Parish Pastoral Council periodically evaluates each of its committees in light of new circumstances and changing priorities in the parish. After a number of years, the committees may no longer be relevant, and practical adjustments are necessary. It is recommended that the committee self-evaluate annually.

Roles

The following is a summary of the roles for each group included in the Council, namely the pastor, staff and councilors

I. COMMON ROLES SHARED BY THE ENTIRE COUNCIL

All Members of the Council

- fully participate in and contribute to Council deliberations;
- share information and data regarding Pastoral needs of the community;
- assist in developing the Parish Pastoral plan, goals and objectives;
- communicate effectively with the entire parish.

II. SPECIFIC ROLES OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Pastor

- Initiates formation or renewal of Parish Pastoral Council
- As a spiritual leader, encourages and affirms Parish Pastoral Council.
- Fully participates at all meetings.

Staff

- Share expertise in ministry, communication skills and resources.
- Help to link the Parish Pastoral Council with other members of the staff and assist in bringing Parish Pastoral Council recommendations to the appropriate committee or organization.

Parish Pastoral Council Members

- Discern the interests and Pastoral needs of the parish community.
- Actively seek information and direction from the pastor, staff and community

Finance Board

Canon 537 of the Code of Canon Law states that the Parish Finance Board is a mandated body having an advisory and consultative role with the pastor regarding the administration of parish finances and of parish properties. While the Finance Board has responsibility for the stewardship of parish financial resources, it is not the role of the Finance Board to recommend directions, priorities, or programs other than those related to its delegation - fiscal stewardship.

The Finance Board is not part of the Parish Pastoral Council. It is a part of the parish administrative structure and acts only in an advisory and consultative manner to the pastor, assisting with professional financial information.

Since the Parish Pastoral Council sets direction and priorities, it is important that financial information regarding resources be available to members. Therefore, appropriate means of communication should be developed between the Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Board, to insure that directions and priorities recommended by the Parish Pastoral Council and parish leaders are within the financial limits of the parish and can be supported.

Parish Organizations

Parish organizations usually have separate agenda and meet separately from the Parish Pastoral Council. Organizations are involved in the goal setting for the entire parish and should set their own goals in light of the parish mission and parish goals. Organizations should report to the parish at the Parish Pastoral Council's annual parish assembly. On occasion, a parish organization, in collaboration with the Parish Pastoral Council and staff, implements a recommendation made by the Parish Pastoral Council.

Sometimes Parish Pastoral Councils have included in their membership a person from each parish organization, who reports to the Council on the activities of the organization. This can be time consuming and often prevents the development of a Pastoral plan for the entire parish. A meeting of parish organization chairs once or twice a year, or as deemed necessary, can be an effective means for calendar development and a regular report of achievements. One or more representatives for all parish organizations may be selected to serve on the Parish Pastoral Council.

The role of the representative(s) would be to help organizations to share responsibility for addressing the parish mission and goals.

It is recommended that the roles and relationships of the various parish organizations be seriously discussed by both the Parish Pastoral Council and the organization before any collaborative plans are developed.

Small Christian Communities

The Parish Pastoral Council is to develop a vision and set goals for the entire parish. Part of this vision may include the formation or support of small Christian communities. The small Christian community addresses the pastoral and spiritual needs of a small group, while maintaining unity with the parish as a whole. Often, up to 20 percent of the parish will join small communities. Therefore, the small Christian communities should be treated as any other committee.

The small Christian community structure does not replace the Parish Pastoral Council, nor does the Parish Pastoral Council govern the small Christian community.

Parish Pastoral Councils may want to recommend and support the small Christian community concept as a means of addressing pastoral needs and goals.

Chapter 7 COMMITTEES

Committees are the working bodies which enable the Parish Pastoral Council to function effectively. The primary responsibilities of committees are:

1. To implement the vision of the council
2. To provide opportunities for all parishioners to use their gifts and talents inservice to the mission of the church.

TASKS OF EACH COMMITTEE

- To pray and reflect together
- To educate itself concerning its areas of responsibility
- To plan ways to implement its goals and objectives
- To submit a budget, along with goals for the year, for approval by the council
- To communicate regularly with the council

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

- Member of Parish Pastoral Council
- Staff persons, if any, responsible for area of committee's responsibility.
- Persons with experience, skills, knowledge and interest in area
- Persons representative of the parish as a whole

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF MEMBERS

- Personal contact is the best approach for recruiting committee members. Use the Gospel message to motivate and to call persons to service.
- Create an awareness in the prospective member of the experience, skill and knowledge he/she may contribute to a specific area.
- Be specific about commitment of time and responsibilities entailed. Let them know they are expected to participate in orientation, in diocesan workshops, and parish council retreats.

COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION

- Chairperson should be elected and is not a member of the Parish Pastoral Council
- Structure meeting to include
 - Prayer and reflection
 - Reports on programs and activities
 - Discussion of issues
 - Study
 - Socializing
- Plan for orientation of new members and ongoing education
- Familiarize committee members with
 - Parish vision, goals, objectives and action steps
 - Responsibilities of committee
 - Diocesan Guidelines and resources
 - Survey parish needs in areas of responsibility
 - Develop a mission statement
 - Set goals, objectives and action steps and evaluate in light of the mission statement
 - Provide written reports to council
 - goals and plans
 - calendar for the year
 - budget request
 - information gathered from parishioners
 - periodic progress reports
 - annual report
- Pray together and strive to form community

WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL LIFE COMMITTEE

Liturgy is the "summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time, it is the foundation from which her power flows. It is in the Liturgy that we celebrate who we are and what we believe as a Christian community."

Vatican II Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy

PURPOSE

The overall purpose of the Worship and Spiritual Life Committee is to plan and provide for the spiritual development of members of the parish through liturgical celebrations, prayer experiences, and programs for spiritual enrichment. This committee plans periodic ecumenical services. It works to provide a climate in which young people may discern their Christian vocations.

SUGGESTED MEMBERSHIP

- Pastor or Associate Pastor
- Deacon
- Chairpersons or liaison with sub-committees on Worship, Vocations, Environment, Ecumenism, etc.
- Staff member who is hired as a Liturgist
- Representatives of parish organizations concerned with spiritual life
- Representatives of ecumenical groups

FUNCTIONS

- To assess effectiveness of all present programs and organizations involved in the spiritual development of members of the parish.
- To set goals, objectives and action steps for short and long range spiritual development of members of the parish.
- To pray together, share faith, and educate self to fulfill the responsibilities of this committee
- To analyze and identify developing liturgical needs of the parish.
- To work in close collaboration with the pastor, parish priests, deacons and all liturgical ministers
- To develop ways to encourage vocations in all walks of life; ordained ministry, religious life, single life, married life.
- To promote and participate in programs with neighboring churches of other denominations.
- To coordinate the activities of all parish liturgical ministries; to provide formation for all liturgical ministers.
- To present an annual budget to the Parish Pastoral Council

RELATIONSHIPS

The Worship and Spiritual Life Committee always serves the Parish Pastoral Council as do all other committees. It does not function in isolation from the council and other committees as all are bonded together in the Body of Christ. Constantly aware of the parish mission statement and the goals of the council, this committee proposes to the council what it believes will help the parish move toward living the mission statement.

The Worship and Spiritual Life Committee cooperates with all other committees of the Parish Pastoral Council when planning in areas that overlap, such as Education, Evangelization, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, etc..

PARISH LIFE AND EVANGELIZATION COMMITTEE

Experiences of community inspire us to share our Good News and experiences of being evangelized lead us to seek a community in which to live and celebrate our faith. Vibrant, spirit-filled parish communities commit themselves to continuing renewal of their own Catholic faith, to extending hospitality and welcome to those who have no Church nor faith tradition, and finally to witnessing to the faith in society by living Gospel values in the arenas of family, neighborhood, workplace, city, town and state.

Evangelization is the essential mission of the Church ...

*She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say,
in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace,
and to reconcile sinners to God...*

The Christian community is never closed in upon itself.

*The intimate life of this community...
only acquires its full meaning when it becomes a witness...*

*Thus it is the whole Church that receives the mission to evangelize and the
work of each individual member is important for the whole.*

On Evangelization in the Modern World, 14-15, Pope Paul VI, 1975

PURPOSE

- To build and strengthen the parish community as a means of support for all the people of God.
- To challenge and assist individual parishioners and the parish community as a whole in developing an understanding and commitment to evangelization as basic to living their Catholic faith.
- To promote parish ministries that reach out to invite and welcome into the Church community, inactive or alienated Catholics and others who have no church or faith tradition.

SUGGESTED MEMBERSHIP

Persons with some of the following traits or experiences might make good committee members

- Active Catholics with real enthusiasm for their faith
- Good listeners and communicators
- Persons who have been through a conversion experience such as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Cursillo, Charismatic Renewal, Search
- Members of small Christian communities
- Team members or sponsors for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
- Persons who have returned to the Church after having been inactive or alienated

FUNCTIONS

- To study and reflect on Church documents and resources for Catholic evangelization and community life.
- To be concerned with the renewal of parish life and building community among all parish members, including new members.
- To encourage parish-wide support of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults process.
- To explore ways for reaching out to alienated and hurting Catholics as well as to those in the neighboring community who have no church affiliation.
- To develop a relationship with other parish groups in order to promote evangelization as a lens for viewing all parish ministries and the renewal of parish structures.
- To foster active and personal religious experience among parishioners through participation in small communities or other communal experiences where the Good News is shared and applied to daily life.
- To assist the parish in becoming a more effective welcoming and hospitable community.
- To foster a greater appreciation and acceptance of diversity of age, culture, ethnicity, race, income, etc. as a gift and source of strength for the parish and surrounding community.
- To encourage and assist parishioners to share their faith within the larger society and culture in order to bring about social change.
- To prepare and submit a budget to the parish pastoral council.

RELATIONSHIPS

Members of this committee work closely with members of the Parish Pastoral Council in achieving the goals of the parish mission statement. They also work with other committees of the Parish Pastoral Council, such as the Education Committee, Family Life Committee, Worship and Spiritual Life Committee, Social Action Committee and Communications Committee in planning for growth, development and outreach to all the People of God.

EDUCATION AND FORMATION COMMITTEE

The Church continues the mission of Jesus, to bring about God's kingdom. This one mission is ever being accomplished through three ministries: Word, Worship and Service. Every form of catechesis is a participation in the ministry of the Word and therefore a participation in the mission of Jesus and the Church.

Each parish council must have an education commission to promote religious education and formation activities for all members of the parish.

ORDERS AND VALUES DIOCESE OF NASHVILLE Parish Statutes 5.3

PURPOSE

- To create an awareness within the faith community of the responsibility of all the faithful for the catechetical mission of the Church.
- To recommend policy for the catechetical ministry to adults, children, youth and persons with special religious education needs.
- To promote, coordinate and evaluate the total Christian educational ministry of the parish.
- To make recommendations to promote the faith growth of the whole community.
- To assist in linking catechetical, liturgical and service ministries.

SUGGESTED MEMBERSHIP

- Parish Pastoral Council member
- Director of Religious Education
- Principal, if there is a school
- Coordinator of Adult Education
- Youth Minister
- Coordinator of Young Adult ministry
- Liaison from School Board
- Persons with talents, interest and knowledge in committee's areas of responsibility.

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

- Christian education and formation of adults and children
- Parochial School
- Youth ministry
- Young adult ministry
- Special Religious Education

FUNCTIONS

- To promote the faith life of the parish, the Education Committee, in collaboration with the professional staff, provides an effective catechetical program for all the members of the parish
- To become informed about contemporary catechetics, the educational and formational needs of the parish, and the present program designed to meet those needs through
 - initial orientation of members
 - study of the philosophy of Christian education, diocesan guidelines for religious education, and ongoing renewal of understanding of basic teachings of Church
 - participation in diocesan workshops and parish retreats
 - becoming informed about curriculum, catechist certification, activities, facilities, and service to all groups and age level
- To become actively involved in the religious education process by
 - Informing parish members about the aims of religious education
 - Participating in and promoting existing programs
 - Helping coordinate all parish educational activities: parish school, catechesis of children and youth, young adult and adult catechesis and formation
 - Approving religious education and school budgets (Parish Statutes 5.4, 7.3 and 7.5)
 - Providing written monthly reports to parish pastoral council
 - Making recommendations for future directions and priorities
 - Reviewing all existing educational policies, programs and activities by:
 - Examining effectiveness of present program and how well each age level is being served
 - Reviewing performance of catechetical personnel in light of existing job descriptions

- Examining all educational activities in terms of conformity with parish policy as well as diocesan policy expressed by the Diocesan School Office and Ministry Formation Services
- Reviewing applications for prospective DREs, Coordinators and Principals
- To prepare and submit an annual budget to the Parish Pastoral Council

RELATIONSHIPS

- The Education and Formation Committee does not operate in a vacuum apart from the council and other committees. It always serves the council and proposes what it believes will help the parish move toward becoming the kind of faith community envisioned in the mission statement.
- The Education Commission does not design nor operate programs of religious education. This is the work of the professional or staff person. The Committee does define objectives and set policies which guide such persons in their work. Directors of Religious Education and Principals are members of the Committee by virtue of their positions.
- A School Committee or Board is a sub-committee of the Education Committee. The precise relationship between the two must be provided for in the by-laws of the Parish Pastoral Council, according to Parish Statutes (PS 5.4)
- Where there is a school, the Principal has full administrative authority in the school. His/her relationship to the Committee is as an ex officio member who has expertise to share with members to assist them in their work. The Director of Religious Education has the same kind of relationship with the Committee.
- The Education Committee cooperates with other committees, such as Family Life, Worship, Parish Life, etc. when planning in areas which tend to overlap.

FAMILY LIFE COMMITTEE

The family is the first and vital cell of all societies, social and ecclesial. The very core of the Church is linked to the well-being of the family, and the future of the Church passes through the family.

FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO

PURPOSE

- To advocate for family life within the parish and raise awareness of the gifts and needs of families
- To review and evaluate parish activities to determine their impact on family life
- To provide support to help families live their callings to be "domestic church"
- To support like-to-like ministries encouraging singles, married couples, parents, families in crisis, divorces or widowed, and others to care for one another
- To raise awareness of the sacredness of life at all stages
- To coordinate the Respect Life activities of the parish
- To respond to letter writing requests of the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment (NCHLA)

FUNCTIONS

- To develop a relationship with other parish groups and ministries to promote a family perspective throughout the parish
- To promote awareness and acceptance of the diversity of family life that includes single life, marriage, re-marriage and blended families, single parent families, etc.
- To promote marriage enrichment for couples
- To provide opportunities for the parish to support engaged couples in marriage preparation
- To promote and support efforts that strengthen parents' ability to communicate the faith to their children
- To promote opportunities to help parents become more effective in their parenting role

- To promote parish response to matters that may weaken or destroy marriage and family life such as alcoholism, drug dependency, abortion, pregnancy out of wedlock, media, etc.
- To support families with special needs due to chronic illness, physical disabilities, or mental illness

SUGGESTED MEMBERSHIP

Persons with the following life experiences would be very helpful to involve in the Family Life Committee:

- Single Persons
- Divorced and separated persons
- Widowed persons
- Parents who are married
- Single Parents
- Childless couples
- Interfaith couples
- Families with handicapped or chronically ill members
- Elderly couples
- Representatives of the racial, cultural and socioeconomic groups of the parish

THE SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

THE SOCIAL MISSION AND MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

"Jesus identified Himself as the one who had come to serve, not to be served. He cited His ministry of service as key to His identity and mission (Luke 4:16) and clearly stated that anyone who aspires to follow Him must likewise serve the needs of all (Mt. 20:26 and Luke 22:26). These words point to the centrality of social ministry in the Church. We participate in that social mission and ministry of the Church when we :

- reach out in service to those who are in need
- speak out for the powerless
- participate in social action to bring about change
- work with those who suffer and are oppressed and help them to take charge of their own lives and act on their own behalf

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Social Action Committee is to plan activities to raise consciousness among parishioners about the Church's social teachings and about social needs and issues in the parish and larger community; and to involve others in doing social ministry. This social ministry is two-pronged:

- direct service to those in need
- social action, or working for justice, to change the conditions that cause suffering and oppression

SUGGESTED MEMBERSHIP

- Member of parish pastoral council
- Parishioners who are already involved in social ministry through other organizations or programs
- Member of Ladies of Charity
- Member of Deanery Council of Catholic Women
- Persons involved in Prison Ministry
- Persons involved in Programs for the homeless
- Persons involved in Peace movements
- Persons who know the community well or work with community services
- Persons of various backgrounds - racial, ethnic, socioeconomic)
- Parishioners who like to plan or coordinate activities

FUNCTIONS

- To Promote social ministry as central to the parish's mission and ministry and as a responsibility of all members of the parish
- To publicize and create opportunities to get others involved in doing social ministry
- To coordinate social ministry activities in the parish
- To be a resource for other groups and people who want to "do for others" and respond to justice concerns
- To support other groups, churches, and agencies in their works of charity, peace and justice
- To maintain communication with the diocese and wider community to discern and develop a larger vision of social ministry
- To provide educational opportunities on the Church's social teachings and positions on justice issues
- To prepare and submit an annual budget to the Parish Pastoral Council

RELATIONSHIPS

The Social Action Committee serves the parish through the Parish Pastoral Council. The committee must understand that social ministry is not restricted to members on the committee, but is the responsibility of all parishioners. Therefore, the committee must work closely with other committees, organizations, and individuals in the parish to coordinate, plan and promote social justice education and social ministry activities.

COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

The Communication Committee of the parish pastoral council is an important committee because its work enhances the effectiveness of the council and helps promote community within the parish. Linking organizations, projects and ministries of the parish together brings about the unity of the larger parish community.

PURPOSE

- To promote the parish in a positive way through improved communications
- To create a feeling of trust and a sense of belonging among parishioners by keeping them informed
- To serve as a vehicle for publicizing the activities of all parish organizations.

Areas include:

- Information and Promotion - council and committees, parish organizations
- Parish calendar
- Releases on newsworthy parish activities for all local media and the *Tennessee Register*
- Information on issues and events affecting the community
- Periodic parish needs, concerns survey to assist council in its planning
- Telephone network for special and emergency parish communication

SUGGESTED MEMBERSHIP

- Persons with knowledge and/or experience in public relations
- Persons with clerical skills
- Artistic persons or those with expertise in graphic arts
- Those who have lived in the parish long enough to know the parish and its members well
- Persons with some aptitude for or experience in writing

FUNCTIONS

- To establish and maintain a communication system for dissemination of information in order to build community by fostering enthusiasm and good will
- To edit and publish all parish communications: bulletin, newsletter, calendar and directory of parish members, activities and groups
- To assist council committees and parish organizations in promoting and publicizing programs
- To develop a plan for improving communication in the parish. This might include: publishing agenda of council meetings; regular reports by council members on parish operation and needs; establishing a "Know Your Council" feature for parish newsletter; being responsible for and utilizing church bulletin board
- To develop rapport with local media and to utilize it more effectively when needed
- To inform council, committee chairpersons, and parish groups of printing deadlines and to work with them to provide full information to the parish and the most effective publicity for their activities, projects and programs
- To evaluate effectiveness of communications regularly and to explore other possibilities for improving communications
- To attend workshops or seminars designed to broaden knowledge and skills in the area of communications
- To prepare and submit an annual budget to the Parish Pastoral Council

RELATIONSHIPS

The Communication Committee serves the Parish Pastoral Council as do all other committees. It does not operate in a vacuum apart from the council and other committees, nor apart from the parish. Rather, aware of the representative nature of the council and mindful of its mission, the Communication Committee serves the entire parish and helps build community within it.

ADMINISTRATION AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

MISSION STATEMENT

In proclaiming and celebrating the Good News of the Gospel and in serving the people it is essential that material needs such as finances, membership, physical plant and talents of the parishioners be considered. A well run parish enriches all parish life.

PURPOSE

- To cooperate with other committees in preparing and submitting annual budgets to the Finance Board
- To educate and encourage parishioners to faithful stewardship of time, talent and money in service to the Church
- To coordinate all fund-raising programs
- To provide long-range planning and responsible stewardship of parish properties and their use
- To study the present role and future potential of existing parish organizations

SUGGESTED MEMBERSHIP

- Pastor
- Parish Pastoral Council Member
- Persons with talents, interests and knowledge to help in administration and stewardship
- Persons who know well the membership of the parish and their talents

FUNCTIONS

Financial Planning and Stewardship Programs

- To prepare and present to Finance Board the annual proposal for both operating and capital expenditures
- To assist parish council committees and subcommittees in preparing and submitting their annual budgets
- To coordinate all parish fund-raising programs in accord with Diocesan programs and policies

- To educate parishioners to the need for generous parish support and to the philosophy of church support

Building and Grounds

- To provide for annual inspection of all parish properties and to review and recommend additions or repairs according to the priorities established by the committee and the parish council
- To develop an inventory of all parish properties and to schedule replacement and/or servicing
- To prepare guidelines concerning use of parish facilities
- To help form policy regarding safety and security and to inspect regularly for hazards
- To study parish needs for heat, lighting and air conditioning with the aim of conserving energy
- To assure adequate parking facilities and traffic flow
- To establish a program of job classification, job descriptions and salary administration for all employees of parish
- To maintain a complete set of architectural plans which cover all existing buildings and remodeling projects of the parish plant

LONG RANGE PLANNING

To assist the council in long range planning for the parish in the light of the Gospel and in collaboration with diocesan goals. This committee works closely with the other council committees. Prayerful reflection is important to the planning process, as well as flexibility and input from the parish.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- To keep abreast of the long range needs of the parish community, the factors which affect the faith growth of its members and their participation in the church's mission.

- To work closely with the other committees of the parish pastoral council, parish organizations and Finance Board to adequately plan and care for the long range needs of the parish
- To become aware of the policies, procedures and resources of the diocese in these matters
- To seek out the needs and views of the parish as part of the data-gathering process
- To explain, clarify, facilitate, monitor and adjust the planning process as it is utilized by the parish pastoral council
- To develop and keep current a parish profile which describes the parish's attributes, needs, size, etc.
- To plan an annual all-parish assembly

CENSUS

- To conduct a thorough canvassing of all who live within the parish boundaries at least every five years
- To develop a means of regular updating of parish census
- To act as liaison for all parish organizations

RELATIONSHIP OF COMMITTEE TO COUNCIL

It is the responsibility of the entire council to decide priorities for the parish. The Administration and Stewardship Committee works closely with and is supportive of all other committees.

RELATIONSHIP OF PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL ADMINISTRATIVE AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE FINANCE BOARD

- It is a unique relationship which the Council has with the Finance Board. One is the policy-making body for the entire parish community and the other is a body to assist the pastor. One looks at the needs of the community and the other looks at the financial assets. One, along with the pastor, sets priorities and works on long-range planning. The other assists the pastor.

- For both to function properly, it is essential that each knows the mission of the parish. For the Finance Board to best advise the pastor, it should be aware of the overall needs of the community and not only its financial needs.
- For the Parish Pastoral Council and the Finance Board to be what they are called to be and do what they are called to do, it is essential that there be open lines of communication. They cannot work in isolation of each other and best serve the people.

FINANCE BOARD

- Each parish must have a Finance Board mandated by Canon Law (C537 and 1280)
- Members are appointed by the Pastor in consultation with members of the Parish Pastoral Council
- This is a three year appointment
- The change of a Pastor has no affect on the life of the board or appointments to it
- The purpose of the Finance Board is to assist the pastor in the administration of parish assets
- Members of the Finance Board must be given complete access to all records and documents relating to the financial status and operation of the parish

ORDERS AND VALUES , p 36, 11.1

FUNCTION AND RELATIONSHIPS

- To become aware of diocesan parish financial policies and procedures
- To be considered as quasi-staff because of relationship to pastor
- To review proposed budgets and return to Parish Pastoral Council for final approval
- To publish an annual financial report

- To develop programs to obtain endowments, wills and bequests
- To study insurance needs
- To periodically review income and expenditures to determine if the parish is operating within the approved budget and make recommendations to the Parish Pastoral Council for increasing revenues
- To help prepare financial statement for submission to the Chancery
- To implement the Bishop's Stewardship Appeal

Appendix A DISCERNMENT

There are no foolproof ways that will lead you to absolute certainty concerning God's will in a particular situation, but Saint Ignatius of Loyola gave some of the most lasting guidelines in his *Spiritual Exercises*. You may follow these steps as you begin the actual process of discernment.

- **Prayer**

The process of decision-making always begins with prayer. St. Ignatius urges you to be specific, begging again and again for light and purification. Although the light may seem blinding at first, and the stripping may seem painful, these two graces are needed if you are to enter the decision-making process properly.

- **Formulation of the Process**

As you pray for interior freedom, you can begin to formulate your proposition. This is a clear, concise, affirmative statement or question on what you are trying to decide. For example: Should this ministry be added? Should this Ministry be discontinued? From the beginning and through the process, ask God to reveal God's truth to you and give you the inner freedom to carry it out.

- **Gather the Data**

Once the proposition is formulated, gather all the information needed to make a wise and prudent decision. The following question might be asked: Will our parishioners approve? Does it cost anything? Can our parishioners afford it? How will this benefit our parish? Are we willing to make the sacrifices of time and energy to carry out this commitment?

- **Pros and Cons**

Once the data is gathered, move toward intensified prayer, asking, as always, for the specific graces needed to make a proper decision. Then, looking at the information gathered and the proposition formulated, list all the cons, that is, the reasons why this particular proposition should not be followed. This list should be made while in prayer. Take as long as you need, using as many prayer periods as you feel are necessary.

As the cons emerge from your inner self, write them down. Once this is completed do the same for the pros, listing all the reasons for acting upon your proposition. The cons are listed first, in order to allow the pros to emerge more easily.

You need to take into consideration the effect each alternative would have on your relations with God and your parishioners.

- **Sifting and Condensing**

After the cons and pros are listed, begin to separate them according to their order of importance. Each con should be weighed carefully, realizing that some are more important than others.

After sifting the cons, proceed to the pros. Eliminate duplication and condense the lists.

- **Prayer**

Having come this far, continue to ask God's blessing, praying for light and purification. Persevering in prayer, inspect your lists, noting what you feel as you reflect on the cons and then the pros. You are looking here for those inner movements which indicate the Lord's presence. In noting these inner movements, you will have a better idea of the Lord's presence in the situation being considered.

- **Decision to Act**

Once that sense is acknowledged, choose to act, since it is in your response that the Lord is to be found.

After your choice is made, pray with diligence that the Lord will confirm this choice, if it is for his greater service and glory.

How will God confirm your choice? Through experiences of peace and inner joy, but most especially through an increased desire and ability to die to self as you serve others in love.

Some Obstacles to Discernment

You may find yourself experiencing some blocks to discernment. These often come in the form of:

- Excessive needs, attachments and compulsions which might prevent your hearing God's Word and doing God's will
- An attachment to one particular alternative
- A lack of freedom to embrace any alternative if it is God's will for you
- A fear of making a mistake and displeasing someone
- Prejudice which makes you unwilling to change or be changed
- Unrealistic expectations and assumptions
- A misguided sense of prudence which leads to indecision, holding off until you are "absolutely certain."
- Under the guise of "openness to the Lord" you may erect the obstacles called passivity. "I'll just pray" sums up this attitude. "I refuse to take any initiative, just in case God wants me to do something else."

Take some consolation in knowing that such obstacles are part of normal spiritual growth. There are merely opportunities for you to encounter, in your response, the converting and transforming power of God. It is this transformation which frees your heart to choose God in every situation; you will then find his will.

*A development of these ideas on discernment may be found in
Discernment; Seeking God in Every Situation
Rev. Chris Aridas, Living Flame Press, Hauppauge, New York.*

Appendix B RESOURCES

MINISTRY FORMATION SERVICES

Mission Statement:

*Ministry Formation Services
trains and supports lay ministers for leadership
and service in the Diocese of Nashville.*

Serving the parishes throughout the diocese, Ministry Formation Services continues to study and research Parish Pastoral Councils as they develop in new ways across the country. Parish Pastoral Councils are in their formative years in our Church. Changes and new developments will occur. MFS is connected with other dioceses in the study of these changes, but our most important connection is to the pastors, the parishes and the Parish Pastoral Councils of the Diocese of Nashville.

MFS facilitates the formation and operation of Parish Pastoral Councils. Our vision of Church is one which challenges its members to share leadership after the example of Jesus: and in response to Vatican II, calls the baptized to wider participation in the faith community through the exercising of their gifts.

Ministry Formation Services works for:

- greater participation of all members of the Church through consultation and collaborative ministry:
 - collaboration in setting direction and vision for the local Church;
 - the development and support of effective Parish Pastoral Councils; and
 - parish renewal by making accessible those programs and movements which support such renewal.

Ministry Formation has developed a team of persons, well grounded in theology and conciliar process, who are willing to assist parishes in the initial and continuing formation of Parish Pastoral Councils. The Formation Team can be contacted by calling the Catholic Center.

Ministry Formation Team

The Ministry Formation Services Team is responsible for providing learning experiences which enable the members of Parish Pastoral Councils to function actively as a consultative and collaborative body within the Parish.

Responsibilities

The Ministry Formation Team will focus on the following:

- Initial formation for new Parish Pastoral Councils
- Re-structuring and continuing formation for already established Parish Pastoral Councils
- Orientation sessions for new parish council members
- Sessions to assist in the implementation of Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines
- Assistance with Parish Pastoral Council retreats
- Formation and consultation with parish liaison members.

Appendix C Glossary of Terms

Administrative Decisions

Resolution of those issues concerned with the day to day operation of the parish, its programs and ministries. These are the responsibility of the pastor or the person designated by him to a particular area.

Accountability - Holding persons, committees or organizations responsible to their given job description.

Collegial - Quality of authority or power shared equally among colleagues for the common good.

Committee - A group of persons chosen to consider, investigate, report or implement recommendations.

Committee, Ad hoc - A committee established for a specific purpose or a special activity which usually disbands when purpose is accomplished.

Committee, Standing - A committee which remains in place for an extended period of time.

Code of Canon Law - The official body of laws promulgated for the universal Latin Church, which aims at an orderly development in the ecclesial society and in the individual persons who belong to it.

Consensus - A decision, which all members of a Council can support, arrived at through open discussion, prayer, and resolution of major issues. Without compromising any strong conviction or needs, consensus results in a decision that all members of the group can accept.

Constitution and Bylaws - A written document which guides the operation and functions of the Council. The practicalities of meetings, processes, roles and relationships are usually defined in the operational guidelines.

Consultation - A process in which a group comes together to listen to one another, to reflect, and through research and study to come to an understanding which can result in a wise decision.

Consultative Body - A group of advisors who pray and study about an issue and are able to express an informed, educated opinion.

Deanery - A geographic grouping of parishes designated to facilitate communication.

Discernment - the process of decision-making through prayerful reflection, research, interaction and deliberation.

Evaluate - The act of assessing positive and negative results of a plan, goal or action of the Council.

Forum - A gathering of parishioners for the purpose of obtaining information regarding pastoral needs, issues and concerns which are to be addressed by the Parish Pastoral Council.

Function - The normal or characteristic action of anything. Four functions of a Pastoral Council are (1) Spiritual Leadership, (2) Pastoral Planning, (3) Parish Governance, and (4) Policy Formulation.

Goal - Statement of a desired end which is related to a major area of concern.

Guideline - A statement of procedure which clarifies how the norms are to be applied and observed.

Mission Statement - A concise statement of the group's purpose and reason for existence. It helps the group to identify itself and set vision and goals. It responds to the questions "Who are we?" "What do we value?" and "What do we seek to become?"

Norm - A rule of action and standard of conduct that must or should be followed.

Objective - A specific, time-oriented and realistic statement of what is to be done, for whom, when, how and at what cost.

Parish - A community of worshipping faithful, entrusted to a parish priest as a proper pastor who is appointed by the diocesan bishop.

Parish Finance Board - A consultative group which aids the Pastor in the administration of parish goods. Canon 537 requires all parishes to have a finance council according to the norms of the diocesan bishop.

Parish Pastoral Council - A consultative group which assists the pastor in discerning how the parish can best carry out the mission of the Church.

Participative - Sharing in, taking part in. Participative decision-making means the entire Council is in open dialogue during the various consultations so that there is a mutual shaping of each other's thinking in the process.

Participative Leadership - The capacity to influence the thinking of others in a given situation toward a certain goal or objective in such a way that they take ownership for both the process and its outcome. They are enabled to grow and develop independently of the leader.

Pastor - An ordained priest appointed by the bishop to lead and involve the people of a parish in their pastoral care. This care includes the following areas: worship, education, pastoral service and administration.

Pastoral Planning - Pastoral Planning is a prayerful and participative process by which Parish Pastoral Council members define their parish as a community, identify their common purpose, vision, goals and priorities, and devise ways to accomplish their mission.

Pastoral Staff - The group responsible for collaborating with the Pastor in implementing pastoral care, programs and ministries of the parish. The staff usually consists of one or more associate pastors, deacons, men and women religious and lay pastoral ministers. This term refers to paid and volunteer staff.

Pastoral Team - A group composed of priests, deacons, men and women religious and lay pastoral ministers who make administrative and pastoral decisions collegially and hold themselves responsible and accountable as a group for the implementation of these decisions.

Planning - A process of assessing needs, establishing goals and objectives and determining the means and resources to achieve a desired outcome.

Presider - The foremost leader, the president or highest authority. The pastor is the presider of the Parish Pastoral Council.

Priority - A specific pastoral need or goal given a preferential ranking.

Purpose - The reason for which something exists or is done. The purpose of a Parish Pastoral Council is to discern the mission, to plan ways to carry out the mission of the Parish and to involve parishioners in fulfilling that mission.

Resolution - A written plan developed by the Parish Pastoral Council or its committees through a planning process. It includes a description of the issue, a plan to address the issue which delineates responsibilities, available resources, suggested timeline and reporting and evaluative procedures.

Second Vatican Council - The 1962-1965 assembly in Rome of Bishops of the world called together by Pope John XXIII and referred to as an ecumenical council. Approximately 2,500 bishops were in attendance at this major event in the Church's history in this century which set the Church on a course of renewal.

Shared Responsibility - The theological principle which says that each member of the Church, by reason of baptism, has the right and duty to participate in the church's mission. See Canons 204.1, 218, 211, 225.1 and 228.

Subsidiarity - A principle of authority whereby decisions are entrusted to the appropriate body and not assumed by a higher authority. Issues are dealt with and policies are established at the appropriate level of responsibility and competency. A decision which can be made at the subcommittee level should not be made by the committee to which the subcommittee is related; a decision that can be made responsibly by the committee should not be made by the Parish Pastoral Council.

Appendix D Bibliography

These materials and other resources are available through Ministry Formation Services, 2400 Twenty-First Avenue, South Nashville, Tennessee 37212, (615) 383-6393 or (800) 273-0256 FAX (615) 292-8411.

BOOKS

Bausch, William J., *The Christian Parish, The Pilgrim Church, and Traditions, Tensions, Transitions in Ministry*, Twenty-Third Publications, 1988.

These three books are companion volumes. Each examines the parish, its ministry and services. The period of transition from a pre-Vatican concept of Church to a post-Vatican Church is the main focus of Bausch's writings.

Brennan, Patrick J., *Parishes That Excel*, Crossroad., 1992

This seminal book on parish ministry focuses on exceptionally successful parishes, Catholic and non-Catholic alike. The author shows how and why these parishes excel, and encourages others to go and do likewise, or even better.

Cooper, Norman P., *Collaborative Ministry, Communion, Contentment*, 1993

This book combines theory and practice. It begins by exploring foundational issues around ecclesiology, spirituality, and leadership styles - a worth while task since members of the same pastoral team can have vastly different understanding of what they are all about. The author then provides a process for combining the theory with a parish mission statement, strategic parish planning, and a workshop for developing collaborative

ministry within the parish.

Dolan, Jay P. R. Scott Appleby, Patricia Byrne and Debra Campbell, *Transforming Parish Ministers*, Crossroad, 1990

This is a lucid, even fascinating, history of American Catholicism in a revolutionary half century of change. The roles of priests, sisters, and laity in relation to the parish emerge in a new clarity in this synthesis of recent research and insightful analysis. It is a vivid account that is indispensable for all concerned with the future of Catholicism.

Duch, Robert C., *Successful Parish Leadership, Nurturing the Animated Parish*, 1990

This book deals with the need for a new kind of leadership for today's and tomorrow's Church. The author makes it very clear that he is not talking about nurturing the divine element in the Church but only the human element. It is not a discussion about faith and morals, rather it is a concerned with the human organization of the Church and its operational procedures. He writes about revitalizing, restructuring, renewing and refreshing the Church in this age of great change and expectations. It is a direct response to the Bishops' letter of 1987 which challenged all to consider new organizational structures and more creative leadership styles for the Church in the United States.

Howes, Robert G., *Creating an Effective Parish Pastoral Council*, The Liturgical Press, 1993

For parishes that are forming a parish council or are seeing the need to evaluate their existing council, this book offers the tools, directions, and goals needed to create an effective council.

Forster, Patricia M., O.S.F. and Thomas P. Sweetser, S.J., *Transforming the Parish, Models for the Future*, Sheed & Ward, 1993.

This book is the result of twenty years of work with parishes across the United States through the Parish Evaluation Project. It offers models for the future in the areas of spirituality, small Christian communities liturgy, faith development, volunteers and freeing structures. It provides ideas and suggestions about what parish life could be while at the same time paying close attention to what is. It is a practical guide for staff, parish leaders pastoral ministers, diocesan personnel and those studying the future of parish life and operation.

Keating, Charles J., *The Leadership Book*, Paulist Press, 1982.

In a concise and attractive style, *The Leadership Book* examines theories of management, and shows their practical application in areas of Church management.

Leas, Speed B. and Lyle E. Schaller, Editor, *Creative Leadership Series. Leadership & Conflict*, Abingdon, 1992

The author feels that conflict management does not necessarily imply control of conflict. Rather, it suggests handling the problem competently. He starts by developing a theory of human needs which lays the foundation for the rest of the book. He then focuses on a general

theory of leadership and the effect of fear on conflict dynamics. He discusses uncovering suppressed conflict, dealing with organizations as systems, curbing conflict, situations where conflict should actually be encouraged, and self-defense as a means of identifying problems.

Lyman Coleman, et. al., *Serendipity New Testament for Groups*, Paulist Press, 1988.

A New Testament with reflection questions in the margins. Excellent resource for prayer at the Council and Committee meetings.

McKinney, Mary Benet, O.S.B., *Sharing Wisdom: A Process for Group Decision Making*, Tabor Publishing, 1992.

Contains a faith-filled approach to decision making. Valuable for Church groups seeking to discern and plan directions. Includes focus questions for each chapter, practical appendix materials and resource notes.

McKnight, Felicia B., *Parish Alive*, Crossroad, 1992.

This book is the story of a transformative process begun in the Diocese of Providence, Rhode Island. It enables any and every parish to become a vibrant spiritual life center for any and every member of that parish from the catechumen to the pastor. It emphasizes moving away from maintenance programs toward parishes as centers for ever-deepening spirituality.

Rademacher, William Marliss Rogers, *The New Practical Guide for Parish Councils*, Twenty-Third Publications, 1992.

Updated version, featuring new chapters on the meaning of consultation, the Council/committee system, as well as ways for Council members to grow in holiness. Includes discussion questions after each chapter, comprehensive bibliography, index, resources.

Ramey, David A., *Empowering Leaders*, Sheed & Ward, 1991.

Applying insights from research in human development, organizational development, and group leadership studies, this book provides a comprehensive approach to long-term strategic leadership. The author's focus is clear: to integrate the personal, social and organizational insights which truly empower leaders to make long-lasting contributions for both themselves and others.

Sofield, Loughlan, S.T. and Carroll Juliano, SHCJ, *Collaborative Ministry - Skills and Guidelines*, Ave Maria Press, 1988

The focus is on the topics which need to be addressed by the Council in order to grow in collaboration. Councils will find the chapters on spirituality, leadership, and conflict management especially helpful. Contains charts and discussion/reflections questions.

Sofield, Loughlan, S.T. and Brenda Hermann, MBST, *Developing the Parish as a Community of Service*, Ave Maria Press.

One way of organizing a Parish Pastoral Council is explained in this book. A 30-page description of theory process and 30 ready-to-use models for each step of the process are included.

Sweetser, Thomas, *Leadership in a Successful Parish*, Harper and Row Publishers.

The book provides a good overview on the history, development, models for Councils and some new approaches. Good information for those interested in beginning or improving Councils.

Sweetser, Thomas, *Successful Parishes -How They Meet the Challenge*, Winston Press, Inc.

The author portrays a number of very diverse parish situations where the challenge to change and renew the parish has been successful. He calls parishes to listen to the people, to facilitate lay leadership and ministry and to promote adult spirituality.

Wilson, Marlene, *How to Mobilize Church Volunteers*, Augsburg, 1983

How do you motivate the volunteers on your staff? Are you "burning out" your best people? What can you do with the pew-sitters? Do you find it hard to ask for help? This insightful, practical book will help you answer these and other questions. It offers a plan to turn the volunteer challenge into a reality.

CHURCH DOCUMENTS

Canon Law Society of America. *Code of Canon Law Latin-English Edition*, 1983.

During the course of the centuries the Catholic Church has been accustomed to the reform of the laws of canonical discipline so that in constant fidelity to its divine founder, they may be better adapted to the saving mission entrusted to it. This book contains the revised Code of Canon Law. It is the result of many years of collaboration with many people.

Diocese of Nashville, *Administrative handbook*, August 6, 1984

Diocese of Nashville, Order and Values, Governance Documents of the Diocese of Nashville, March 1992.

Flannery, Austin, O.P., *Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, St. Paul's Edition, 1987.

This compendium consists of Second Vatican Council constitutions, decrees and major pronouncements along with their authentic announcements for serious students of Vatican II.

Provost, James H. (Editor), *Code, Community, Ministry, Canon Law* Society of America, 1983

This book contains selected studies for the Parish Minister introducing the Revised Code of Canon Law. The studies are all in pastoral settings which may help those interested in the daily life of the Church appreciate the opportunities and possibilities contained in the revised Code.

United States Catholic Conference, *The Parish: A People, a Mission, a Structure*, 1982.

This planning guide challenges parishes to identify the mission of the parish and organize ministries around this mission. Many ideas for the evaluation of a parish and its ministries are included.

United States Catholic Conference, *A Shepherd's Care, Reflections on the Changing Role of Pastor*, Bishops' Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1987

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

The Conference for Pastoral Planning and Council Development is a national association of those engaged in these ministries in the United States and Canada. Their conferences and publications keep Parish Pastoral Council members and Pastors informed about creative and innovative ways of meeting the needs of the people in their parishes. The address is:

Sheed and Ward
P.O. Box 419492
Kansas City, MO 64141

PERIODICALS

Today's Parish, published monthly, from September to May (subscription \$20). Up-to-date timely articles on the parish. Twenty-Third Publications.

Church, a quarterly periodical devoted to the development and renewal of pastoral ministry and parish life (subscription \$32). National Pastoral Life Center.

U.S. Catholic, a monthly periodical which is devoted to contemporary issues which affect the lives of U.S. Catholics (subscription \$18). Claretian Publications.

VIDEOTAPES

Councils in the Church: A Teleconference on Parish Councils, National Pastoral Life Center, 1989.

An overview of Pastoral Councils in the Church. Emphasis is on Diocesan Councils.

Ministry of the Parish Council, St. Vincent de Paul Church, 1986.

These two forty-five minute videotapes are excellent for steering committees to use in forming a Council. The first part deals with the history and theology of Councils in the Church. The second tape presents information regarding the role and functions of the Council and principles of operation for Councils.

The Multi-Ethnic Parish: Integration or Ethnic Identity?, National Pastoral Life Center.

A two-hour presentation on unifying the ethnically diverse parish and assisting ethnically and culturally diverse parishes in participating in parish life.

Parish Pastoral Councils, ACTA Publications, Chicago, 1989.

Available in English and Spanish, this training program is designed for new and existing councils. Consists of two cassettes with a total of four sessions. Discussion Guide offers points to remember and questions for discussion..

Running Good Meetings, ACTA, 1994.

This video program will be useful to all groups— especially community organizations, religious institutions, school and parish councils, and other not-for-profit organizations - that seek to improve the quality of their meetings. The video tape can be used to train entire organizations, councils, boards of directors, committees and even individuals how to run meetings more effectively.