

Diocese of Gaylord
Parish Pastoral/Finance Council Guidelines

Revised November 2005
Approved by Bishop Patrick R Cooney

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INTRODUCTION

THE CATHOLIC PARISH

(A Synopsis of The Parish, a People, A Mission, A Structure, NCCB, 1980)

The parish is for most Catholics the single most important part of the church. It is where for them the mission of Christ continues. This is where they publicly express their faith, joining with others to give proof of their communion with God and with one another. Very simple.

But a parish largely defies a tidy description. So many factors impact on the parish, giving each a distinctive character. Locale, age, race, nationality, culture, education, attitudes and experiences create a variety in which no two are neatly the same. Further, our Catholic pastoral tradition embraces, within each parish, people of varying degrees of commitment. Most parishes in the Gaylord Diocese have a geographical underpinning, though in multi-parish settings modern mobility provides the opportunity for factors other than geographic proximity for parish identity.

A People

A parish is, first, a people, a community, bonded by faith in Jesus Christ. Because Jesus calls us to love God and one another as ourselves, a parish must foster personal relationships among its members. Through these personal relationships of faith, the members of a parish truly care for one another as brothers and sisters, and bond together for every other good work.

All the baptized have a role and obligation to build community life. To develop mature parishes, leadership and participation in lay ministerial roles are absolutely critical. The priest and the parish staff members must include that direction in the fulfillment of their roles.

If the parish is to become an authentic Catholic community, it must also acknowledge and participate in the larger faith community of the diocese and the universal church. The mission of the diocese is to be embraced by the local parish. The faith of the local parish is formed and nourished by the faith of the universal church.

The celebration of the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, is central to the parish's community life. In every parish, preaching and the celebration of the Sacraments is to be done with the greatest care and beauty. The whole parish is involved in the celebration of the Sacraments, but especially of the Sacraments of Initiation.

A Mission

The community life of the parish cannot be simply turned in upon itself. A parish must also be outward-directed. All the members of the parish share in the mission of building the Kingdom of God. It is a kingdom of justice and healing. The alienated and the poor find refuge in and support from the parish. The parish embraces advocacy for justice, even when it is uncomfortable to do so.

Evangelization: This is the central mission of the parish community. This includes ongoing evangelization of active members as well as the invitation to the alienated and to non-believers. Hospitality is an essential component of this mission.

Christian Formation: Formation in faith begins in the family, and the parish supports rather than replaces the family role. Thus the parish nurtures strong family life, but also cares for the special needs of single parents. The parish surrounds with concentrated prayer and reflection all significant family events such as birth, marriage, death and other personal celebrations or crises.

Catholic schools support families in sharing a full faith experience with children, and are not promoted simply as alternatives to the public education of secular learning. Catechetical and youth ministries are also necessary undertakings. Christian formation of all ages is ongoing and guided by the needs of the people.

Social Justice: The mission of justice and peace permeates the liturgical and education life of the parish. The parish identifies critical issues and sponsors efforts to build a just society.

Ecumenism: Active ecumenism is a necessary undertaking if a parish is to be genuinely committed to the unity of all God's people.

A STRUCTURE

The community and mission of the parish are supported and ensured by appropriate structures.

Leadership: Developing leadership is essential if the parish is to pursue its true mission. Authentic leadership focuses on fidelity to the Gospel, articulation of the parish's mission, and on the enabling of others to use the gifts the Spirit has given. Leadership develops structures for participation in discernment and decision-making as well as participation in the parish's various ministries.

Parish Council: Each parish must have a parish council whose function is clear: to develop the understanding of the parish's mission and goals, and to formulate the policies that carry out that mission. An effective council must be formed and trained in its responsibility, and be grounded in faith and worship.

The Pastor: The pastor is the point of unity between the worship of the parish and its activities, between the spiritual aspects of the parish and the organizational, between the specific character of the parish and the mission of the larger church. An effective pastor develops the skills of open dialogue, shared decision-making and effective action. The pastor does not simply provide service in his own person, but enables the parishioners to serve one another.

Small Groups: prayer interaction and sharing among individuals in a parish and among neighboring parishes greatly enrich the goal of community life and ongoing Christian formation.

Evaluation: Regular evaluation of the parish's mission and goals insures that the mission is clear and participated in by all. The people of the parish can be called to contribute talents and treasure to a clearly enunciated and evaluated mission.

Diocese of Gaylord
Parish Finance Council
Guidelines
Revised November 2005

1) ESTABLISHMENT

A finance council is to be established in all parishes of the diocese. Pastors/ parish life coordinators are to regard finance council development as a major parish priority.

Canon 537: The Code of Canon Law requires that each parish in a diocese have a finance council. The finance council is to be governed by the Universal Church Law and by norms given by the diocesan bishop.

2) PURPOSE

The finance council is a community of servant leaders whose purpose is to assist the pastor/ parish life coordinator in the administration of the goods of a parish through an advisory process.

Servant Leaders: Members should be rooted in the gospel understanding of the ministry of servant leadership. Finance councils need to be careful to avoid a narrow understanding of their role which could limit their ability to discern the mission of the Church.

Purpose: The purpose of the finance council is to provide the pastor/ parish life coordinator with a group of Christian faithful who will aid in the administration of parish goods according to established norms through an advisory process. Distinct from the pastoral council of the parish, the finance council is to serve the goals and priorities set by the pastoral council. Both councils are guided by the mission statement of the parish.

The finance council advises the pastor/ parish life coordinator in forming good policies for the administration of the parish's temporal goods; that is, its financial resources, buildings and grounds. Attention to the right use of the church's goods is a requirement of justice and an indispensable aid in furthering the church's mission. The resources with which we deal and through which we are able to function are the contributions by our people. Aside from the legal liability involved, there is an accountability and responsibility that the parish, as an appropriate entity owes to its people.

3) AUTHORITY

The finance council is a consultative (advisory) body to the pastor/ parish life coordinator in the parish, considering all matters of major financial concern. In such matters, through prayer and study, policy is carefully discerned by the finance council together with the pastor/ parish life coordinator, in accord with the regulations of Universal Church Law as well as norms issued by the diocesan bishop.

Consultative (advisory) Body: The distinction of responsibilities of pastoral authority, policy formation, and administration must be maintained in the finance council. The council is consultative. The pastor/ parish life coordinator convenes a group of people possessing Christian maturity and commitment, coupled with administrative expertise of good judgment. They are asked to provide him/her with input of information and their advice relative to particular administrative problems, policies, issues, or projects related to the effective pursuit of the pastoral mission of the parish.

The pastor/ parish life coordinator is ultimately responsible for all legal, business, and administrative matters of the parish. Since the pastor/ parish life coordinator has the ultimate responsibility for all juridic matters and is called on to share accountability with the selected lay persons of the parish community, he/she should not see himself/herself as separate and alone. Council members should not see themselves as delegates of the community, but rather as collaborators with the pastor/ parish life coordinator.

Pastor/ Parish Life Coordinator Presides: The presiding function of the pastor/ parish life coordinator does not necessarily imply that he/she is the chairperson of the finance council. The present practice of separating the role of chairperson from the role of pastor/ parish life coordinator is appropriate and may be continued. The presiding role does, however, make clear that the approval of the pastor/ parish life coordinator is required before recommendations of the finance council become policy of the parish.

4) IMPLEMENTATION

Policy is implemented by the pastor/ parish life coordinator, pastoral staff, and other members of the community who minister with them.

Implementation policy: The finance council is not itself responsible for implementing policy. This administration function more properly belongs to the pastor/ parish life coordinator, the pastoral staff and those who assist them, particularly the volunteers who serve in various parish ministries. The finance council does not have responsibility for hiring or evaluating the staff. Even though the finance council may be involved in personnel matters on a consultative basis, primary responsibilities rests with the pastor/ parish life coordinator.

5) RESPONSIBILITY

The finance council's responsibilities under the direction of the pastor include the careful stewardship of parish resources, the development of further resources, and the allocation of resources to carry out the goals and objectives established by the pastor/ parish life coordinator with the pastoral council.

Financial and Administrative Planning: The finance council through an advisory process is to assist the pastor/ parish life coordinator who represents the parish in temporal affairs and juridic affairs. The finance council's role is financial and administrative planning and related consultation. This work is to be informed and inspired by the vision of the Church exemplified in the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. The ways in which the council fulfills its shared responsibilities are: the spiritual enrichment and growth of the members, formation of financial policies including the devising and regular monitoring of the parish budget, the policies for the proper maintenance of the buildings and grounds of the parish, long range financial planning, preparation of the annual financial report, attention to civil law pertaining to the administration of the temporal goods of the parish – all through an advisory process.

The clear distinction between policy formation, the proper work of the pastor/ parish life coordinator and parish staff, should be maintained. At the same time members of the parish staff should offer to the finance council their knowledge and judgment regarding questions under discussion. If the parish's temporal resources are inadequate to the needs of the pastoral program, the difficulty must be resolved by the pastor/ parish life coordinator with the assistance of both pastoral and finance councils.

Specific Responsibilities:

- a) Aid and advise the pastor/ parish life coordinator concerning the administration of parish goods within the limits of Canon Law 1281 through 1288, and the directives of diocesan policies regarding finance, law, and insurance. See Appendix B.
- b) In cooperation with the parish pastoral council, research, prepare and recommend to the pastor/ parish life coordinator the annual parish budget for both operating and capital expenditures. The budget is to be based on the approved goals and objectives determined by the pastoral council as the council discerns what is needed to carry out the mission of the parish in liturgy, education and service.
- c) Periodically review income and expenditures to determine if the parish is operating within the approved budget. Provide parishioners through the pastor/ parish life coordinator with periodic (quarterly, semi-annual, or annual) reports on the financial position of the parish. Approve annual and special financial reports for submission to the diocesan finance office by the pastor/ parish life coordinator.
- d) Make recommendations to the pastor/ parish life coordinator for increasing revenues to meet both parish and diocesan goals and priorities.
- e) Coordinate all fund-raising in the parish, emphasizing the biblical context of stewardship of time, talent and treasure.
- f) Assist the pastor/ parish life coordinator and parish staff in organizing the annual diocesan Catholic Services Appeal.
- g) Review all banking arrangements, capital expenditures and long-term contracts.
- h) Review the program for maintenance of parish buildings and grounds.
- i) See that a current inventory of personal and real property of the parish is maintained, and that the documents and deeds of parish ownership are properly filed and safe-guarded.
- j) Occasionally the finance council will be asked to study and approve what church law calls “acts of extraordinary administration.” These acts are defined as such by church law and diocesan regulations. They include sale of parish property and major financial transaction. The pastor/ parish life coordinator and the council should carefully study the law and the regulations in preparation for taking up such matters.

6) MEMBERSHIP

Members of the finance council should be committed to the mission of the Church and should possess experience or expertise in business and home finance, planning, administration and law.

Membership: Members of the finance council should possess both dedication to the Church mission and skill in dealing with financial matters. Parish finances require careful attention and study, however, this should not be the primary concern of the pastor/ parish life coordinator and people. The Code of Canon Law wisely separates the work of finance council from the work of the pastoral council in order to insure that the pastor/ parish life coordinator receives full and qualified consultation regarding both pastoral and financial concerns. Members of the finance council must operate from a value system influenced more by the gospel than by a secular business philosophy. Their use of resources and money management is to be measured by the ability to contribute to the mission and ministry of the parish.

Criteria for membership: Members of the finance council should be practicing Catholics and members of the parish. They should exhibit a spirit of Vatican II, an awareness of Christian stewardship concepts and willingness and interest in service to the parish. Experience and/or expertise in financial management, administration and/or law would be helpful.

Numbers: The parish finance council should be composed of the pastor/ parish life coordinator and at least two qualified lay persons. A suggested number of members is from two to six lay persons. Care should be taken to exclude anyone with an apparent conflict of interest. Close relatives of the pastor/ parish life coordinator are excluded from appointment to the finance council. The membership of the finance council shall be made known to all parishioners.

Appointment: After careful inquiry among the members of the parish, pastor/ parish life coordinator will appoint members to the finance council who possess the specific qualifications required of the council. The members of the council should possess understanding of the diocesan and parish missions.

Methods of selection: a) Appointment by the pastor/ parish life coordinator, with consultation of the pastoral council. b) Biblical selection in which pastor/ parish life coordinator and parishioners gather for prayer in the selection process. Members of the community then designate those of their number who would be qualified and willing to serve. From among those designated, the pastor/ parish life coordinator would appoint membership.

Vacancy: Any vacancy on the finance council is to be filled as soon as possible through appointment by the pastor/ parish life coordinator after consultation with remaining members.

Vacant Pastorate: In the case of a vacant pastorate, the members under the previous pastor/ parish life coordinator will assist the bishop/ delegate during the interim. The new pastor/ parish life coordinator is to reconvene a parish finance council as soon as possible after his/ her appointment to the parish.

7) COMMISSIONS

Finance councils may form various commissions to assist them in their ministry.

Commissions and Committees: The number of commissions will depend on the complexity of the temporal goods of the parish. Standing commissions may be formed to include budget commission, cemetery commission and so on. Ad hoc committees may be formed to study particular projects.

Most parishes have a number of committees and organizations which share responsibility for providing for parish needs. These groups assist the pastor/ parish life coordinator and/ or staff in carrying out the parish mission. Pastors/ parish life coordinators have the responsibility to provide spiritual leadership to these groups. These groups should promote the mission of the Church and foster the spiritual growth of its members. In turn, each group must understand that it is responsible to the pastor/ parish life coordinator or parish staff whom he/she designates.

8) FORMATION OF MEMBERS

Orientation: Finance councils must offer orientation for potential new members. The goal of this orientation is to provide for smooth leadership transitions and to assist new members to effectively assume their roles. Orientation sessions should welcome new members, encourage their participation in faith sharing, explain the role of the parish finance council, and introduce the finance council's charter, policies and procedures.

In-Service Education: The effective functioning of the finance council depends on adequate in-service education for all members. On-going educational programs are part of the defined responsibilities of members. Such services should be provided for all members on a continuing basis. Where appropriate, these opportunities may also be made available to the entire parish to insure that all parishioners understand the purpose of the finance council and its responsibilities to the parish.

Some in-service opportunities may be made available at the parish level. However, parishes should also explore ways in which members may participate in educational opportunities at the diocesan level and beyond. The importance of the finance council's ministry makes it appropriate for parish funds to be expended for this purpose.

Skills training: Conceptual understanding is not enough to make the finance council effective. In addition, finance council members need to possess skills in faith sharing, communication, and shared decision making. Parish leadership has the responsibility for providing opportunities for finance council members to learn these skills and apply them to their deliberations as a council.

9) MEETING FORMAT

Meetings shape the way in which the parish finance council fulfills its mission.

Meetings: The parish finance council shall have a minimum of four meetings per year. Additional meetings should be held as needed. The administration of the parish's temporal goods should be guided by an annual budget. There should be a regular check on the budget at the meetings. Also, the periodic assessments of buildings and grounds and the response to any special needs of the parish plant would be accomplished at those meetings. An agenda and study materials are communicated before the meeting. The pastor/ parish life coordinator and a majority of members constitute a quorum for consultation.

10) CHARTER

Each Finance Council is required to have a charter. The charter should reflect the guidelines and spell out how the finance council will achieve its purpose and fulfill its responsibilities. See Appendix F. Once the finance council has recommended this charter and the pastor/ parish life coordinator has approved it, the pastor/ parish life coordinator is to forward it to the Bishop's Office for approval. The charter should be evaluated regularly by the parish and periodically by the diocese.

Charter: Each finance council's charter should reflect the unique vision of a gospel community. A process of prayerful discernment should be used to develop a charter. This process needs to include reflection on the scriptures and a review of Church documents pertinent to finance council ministry. The guidelines articulate a vision of parish finance council which should inform all charters adopted in the Diocese of Gaylord.

PASTORAL COUNCIL FINANCE COUNCIL

WHAT ARE WE CALLED TO BE?

Prayerful:

Members are called to be people of prayer who center their lives in Christ and shape them in his image. The council needs to pray together in order to understand and appreciate more deeply their ministry of shared responsibility.

Pastoral:

Members are called upon to help provide ways to meet the needs of the community. A collaborative, discerning, caring spirit needs to be present in order to meet the pastoral needs of the parish and community.

Representative:

This does not mean that we look after our own, or group special interests. To be representative means that as council members we act upon the best interests of the whole parish. Council members help the pastoral staff in discerning how best to meet parish needs and challenge the parish to a greater life of faith.

Discerning:

Council members need to be open to the working of the Holy Spirit among them. Discernment takes place when we listen prayerfully to the Spirit as we are making decisions.

Prophetic:

To be prophetic is to see and to have a vision of what we as a people of God are called to be. To be prophetic also means to have a keen sense of God's justice for the poor, the disadvantaged, and the marginalized. Council members need to raise the question of how the parish responds to these concerns.

Enabling:

Council members challenge and enable parishioners to recognize what it means to be adult members of a faith community, and to share the gifts with which they have been blessed.

Collaborative:

Without a collaborative spirit, a council will soon experience division and frustration. Council members act in the spirit of the gospel, putting aside personal preferences and personal agendas, in order to minister on behalf of the total community. Collaboration means working together as a council, with the pastor/ parish life coordinator, and with the parish staff, towards common goals and values.

COUNCIL FORMATION

Formation of council members is essential to understanding the role of council work. It should be considered a requirement for membership, and should provide opportunities for spiritual growth, theological foundation and necessary leadership skills.

Councils have the responsibility to provide this formation period for new members. An understanding of the role of the council, the consultative (advisory) nature of the work of council, and the process of prayerful decision making should be provided.

In addition, continuing opportunities to grow in understanding of Church and the mission of the Church should be provided. Serving in this leadership capacity of the parish requires proper understanding of Church teachings.

Parishes should consider this a priority when budgeting for the fiscal, and allow monies for educational opportunities in order to keep the council updated.

**Diocese of Gaylord
Parish Pastoral Council
Guidelines
Revised November 2005**

1) ESTABLISHMENT

A pastoral council is to be established in all parishes of the diocese. Pastors/ parish life coordinators are to regard pastoral council development as a major priority.

Canon 536: After the diocesan bishop has listened to the presbyteral council and if he judges it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish; the pastor/ parish life coordinator presides over, and through it the Christian faithful, along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office, give their help in fostering pastoral activity.

Par. 2: This pastoral council possess a consultative vote only and is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop

In 1986 Bishop Robert Rose mandated the establishment of pastoral councils in each parish of the diocese. In 1991 Bishop Patrick Cooney reaffirmed this mandate and the guidelines for the operation of councils in each parish.

Uniqueness of small parish communities: The Diocese of Gaylord has a number of small parish communities. These parishes should reflect carefully on their unique needs and shape structures appropriate to their size. Within these guidelines, communities are encouraged to experiment with various structures that will integrate effective ministry and spiritual renewal.

Council support: Pastors/ parish life coordinators and pastoral council members should work together to review all aspects of the council's ministry in light of these guidelines. All are asked to focus specifically on the spiritual dimensions of pastoral council ministry as the primary basis for the renewal of parish pastoral councils. Opportunities for ongoing council support should be provided through both diocesan and parish programs and events. Resources to assist with council formation and renewal are available through the Rose Resource Center. See Appendix K.

2) PURPOSE

The pastoral council is a community of servant leaders whose purpose is to assist the pastor/ parish life coordinator in discerning, through prayer and study, how the parish can best carry out the mission of the Church through an advisory process.

Servant Leadership: Members of councils should be rooted in the gospel understanding of the ministry of servant leadership. The development of pastoral councils should be a process of spiritual formation which includes faith sharing, scripture, prayer and liturgy. The spiritual process will help councils avoid narrow understanding of their role, which would limit their ability to discern the mission of the Church.

Mission: The role of the pastoral council involves understanding the mission of the Church and how that mission is being carried out in the individual parish. The council reviews the mission statement of the parish annually and revises it as parish vision changes. The pastoral council calls all to ministry in the parish. The council should be a model of Christian community as they call all members to Worship the Almighty, Cherish and Share His Word and Co-build the Kingdom.

3) AUTHORITY

The pastoral council is the primary consultative/ advisory body to the pastor/ parish life coordinators in the parish, considering all matters of major pastoral concern. In such matters, policy is carefully discerned by the pastoral council together with the pastor/ parish life coordinator.

Consultative Body: Much of the pastoral council's consultative role will be carried out in an informed way. However, in matters of significant pastoral consequence, the pastoral council will engage in a more formal process of decision making. Studies show that no one decision-making method is applicable in all situations. We suggest that two criteria should be applied: first, what is the most appropriate method to use in this particular case; and second, which method will be most effective in helping achieve one's goals. The two criteria, appropriateness and effectiveness, should be the primary yardsticks in determining which form of decision-making to employ in any given situation. Consensus is a valid, appropriate, and effective form of decision-making when used judiciously and applied reasonably. However, it is only one of many valid, appropriate, and effective methods. See Appendixes C & E.

4) IMPLEMENTATION

Policy is implemented by the pastor/ parish life coordinator, pastoral staff, and other members of the community who minister with them.

Policy Implementation: Pastoral councils do not implement the policy set, nor do they engage in the administration of the parish. Day to day administration of parish matters is the responsibility of the pastor/ parish life coordinator and parish staff. Volunteers who serve in the various parish ministries may also be called upon to help staff implement policy. The pastoral council does not have responsibility for hiring or evaluating the parish staff. The primary responsibility for all personnel matters rests with the pastor/ parish life coordinator.

5) RESPONSIBILITY

The pastoral council's responsibilities include calling all to ministry, pastoral planning, stewardship and/ or other pastoral concerns that the pastor/ parish life coordinator designates.

Role and Function: As stated in Canon 536, the pastoral council serves in a consultative capacity with the pastor/ parish life coordinator. Functions of the pastoral council include planning, policy development, spiritual formation and community building.

Planning: Pastoral councils should use a planning cycle to accomplish the following:

- *Development and ongoing evaluation of a mission statement
- *Identifying and reflection on parish needs in light of its mission
- *Establishing annual goals and objectives that respond to priority needs
- *Monitor programs and activities in light of parish goals and vision

Policy Development: Together with the pastor/ parish life coordinator the council sets a vision, a direction for parish life. The vision answers the question: "What do we want to accomplish?" From this vision parish policy is established. Diocesan policy is to be followed and used as a guide in setting parish policy. Pastoral councils do not implement the policy, nor do they engage in the administration of the parish. Day to day administration of parish matters is the responsibility of the pastor/ parish life coordinator and parish staff.

Spiritual Formation: The pastoral council should model and develop a community of faith and service in harmony with the beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church. The council calls all members of the parish to growth in their faith and to ministry within the church and in the world.

Community building: The council models and builds a sense of community within the parish as they help focus the thought, life and decision making of the parish.

6) MEMBERSHIP

Pastoral councils are called to model the unity of the Body of Christ. Councils should be representative of the diversity of the parish community, yet united in carrying out the mission of the Church. Methods used to select pastoral councils should promote this unity and diversity.

Qualifications: While all baptized members of the parish are eligible to serve on the pastoral councils, it is appropriate for pastoral councils to spell out additional criteria for council membership in the parish charter. The qualifications should reflect spiritual values and the scriptural understanding of servant leadership.

Parish leadership must strive to keep unity in diversity as a central value in building community, calling forth Christian leaders and developing pastoral councils. Special interest groups have no place on the pastoral council. Members of the council are representative of the entire parish and its mission, and do not serve an individual cause or group.

Selection of Members: Pastor/ parish life coordinators should strive to help the community understand the biblical meaning of selection – not as a political contest which results in winners and losers, but as a prayerful attempt to discern the will of God. Parishes should develop a process of calling forth and biblical selection which fits the unique pastoral circumstances of the individual parish.

The council charter may allow for the pastor/ parish life coordinator to appoint some members to the pastoral council in addition to the biblically selected members. The criteria for the selection of the members should be stated in the pastoral council charter, including number of members and term of service. See Appendix F.

Staff Representation: It is appropriate, if desired, for a member(s) of the parish staff to sit on the pastoral council. The purpose of this service would be to unite the consultative function of the council with the various ministries of the parish. Staff representation should not be disproportionate nor should it dominate the work of the council.

7) COMMISSIONS

Pastoral councils may form various commissions to assist them in their consultative/ advisory role.

Purpose: Members of various parish commissions have as their purpose to discern, through prayer and study, how the parish can best carry out the mission of the church in the specific area to that commission. The commissions serve as an extension of the pastoral council and are consultative to the pastor/ parish life coordinator and pastoral council.

Commissions: Membership on commissions should be representative of the diversity of the parish community yet united in carrying out the mission of the parish. Various commissions will assist the pastoral council in fulfilling its purpose of advising the pastor/ parish life coordinator on matters of the pastoral concern. The consultative function of the commission will not lead to direct and immediate involvement in particular ministries. The role of the commission is to call members of the parish to the various ministries.

Commissions that assist the pastoral council may be either permanent or as hoc, as indicated by their mandate. Parish may find it advisable to use ad hoc commissions on a more regular basis to keep from expanding permanent structures beyond the limits of optimum functioning.

Committees and parish organizations: Committees and organization are essential to parish life and ministry. These groups have the responsibility of assisting in coordinating and carrying out particular aspects of parish life. It is their role to continuously call all members of the parish to ministry to keep the life blood of the parish ever flowing.

Committees should promote the mission of the parish and foster the spiritual growth of its members through an advisory process. Pastor/ parish life coordinators and staff have the responsibility of providing spiritual leadership to these groups and all who minister in the parish. The groups must understand that they are responsible to the pastor/ parish life coordinator or a member of the parish staff whom he/she designates.

8) FORMATION OF MEMBERS

Pastoral councils bear the responsibility for forming their members to carry out their roles of servant leadership. Orientation, in-service education, and skills training should be provided to insure that members are able to fulfill their responsibility as Christian leaders. The pastor/ parish life coordinator's role in the formation is of particular importance and should be clearly recognized.

Orientation: Members of pastoral councils, along with pastor/ parish life coordinators, are to offer orientation for potential new members. The goal of this orientation is to provide for smooth leadership transition and to assist new members to effectively assume their roles. The orientation sessions should include introducing new members to faith sharing, the role of the pastoral council as well as its policies, charter and procedures.

In-Service Education: Continuing educational opportunities are essential for the effective functioning of a pastoral council. Members have the responsibility to participate in faith formation provided to the council, as well as, participating whenever possible in adult formation which is made available to the entire parish. Council members need to possess skills in faith sharing, communication and shared decision making.

Council members should be encouraged to participate in formational opportunities at the diocesan level – i.e. Workshops offered by councils, Diocesan Conferences, Center for Catholic Studies, etc. Other in-service opportunities should be made available at the parish level. Every council meeting should include some faith formation. The importance of the pastoral council's ministry makes it appropriate for parish funds to be expended for this purpose.

9) MEETING FORMAT

Meetings shape the way in which the pastoral council fulfills its mission.

Planning: The planning of the pastoral council meetings needs to be viewed as an important aspect of a successful meeting. The pastor/ parish life coordinator, with the chairperson, prepare the agenda of which should be mailed at least one week prior to the meeting. Persons responsible for various aspects of the meeting should be indicated on the agenda. Meetings should integrate faith sharing, prayer and ongoing education as well as the business component. See Appendix I.

10) CHARTER

Each pastoral council is required to have a charter. The charter should reflect these guidelines and spell out how the pastoral council will achieve its purpose and fulfill its responsibilities. Once the pastoral council has recommended this charter and the pastor/ parish life coordinator has approved it, the pastor/ parish life coordinator is to forward it to the bishop's office for approval. The charter should be evaluated regularly by the parish and periodically by the diocese.

Charter: Each pastoral council's charter should reflect the uniqueness of the particular parish community. These guidelines articulate a vision of a pastoral council which should help in the formation of parish charters. See Appendix F.

PASTORAL PLANNING

The primary responsibility of a parish pastoral council is pastoral planning. In this process the future vision for the parish is addressed in terms of long range planning. The pastoral council evaluates the needs and goals of the parish in light of Church teaching and the mission of the parish, as well as the larger Church. The pastoral council then directs the resources of the local Church toward the fulfilling of this mission. They do this by a process of setting goals and objectives annually and long range, which will lead to realizing the vision of the parish over a period of time.

This process of discerning needs, setting goals and objectives, implementation and evaluation is called pastoral planning. Pastoral planning is an on-going, cyclical process in which the pastoral council should be engaged. It is always mission motivated, and should be rooted in prayer.

This planning begins with the development of a parish mission statement. This statement answers two questions: “Who are we?” and “Why do we exist?” It gives specific expression to how the parish will intentionally live out its call as Church.

The next step in the planning process is the development of goals and objectives. Goals are developed by asking the question: “What are our priorities?” The council formulates goals which are clearly defined, constructive statements of a desired direction. Once these goals are defined, objectives toward accomplishing them within a given time frame are set. The objectives specify how the goal can be achieved.

Once the goals and objectives are set, the task of how they are to be implemented is the responsibility of the pastor/ parish life coordinator and the parish staff. They in turn, invite members of the parish to participate whenever possible or necessary.

The pastoral planning cycle is completed through the process of evaluation. The council continually evaluates the parish’s goals, objectives, needs and resources in light of the mission and vision for the future of the parish and larger church. Adjustments may need to be made. New challenges need to be met. The entire planning process serves as a roadmap to stay focused on what the parish is to become in light of the teachings of the Church.

COUNCIL FORMATION

Formation of council members is essential to understanding the role of council work. It should be considered a requirement to membership, and should provide opportunities for spiritual growth, theological foundation and necessary leadership skills.

Councils have the responsibility to provide this formation period for new members. An understanding of the role of the council, the consultative nature of the work of the council, and the process of prayerful decision making should be provided.

In addition, continuing opportunities to grow in understanding of Church and the mission of the Church should be provided on a regular basis. Serving in this leadership capacity of the parish requires proper understanding of Church teachings.

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

ACCOUNTABILITY

A process by which persons are held responsible and evaluated with regard to ministerial activity within the Church.

CODE OF CANON LAW

Law enacted and promulgated by the Pope for the orderly pastoral administration and government of the Church. The revised Code, effective November 27, 1983 consists of 752 canons in seven books.

COLLABORATIVE

To work together as a joint effort.

COMMISSION

A group which develops policy in the area of need and recommends this policy for approval to the parish council and to those who will implement the policy.

CONSENSUS

A process of decision making in which the members of a group work to reach substantial, though not necessarily unanimous agreement on all matters of overall direction and policy.

CO-RESPONSIBILITY

That process by which a decision is made in such a way that those affected by it have a share in its formulation.

CONSULTATIVE

Advisory

DISCERNMENT

A process which enables councils to determine whether or not decisions are in accordance with God's will. Includes prayerful reflection, gathering of evidence, discussion of positive and negative factors of proposed alternative plans of action and confirmation by group.

GOAL

Statement of desired end.

GOAL STATEMENT

A clearly defined, constructive statement of desired direction or activity in broad, general terms.

LAITY

Lay men and women; any baptized Church member who is not a clergyman.

MISSION STATEMENT

A broad statement of reason for existence, purpose and philosophy that helps an entity to identify itself and set goals.

NON-RESIDENT PASTOR

Pastor who is resident at another parish.

OBJECTIVE

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

OBJECTIVE STATEMENT

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

PARISH

A community of the faithful to be served by a pastor/pastoral administrator charged with responsibility for providing them with full pastoral services. Most parishes are territorial, embracing all of the faithful in a certain area of the diocese. Some are personal or national for certain classes of people without strict regard to their places of residence.

PARISH ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Staff which directly assists the pastor/pastoral administrator with parish ministry. It may include associate pastors, deacons, school principal, director of religious education, minister of music, etc.

PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

A council which aids the pastor/pastoral administrator in the administration of parish goods. The finance council is regulated by universal law as well as by norms issued by the diocesan bishop. Members of the council are selected according to norms established by the diocese. The council possesses consultative vote. The finance council does not set parish priorities. These are determined by pastoral council with the pastor/pastoral administrator.

PARISH LIFE COORDINATOR

Someone other than the ordained priest who is entrusted with the pastoral care of a parish. This includes the following areas: worship, education, pastoral service, and administration.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

A council which assists the pastor/pastoral administrator in discerning how the parish can best carry out the mission of the Church. The pastoral council is regulated by universal law as well as by norms issued by the diocesan bishop. The council possesses consultative vote.

PARTICIPATIVE

Sharing in, taking part in.

PARTICIPATIVE LEADERSHIP

Capacity to influence the behavior 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 and are enabled to grow and develop independently of the leader.

PASTOR

An ordained priest charged with the pastoral care of people committed to his care. This care includes the following areas: worship, education, pastoral service and administration.

PASTORAL STAFF

The group responsible for collaborating with the pastor/pastoral administrator in implementing the policies of the parish. Usually consists of one or more associate pastors/pastoral administrators, men and women religious and lay ministers. Usually refers to paid staff, but can refer to volunteer staff.

PASTORAL PLANNING

Includes participation in assessing the unique needs and gifts of the community, setting goals for bringing the gifts to bear on human needs, developing realistic objectives, and evaluating the progress made toward fulfilling the mission of the Church.

POLICY

A guide to action which provides direction, yet is broad enough to permit creative alternatives for implementation.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

A theological concept which acknowledges that all baptized persons mutually share responsibility for ministry and church life with and to one another.

STEWARDSHIP

The use of resources (time, talent, money) based on the premise that all resources are gifts of God and belong ultimately to Him.

STRATEGY

One step, task, or specific action to assist in achieving an objective. A group of strategies designed to achieve an objective is called a plan of action.

SUBSIDIARITY

A principle of authority whereby decisions are entrusted to the appropriate body and not assumed by a higher authority. Issues are dealt with and policies are established at the lowest proper level of responsibility and competency. A judgment which can be made at the sub-committee level should not be made by the commission committee to which the sub-committee is related; a judgment that can be responsibly made by the commission/committee should not be made by the parish council.

APPENDIX B

CANONS RELATED TO PARISH AND FINANCE COUNCILS

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL:

Canon 536 (Definition of Pastoral Council)

Par. 1 - After the diocesan bishop has listened to the presbyteral council and if he judges it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish; the pastor presides over it, and through it the Christian faithful along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity.

Par. 2 - This pastoral council possesses a **consultative vote only** and is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop.

Canon 515 (Definition of a parish)

Par. 1 - A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church; the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop.

Par. 2 - The diocesan bishop alone is competent to erect, suppress or alter parishes; he is not to erect, suppress or notably alter them with hearing the presbyteral council.

Par. 3 - A legitimately erected parish has juridic personality by the law itself.

Canon 528 (Definition of a Pastor=s responsibilities)

Par. 1 - The pastor is obliged to see to it that the word of God in its entirety is announced to those living in the parish; for this reason he is to see to it that the lay Christian faithful are instructed in the truths of the faith especially through the homily which is to be given on Sundays and holy days of obligation and through the catechetical formation which he is to give; he is to foster works by which the spirit of the gospel, including issues involving social justice, is promoted; he is to take special care for the Catholic education of children and of young adults; he is to make every effort with the aid of the Christian faithful, to bring the gospel message also to those who have ceased practicing their religion or who do not profess the true faith.

Par. 2 - The pastor is to see to it that the most Holy Eucharist is the center of the parish assembly of the faithful; he is to work to see to it that the Christian faithful are nourished through a devout celebration of the sacraments and especially that they frequently approach the sacrament of the most Holy Eucharist and brought to the practice of family prayer as well as to a knowing and active participation in the sacred liturgy, which the pastor must supervise in his parish under the authority of the diocesan bishop, being vigilant lest any abuses creep in.

Canon 529 (Definition of a Pastor's responsibilities)

Par. 1 - In order to fulfill his office in earnest the pastor should strive to come to know the faithful who have been entrusted to his care; therefore he is to visit families, sharing the cares, worries, and especially the grief's of the faithful, strengthening them in the Lord, and correcting them prudently if they are wanting in certain areas; with a generous love he is to help the sick, particularly those close to death, refreshing them solicitously with the sacraments and commending their souls to God; he is to make a special effort to seek out the poor, the afflicted, the lonely, those exiled from their own land, and similarly those weighed down with special difficulties; he is also to labor diligently so that spouses and parents are supported in fulfilling their proper duties, and he is to foster growth in the Christian life within the family.

Par. 2 - The pastor is to acknowledge and promote the proper role which the lay members of the Christian faithful have in the Church's mission by fostering their association for religious purposes; he is to cooperate with his own bishop and with the presbyterate of the diocese in working hard so that the faithful are concerned for parochial communion and that they realize that they are members both of the diocese and of the universal Church and participate in and support efforts to promote such communion.

Canon 530 (Definition of a Pastor's responsibilities)

The following functions are especially entrusted to the pastor:

#1 - the administration of baptism

#2 - the administration of the sacrament of confirmation to those who are in danger of death, according to the norm of Canon 883.3

#3 - the administration of Viaticum and the anointing of the sick with due regard for the prescription of Canon 1003, par. 2 and 3, as well as the imparting of the apostolic blessing.

#4 - the assistance at marriages and the imparting of the nuptial blessing

#5 - the performing of funerals

#6 - the blessing of the baptismal font during the Easter season, the leading of processions outside the church and the imparting of solemn blessing outside the church.

#7 - the more solemn celebration of the Eucharist on Sundays and holy days of obligation.

PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

Canon 537 (Definition of a finance council)

Each parish is to have a finance council which is regulated by universal law as well as by norms issued by the diocesan bishop; in this council the Christian faithful selected according to the same norms, aid the pastor in the administration of parish goods with due regard for the prescription of Canon 532.

Canon 532

The pastor represents the parish in all juridic affairs in accord with the norm of law; he is to see to it that the goods of the parish are administered in accord with the norms of Canons 1281-1288.

Canon 1281

Par. 1 - With due regard for the prescriptions of their statutes, administrators invalidly posit acts which go beyond the limits and procedures of ordinary administration unless they first obtain written authority from the ordinary.

Par. 2 - The acts which go beyond the limits and procedures of ordinary administration are to be defined in the statutes. If, however, the statutes do not mention such acts, it is within the competence of the diocesan bishop to determine such acts for persons subject to him after he had heard the finance council.

Par. 3 - Unless and to the extent that it is to its own advantage, a juridic person is not held to answer for acts invalidly posited by its administrators. A juridic person, however, is responsible for acts illegitimately but validly posited by its administrators with due regard for the right to sue or to have recourse against administrators who have damaged it.

Canon 1283

Before administrators take office:

#1 - they must take an oath before the ordinary or his delegate that they will be efficient and faithful administrators;

#2 - they are to prepare, sign and subsequently renew an accurate and detailed inventory of immovable goods, movable good, either precious or of significant cultural value, or other good along with a description and appraisal of them.

#3 - one copy of this inventory is to be kept in the archives of the administration; the other, in the curial archives; any change whatever which the patrimony may undergo is to be noted on each copy.

Canon 1284

Par. 1 - All administrators are bound to fulfill their office with the diligence of a good householder.

Par. 2 - For this reason they must:

#1 - take care that none of the goods entrusted to their care is in any way lost or damaged and take out insurance policies for this purpose, insofar as such is necessary;

#2 - take care that the ownership of ecclesiastical goods is safeguarded through civilly valid methods;

#3 - Observe the prescriptions of both canon and civil law or those imposed by the fonder, donor or legitimate authority; they must especially be on guard lest the Church is harmed through the nonobservance of civil laws.

#4 - accurately collect the revenues and income of goods when they are legally due, safeguard them once collected and apply them according to the intention of the founder or according to legitimate norms;

#5 - pay the interest on a loan or mortgage when it is due and take care that the capital debt itself is repaid in due time.

#6 - with the consent of the ordinary invest the money which is left over after expenses and which can be profitably allocated for the goals of the juridic person.

#7- keep well-ordered books or receipts and expenditures;
#8 - draw up a report on their administration at the end of each year;
#9 - duly arrange and keep in a suitable and safe archive the documents and deeds upon which are based the rights of the Church or the institution to its goods; deposit authentic copies of them in the archive of the curia when it can be done conveniently.

Par. 3 - It is strongly recommended that administrators prepare annual budgets of receipts and expenditures; however, it is left to particular law to issue regulations concerning such budgets and to determine more precisely how they are to be presented.

Canon 1285

Within the limits of ordinary administration only, it is permissible for administrators to make donations for purposes of piety or Christian charity from movable goods which do not pertain to the stable patrimony.

Canon 1286

Administrators of goods:

#1 - are to observe meticulously the civil laws pertaining to labor and social policy according to Church principles in the employment of workers;

#2 - are to pay employees a just and decent wage so that they may provide appropriately for their needs and those of their families.

Canon 1287

Par. 1 - Both clerical and lay administrators of any ecclesiastical goods whatsoever which have not been legitimately exempted from the governing power of the diocesan bishop are bound by their office to present the local ordinary with an annual report, which in turn he is to present to the finance council for its consideration; any contrary custom is reprobated.

Par. 2 - Administrators are to render an account to the faithful concerning the goods offered by the faithful to the Church, according to norms to be determined by particular law.

Canon 1288

Administrators are neither to initiate nor to contest a lawsuit on behalf of a public juridic person in civil court unless they obtain the written permission of their own ordinary.

APPENDIX C

CONSENSUS RATIONALE AND PROCESS

Councils are always in the search for wisdom, for the course of action that has the best hope of being what God wants for the parish. When members of the pastoral council/finance council come together to make decisions, they are aware that as a parish leadership body they have the responsibility to weigh and judge in the light of God's will. They must ask themselves these challenging questions:

How can we, the people of God, know with the certitude of faith that we are making the right decision?

How can we discover not our own will for God but God's will for us?

What is consensus?

Consensus

- * is built on prayer
- * seeks the will of God, not "my" will
- * is based on mutual trust among persons making the decision
- * honors the teachings of the scriptures and the Church

What is not involved in consensus?

Consensus does not involve

- *majority rule (no votes are taken)
- *compromise (people don't give in to keep the peace)
- *quick decisions (working through to consensus takes time)
- *competition (there are no winners and losers)
- *dependence on the leader (all engage in the discussion and come to a decision)

What are the four steps of the consensus process?

1. Input

- *Issue is clearly stated
- *Background information is presented
- *Opportunity for clarification is given

2. Discussion

- *Facilitator introduces issue, others respond. Facilitator keeps discussion on the issue
- *When most viewpoints have been expressed, facilitator tests for consensus

3. Reflection

- *Does what is proposed support the Gospel?
- *In light of the parish mission statement, will this be good for the entire parish?
- *Can each of us live with this and support this?

4. Review

- *Summarize the issue, basic background, areas of agreement and disagreement, statement of consensus reached
- *If there is no consensus, continue to discuss the problematic areas.

What can be done when a consensus is difficult to reach?

- *If the discussion is “going around in circles,” drop the matter and continue the meeting. Return to the issue later.
- *If there seems to be missing information, do further research and gather more data before trying to complete the consensus process. Postpone further discussion until all have had the opportunity for prayer and reflection time.

What if I’m the one who’s outside the circle of agreement?

- *Are you considering what is best for all?
- *Do you understand all the data presented?
- *Have you carefully justified your reasons for disagreeing?
- *Can you say, “Well, I don’t agree completely, but I see the validity of your position and I can live with that?”

What kind of attitudes are harmful and helpful to the process?

Harmful

Rigidity of opinions
Hostile or suspicious attitude
Determination to win
Sabotaging the process
“Why do we have to do it this way?”

Helpful

Openness
Honesty
Respect for the truth in everyone
Patience
Enthusiastic support for outcome
often a brand-new idea

When should our council use a formal consensus process?

- *Only when discerning major decisions that are intended to establish goals and objectives for the future.
- *Not with regard to operational issues or day-to-day decisions. Most of these issues are not brought to the council anyway.

APPENDIX D

CRITERIA FOR A VIABLE PARISH

Proclaiming the good News

A viable Parish should have:

1. Preaching of the Word of God at all liturgies
2. Ongoing study reflection on the Word of God
3. A program of evangelization for those who are not Catholics and those who are inactive Catholics
4. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in its fullness
5. Formation programs for liturgical ministers and catechists
6. Catechetical instruction and faith development of adults, youth and children

Worship

A viable parish should:

1. Be able to celebrate the Eucharist daily or, at the minimum, weekly - with the people actively involved in all ministries of the altar - with a congregation large enough to have a sense of community
2. Be able in parishes with sizable ethnic populations to celebrate Sunday Liturgy in the language of the people; on major feasts to have bi - or multi-lingual/cultural celebrations
3. Have regular opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation
4. Have preparation programs for the celebration of the sacraments for both adults and children
5. Have opportunities to promote and develop the peoples prayer life, especially in families and small communities, and existing organizations

Ministry of Service and Healing

A viable parish should:

1. Have a sensitive ministry to the poor, the afflicted, the marginalized, the sick, the shut-ins, the elderly and dying
2. Be able to minister to the grieving at the time of death and afterwards
3. Promote support systems for ethnic groups, youth and young adults, for married couples, broken and single families, and for social justice
4. Be responsive to community and ecumenical cooperation
5. Encourage social functions for all the parish
6. Support and encourage involvement in apostolic work and diocesan programs

The Calling Forth and Formation of Leaders

A viable parish:

1. Should call forth all members of the parish to share responsibility for the ministry of the Church and the parish

2. Is required to call forth qualified persons to advise the pastor/parish life coordinator on temporal and spiritual affairs: the Finance Council and the Pastoral Council
3. Is encouraged to have a pastoral council and other appropriate advisory committees; e.g. school board, liturgy committee
4. Should promote vocations to the Presbyterate, the Religious Life
5. Should call forth persons to share in the lay ministries of the parish and the world-wide mission of the Church
6. Should provide volunteers and ministers with proper supervision, support, training, direction and enrichment
7. Should promote and support Catholic education
8. Be able to attract and support qualified volunteer and professional people as staff
9. See that its leaders and ministers are formed in their ministries and sensitive to the cultures of the community and reflective of the make-up of the parish
10. Should contribute to and actively participate in vicariates and diocesan faith development programs such as the Center for Catholic Studies

Administration

A viable parish should:

1. Have a resident pastor or parish life coordinator
2. Have sufficient resources to accomplish the mission of the Church as defined in these criteria. Sufficient resources should include, at a minimum:
 - a. adequate salary and benefits for pastor /parish life coordinator based on diocesan criteria
 - b. salary and benefits for (at least) part-time secretary/bookkeeper
 - c. adequate budget for household and office expenses
 - d. adequate monies to pay staff necessary to accomplish criteria
 - e. adequate financial resources to meet its share of the Catholic Services Appeal
3. Have an annual budget that is adhered to
4. Hold the faithful accountable for the support of the parish through a development program
5. Be able to maintain the parish plant and facilities, safeguard the parish with required insurance, make required diocesan and legal reports, and keep an updated accurate roster of members.

Additional Criteria for a Viable Parish

1. Location of other parishes in the area
2. Viability of the parish school
3. Need of focused ministries
4. Condition of Plant
5. Fundamental Option for the poor
6. If there is a closure of a parish, there must be a plan for the community that is there
“Archdiocese of San Francisco”

APPENDIX E

DECISION-MAKING METHODS

1) AUTHORITY RULE WITHOUT DISCUSSION

- Example:** Leader informs community of a decision he or she has made.
- Disadvantages:** Decision dependent on the wisdom of a single person; advantages of group interactions and wisdom is lost; may discourage any commitment to implementing the decision on the part of other members; possible resentment may result in sabotage of any progress.
- Advantages:** Especially useful for simple, routine decisions; effective when very little time is available to make the decision, when group members expect the designated leader to make the decision, and when there is a lack of skills and information among group members to make the decision in an appropriate manner.

2) DELEGATION TO EXPERT

- Example:** Identify and delegate someone with a certain expertise to make the decision.
- Disadvantages:** It may be difficult to determine who the expert is, especially if members are not aware of each other's gifts; ownership of the decision and commitment to implementation may be minimal; advantage of group interaction is lost; minimal use of the resources of other members.
- Advantages:** Useful when the expertise of one person is so far superior to that of all other group members that little is to be gained by discussion; should be used when the need for membership action in implementing the decision is slight; affirms the unique expertise and gifts of members.

3) SAMPLING MEMBERS' OPINIONS

- Example:** Leader takes a general pulse of the community and decides.
- Disadvantages:** There is not enough interaction among group members for them to gain from each other's resources and to get the benefits of group discussion; unresolved conflict and controversy may emerge in indirect ways, damaging future group effectiveness.

Advantages: Useful in a situation where it is difficult to get group members to talk, when the decision is so urgent that there is no time for group discussion, when member commitment is not necessary for implementing the decision, and when a lack of skills and information exists among group members so that it is important to make the decision any other way.

4) AUTHORITY RULE AFTER DISCUSSION

Example: Leader consults with group and makes decision after discussion.

Disadvantages: Could develop minimal commitment for implementing the decision; does not resolve the controversies and conflicts among group members; tends to create situations in which group members either compete to impress the designated leader or tell the leader what they think he or she wants to hear; often results in decreased sense of self esteem among members.

Advantages: Involves the membership and uses their resources more fully than the previous methods; gains some of the benefits of group discussion; involves consultation when the leader has the responsibility to make a difficult decision.

5) MAJORITY CONTROL

Example: Community takes vote.

Disadvantages: May leave an alienated minority; could result in a sense of winners and losers; commitment for implementing the decision may be diminished.

Advantages: Will usually result in a commitment of the majority of members; appropriate and effective when there is a decision by the membership that the issue should not consume a disproportionate amount of time or energy; brings closure to issues that are difficult to resolve.

6) MINORITY CONTROL

Example: A small committee is authorized to make the decision.

Disadvantages: Does not utilize the resources of many group members; does not establish widespread commitment to the decision; not much benefit from group interaction; leaves the majority often feeling used or devalued.

Advantages: Can be used when everyone cannot meet to make a decision, when the group is under such time pressure that it must delegate responsibility to a committee, when only a few members have any relevant resources, or when broad member commitment is not needed to implement the decision.

7) CONSENSUS

Example: All community members involved in and agree to the decision.

Disadvantages: Takes a great deal of time and psychological energy and a high level of member skill; may arrive at least common denominator; some times opts for cohesion over gospel-oriented decisions; can prolong decision around issues that are urgent.

Advantages: Can increase the level of commitment by all members; uses the resources of all members; provides a process to deal with difficult decisions that affect all.

8) DISCERNMENT

Example: A prayerful process of weighing the pros and cons of the decision is engaged in before the community comes to a decision.

Disadvantages: Is a very time-consuming process; can become a very burdensome process for decisions that can be made more simply; requires a high level of maturity and freedom on the part of all members.

Advantages: Provides a prayerful process for deciding; encourages each member to look at a situation both positively and negatively; often gains the greatest commitment to decision reached.

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APPENDIX F

THE CHARTER

The charter is the document which governs the operation of parish councils. It is essential that each parish have a carefully prepared charter for its councils. The charter should be drawn up in accordance with the diocesan guidelines for each type of council. The following information should be included in the charter:

OUTLINE OF A CHARTER FOR PARISH COUNCILS

1. The name of the organization:

The proper name of the parish should always be used.

2. The Parish Mission Statement:

A parish mission statement is the community's description of itself and its reason for exercising ministry in a particular manner. Each parish, simply 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 forms the underlying principle of ministry in the parish, which is the concern of the councils.

3. The Purpose of the Council:

The focus of the charter for the Finance Council will be on the council's specific membership and expertise, and the counsel to be offered to the pastor on matters affecting the administration of parish goods.

The focus of the charter for the Pastoral Council will be on the spiritual development of the faithful, the evangelization of the inactive, the care of the poor and marginal in the society, the conversion of members and those who aspire to membership in the Church, etc.

4. Membership:

The charter 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 express clearly the term of office of each member. It should make provision for vacancies by reason of death, resignation, inability to continue in office or other causes.

5. Officers:

The charter should designate the officers of the parish councils, the manner of their selection, term of office and responsibilities.

6. Meetings:

The charter should specify the number of meetings each year and their regularity, as well as, the principles governing open meetings and executive sessions.

7. Commissions:

The charter should name any permanent commissions and outline their responsibilities.

8. Amendments to the Charter:

The charter should describe the process for amendment.

APPENDIX G

THE ROLE OF THE CHAIRPERSON

The role of the chairperson is that of a leader - a facilitator. Leaders make things happen, they do not do everything or make all the decisions. At a meeting the job of the chairperson is to make it easy for council/commission members to exchange ideas and interests with each other. Following are some techniques for effective group leadership.

1. **Get people acquainted.** People participate more when they know each other. There are many techniques that can be used. The more effective ones have to do with the members introducing themselves and telling something about themselves. The chairperson can lead by introducing her/himself first in the manner that the members can follow.

2. **Have and define the purpose for each meeting.** Ten basic reasons for having a meeting are:

- a. To develop a Community of Faith. The community is strengthened by praying together and sharing personal concerns and interests.
- b. To promote continuing education of council/commission members. As a group, the council/commission needs to study and reflect on new teachings, renewal, what makes a viable parish, etc.
- c. To receive reports from commissions/subcommittee.
- d. To determine council/commission goals and objectives as a basis for decision-making. Ideally, at the first meeting of newly installed officers and members, the general goals would be defined for the year.
- e. To identify, analyze or solve a problem which has been brought up by the pastor/parish life coordinator, a member of the parish or commission.
- f. To gain acceptability and support for an idea, program or decision.
- g. To reconcile a conflicting view and come to group consensus.
- h. To assure accurate communication and equal understanding by all present. For example, to clarify the relationships between the pastor/parish life coordinator, councils, commissions, laity in the parish.
- I. To allow for discussion and resolution of matters pertaining to parish life.
- j. To make assignments for commissions/subcommittee projects.

3. Preparation for the meetings:

a. **Plan a yearly calendar of meetings** - dates, time, place and length. This can be done by the chairperson with the pastor/parish life coordinator and elected officers before the first meeting and presented to the group for their suggestions and approval. It is easier to say, "Are these arrangements acceptable?" than to ask, "When shall we have our meeting?"

b. **Make arrangements for facilities.** If meetings are at the church hall or rectory, have chairs, tables, etc. Check with the persons in charge of the education section of the meeting to see if they will need A.V. equipment and make sure it will be available.

c. **Announce the meeting.** Arrange to have the secretary send reminders 7-10 days prior to the meeting date. To facilitate this, keep a current list of names, addresses and phone numbers of council/commission members.

d. **Plan the agenda.** Two or three members of the council/commission may help or be assigned to prepare the agenda. The following points should be included:

(1) Prayer - as a community of faith and as a group vitally involved in parish growth and viability, the council/commission should always include a prayer service as part of the regular meetings. These can be prepared by 2-3 members and the responsibility rotated among the group. The group prayer may be allotted 10-20 minutes, depending on the nature of topics for the business meeting.

(2) Education - a portion of each meeting should be devoted to continuing development and education of the members. Approximately 10-20 minutes should be allowed for this segment of the meeting. Again 1-3 members may assume responsibility for planning this activity. Materials for this segment may be found in the Rose Resource Center of the diocese.

(3) Topics for discussion, reporting and decision - announcements from diocesan offices, requests from pastor/parish life coordinator, items brought to the attention of the chairperson, topics suggested by council/commission members, items discussed at previous meetings which were not resolved, items which are part of the yearly goals which have not been accomplished.

Each of these items should be allotted a certain amount of time on the agenda and the chairperson should try to keep to these time limits.

3. Managing the meeting - This is often thought of as the major role of the chairperson.

a. Open and close the meeting promptly. Most people plan their time and will be prompt if the chairperson is.

b. Arrange for taking minutes. If there is not an elected secretary, ask someone to take notes. There should be a record of decisions and motions; these should be available at each meeting. The minutes should include any responsibilities assigned, the person who has accepted each responsibility and the time-line for accomplishing them.

c. Keep to the agenda. Have the agenda approved at the beginning of the meeting. This allows members to add items if necessary and gives priority to important issues. Give each member a copy of the agenda so they know what is to be discussed. It is best to mail the agenda with the meeting announcement to give members a chance to prepare for the discussion. Try to keep within the time appropriated for each item. If members bring up topics other than that which is the main point of a current discussion, get them back to the topic.

d. Encourage each member to take an active part in discussions and activities.

(1) Get all members to express themselves. Call on those who have not spoken for a while. If a member is ordinarily quiet but indicates a desire to speak, give him/her the floor.

(2) Do not permit one member to monopolize the discussion. When a member has spoken to an issue, invite other opinions before letting him/her speak a second time.

(3) Make the best use of each member's special abilities and talents. Ask those who are well organized to draw up the plan for an activity which involves the whole parish, invite those who are active in renewal to plan topics for the education segment on a yearly basis and work with a few different people each meeting for the designated program at the meeting. Ask some members to keep abreast of the courses, workshops and conferences offered by the diocese and to encourage the members of the council/commission and parish to take advantage of these offerings.

(4) Appoint subcommittees to research certain topics to be discussed by the members. Commissions may need subcommittees to give a broader base and more parish involvement to their work. The commission is kept informed of activities through reports of the subcommittees at the regular meetings.

(5) Keep discussions focused on improvements, not problems. Meetings are not "gripe" sessions - they are the vehicles through which change is planned and implemented.

(6) Give compliments and praise for tasks accomplished. A sincere attitude of cooperation is fostered when the chairperson recognizes the efforts and productive results of a member's time and energy.

(7) Maintain a spirit of openness to ideas. Everybody's opinion is important and should be respected. Harassment, ridicule, oppressions and domineering should never occur during the meeting.

(8) Be aware of the group dynamics which are operative among members. As facilitator, your role is to lead the discussions in such a way that all participate, the atmosphere remains positive, free discussion is permitted, people stay on the topic, and the group comes to a conclusion and plan of action. Some suggestions that may help the discussion leader:

- Do not carry on one-to-one discussions with different members in the group.
- Interrupt a discussion only when necessary to keep to the agenda or to bring the group back to the topic if they have digressed. Do not keep giving your own opinion.

- If a member has kept silent and does not seem too interested in the subject at hand, ask his/her opinion on the subject.

- When one member seems to be taking too much of the time, ask him/her to allow others to give their opinions. Say something like, "Perhaps we could hear from other members of the group. Harry, what do you think are some of the factors we have not considered about this topic?"

- If discussion seems to be skirting a problem without getting at the real issue, invite the group to reflect for a few minutes and see if they can identify the basic issue at hand.

- Watch for "hidden agendas." If a group member continues to dwell on a topic for his/her personal pleasure or to vent anger, or to retaliate against authority, or to avenge what appears as a wrong done against him/her, identify the need. It may even be necessary to say, "This current problem is really not related to your difficulty of a year ago. We want to keep a positive attitude about this subject. Let's look at the facts and try to move away from our personal feelings on the subject. Barbara, do you have any additional points that have not been mentioned?"

- Notice that the floor has been taken from the person so he/she is not permitted to continue the pursuit. If he/she comes back to it, try again to keep to objective data about the topic.

- Keep your own opinion in the background. A chairperson who imposes his/her own decisions and ideas on the members will soon find that people have little to say and discussion becomes very dull.

- If two members seem to be getting into a heated argument, prevent it. This can be done by summarizing the point of discussion and what has been said so far. You can state the position of each opponent in an objective way and then ask other members to express their ideas on the subject.

- Call everybody by name and get them to do the same. The use of names encourages informality and more openness in discussion.

-When somebody asks you a question as chairperson, if you answer it, you have cut off discussion and have indicated your decision. Turn the question back to the group. You may ask a specific person what he/she thinks, or leave it open for anyone to answer.

-Let the members know when the time is nearly run out on a topic. Summarize where you are and draw some conclusions, if possible. If the topic is a broad one, you may make specific assignments for further study and the question can be brought up again at the next meeting. Do not make the group vote on the issue if all arguments or both sides of the issue have not been considered.

e. Move the business along. To keep to the agenda and permit only the time specified in your plan, it is necessary to pace the group. Some helpful ways of keeping to the time limitations are given here:

(1) Chairperson and participants need to come prepared. This is another reason for having the agenda sent to members prior to the meeting.

(2) Meetings are not the time for telling jokes, stories, gossip or rumor. If this is a problem, the chairperson can write time appropriated to each topic on the agenda and ask participants to limit their discussion specifically to the subject.

(3) Assign sufficient time on the agenda for reports and discussion but do not pad timing just to "fill-in." If there does not appear to be many items for discussion, additional time can be given to prayer and education at any meeting.

(4) Accept commission, committee, subcommittee reports as completed. These usually do not need to be analyzed, criticized, changed or argued. As indicated previously, if there is a point to be debated, it should be considered as part of the "old" or "new" business.

(5) Allow at leaser 20-30 minutes for each discussion of a policy or problem topic. It takes longer to arrive at a consensus than to achieve a simple majority vote. Don't try to do too much at a meeting. A discussion or decision on one major topic per meeting would be a good norm to follow.

(6) Head off digressions before they occur. When a topic is introduced and a previous question has not been settled, suggest that the new discussion be postponed. If the subject is not on the agenda, ask if it can be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. Once the group has accepted the agenda, no new topics should be added during the progress of discussion.

- (7) Neutralize hot controversies. Maintain your own peacefulness and straight thinking. Your role as chairperson is not to fight for a position but to facilitate interaction among members. The chairperson need never be involved in an argument during a meeting. Some of the techniques under 'group dynamics' can be used to maintain objective interaction among the members.

Some of these techniques may seem rude to the novice chairperson. However, as one becomes seasoned, he/she learns such techniques are necessary to maintain objectivity and prevent one member from distracting and preventing the achievement of goals set by the whole group. These techniques need not hurt or embarrass an individual if the chair is sensitive to the feelings and interests of all the members.

- (8) Prevent lags in discussion through occasional summarization and clarification of where you are.

f. Close the meeting on a note of accomplishment. Be sure agreements reached are uniformly understood and that decisions have been recorded by the secretary.

APPENDIX H

THE ROLE OF THE PARTICIPANT AT MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL/COMMISSION

*To have a good meeting, participation is essential. The first responsibility of council/commission members is to be **active** in discussion, problem solving, decision-making and policy implementation when required.*

1. Come to the meeting prepared to discuss topics on the agenda, give assigned reports, and join in the meeting process.
2. The Council/Commission is a small faith community. Continually strengthen your willingness to help build this community by mutual sharing, prayer, support, exchange of ideas, openness to one another, and reconciliation when differences occur.
3. Maintain an open mind.
 - a. Be open to other points of view
 - b. Listen actively
 - c. When there are differences of opinion, don't personalize them
4. Speak up on matters on which you are knowledgeable, but don't monopolize the meeting.
5. Practice good meeting etiquette
 - a. Address the chair to obtain recognition but speak to the whole group
 - b. Keep to facts - maintain objectivity
 - c. Do not carry on one-to-one conversation on the side
 - d. Participate in discussions; give your point of view but be willing to support another's position if it seems appropriate.
 - e. Keep to the agenda. Stories, personal experiences and socialization should be carried on outside the meeting.
6. Take notes for yourself. This helps the listening process and also reminds you of points that have been made.
7. Examine your motives so that personal hostilities, differences, and controversies do not become "hidden agendas" for your participation.
8. Volunteer for projects; be willing to carry your share of work and responsibility.

9. Examine yourself to see if you are a problem participant.

- a. **Do you monopolize a discussion?** Are you an unusually talkative type? If you seem prone in this way, it probably appears to others that you want to make a big impression but that you have little to contribute. Those who tend to monopolize the time often do not realize how long they have spoken.

If this is your problem, recognize it as such and work toward curbing your desire to speak on every issue. If somebody else has a point, relinquish the floor to them. Do not be hurt if the chairperson suggests that the group would like to hear from someone else. Make notes for yourself; make the point that you have written and let the discussion be taken over by someone else.

- b. **Are you a disrupter?** Do you find yourself being rude? Are you a heckler, needling and making fun of other opinions? Are you trying to “get even” with someone at the meeting?

Usually a person with these characteristics is not aware of them. After a meeting reflect back on what you have said and to whom. If you became angry, what was the reason? Did the chairperson ever divert the discussion away from you? If so, what was happening at the time? By taking time to analyze your manner you may learn more about yourself.

If you recognize these traits, work toward being objective at the meeting. Do not use personal experiences as reasons for supporting an argument. When you begin to feel emotionally involved in an issue, stop and reflect on why you feel that way. Remain quiet rather than beginning an argument that will disrupt the meeting.

- c. **Are you shy and retiring** to the extent that you never speak during a discussion? If you don't have new ideas do you volunteer to help with projects? If you are reluctant to speak at meetings what is the reason? Do you feel comfortable with the group? One suggestion for overcoming non-participation is to make notes ahead of the meeting. Get at least one or two points down on each topic to be discussed. Volunteer early in the discussion to make your point. If you wait, someone else is likely to give your idea. Talk with the others during refreshments and before the meeting so that you get to know them better. Let them know some of your ideas so they begin to respect your understanding of a situation. In a strong moment, ask the chairperson to call on you so you are forced to join the discussion - and have something to say when he/she does ask for your opinion.

APPENDIX I

STEPS TO MORE SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

Before the Meeting:

1. Plan the meeting carefully: who, what, when, where, why, how many.
2. Prepare and send out an agenda in advance. Allow time for feedback on agenda items prior to meeting date.
3. Come early and set up the meeting room.
4. Instruct the chairperson of the board on efficient meeting skills. Make sure the chair is well-prepared and ready for any reactions or directions the board members may take. The leadership of the chair is pivotal to a successful board meeting.

At the Beginning of the Meeting:

Begin with prayer

5. Start on time!
6. Get participants to introduce themselves and state their expectations for the meeting.
7. Clearly define roles.
8. Review, revise, and order the agenda. This is extremely important.
9. Set clear time limits. Set ending time, generally no longer than two hours.
10. Review action items carried over from the previous meeting.

During the Meeting:

11. Focus on the same problem in the same way at the same time. Do not let the members stray from the topic at hand.

At the End of the Meeting:

12. Establish action items: who, what, when.
13. Review the group's meeting record.
14. Set the date and place of the next meeting and develop a preliminary agenda.
15. Evaluate the meeting.
16. Close the meeting crisply and on a positive note.
17. Clean up and leave the room in the manner in which you found it.

End with prayer

After the Meeting:

18. Prepare the group minutes and distribute.
19. Follow-up on action items and begin to plan the next meeting.

Adaptation from How to Make Meetings Work, Doyle and Straus, Wyden Books, 1976

APPENDIX J
PRAYER SERVICE
PASTORAL AND FINANCE COUNCIL DISCERNMENT

OPENING HYMN: One Bread, One Body

LEADER: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us. Let us pray: Our Father, God, we pray for your presence among us as we meet together in community. Send us your Holy Spirit to be our guide. Remind us that the opportunity to serve you is always close at hand, even now. Give to each of us the mind of Christ, that we may show ourselves worthy to be called your people.

ALL: Amen

READING-Acts 4:31-35

PAUSE FOR REFLECTION

LEADER: General Intercessions -

RESPONSE: LORD MAKE US ONE IN YOUR SPIRIT... .

Let us trust in God's love and pray for the needs of the Church of Gaylord and the needs of our parish community that we may continue to spread the message of the Gospel ...we pray...

For the leaders of our church throughout the world, our bishops, pastors and priests, and for all lay men and women who are charged with leading the people of God, that the Holy Spirit will inspire and guide them ...we pray...

For the churches of our diocese that they may continue to grow and search for better ways to serve all people as we take part in building the Christian community. . .we pray...

That all of us gathered together will work toward the betterment of our parish community and a greater appreciation of the Gospel message in our daily lives...we pray...

That we may have the spirit of the early Christians in willingness to serve our parish community, our local community and our larger world ...we pray...

ALL: Thank you God, for the privilege of coming to you in prayer. In these quiet moments we feel your assurance that you listen to us and care about our parish community. In your patient and loving way, help us to be understanding of each other as we make our decision regarding the role of leadership in our parish. Make us one with you in all that we do. In Christ's name we pray ...Amen

AT THIS TIME THE NAMES OF THE NEW MEMBERS WILL BE SELECTED FROM THE BALLOT BASKET, AND ANNOUNCED or NEW MEMBERS, PREVIOUSLY SELECTED WILL BE CALLED BY NAME

At the conclusion of the selection, all join in praying:

OUR FATHER...

BLESSING: All present extend hands over the newly selected members **LEADER:** All praise and glory are yours, loving Father, maker and ruler of the universe; we praise you for calling us to be your people, and we ask your blessing on the newly selected members here gathered. Guide *our* community as we try to follow Jesus. Fill us with love for those in need of our help, and open our hearts to all. Let your spirit teach us to serve in love and to praise you by our work and worship.

Father of all, we praise you through Jesus Christ, our brother, in the love of your Holy Spirit, now and forever.

ALL: Amen

PRAYER SERVICE THEME: Affirmation in Faith

Leader: We believe that we are living in Christ

All: And He is living in us.

Leader: He gives us a share in His Spirit

All: And we ourselves testify that the Father sent His Son.

PSALM 16: A Prayer of Confidence

Sustain me, O God,
for I am anchoring my faith in You.
I say it again, "You are my Lord;
when I am estranged from You, I have nothing that is of any real worth."

The significant and contributive people of this world are those who
know you.

They are the individuals I must respect.
Those who make lesser things their ultimate concern
are investing in eventual trouble and grief
I cannot worship their idols or respect their objectives.

I have chosen to make God my ultimate concern. he is the Pilot
of my ship.
Thus the course before me will lead to ultimate fulfillment.
I am guaranteed an inheritance of infinite value.

I look to God as my chief counselor.
Even in the darkness of night He is ready to teach and guide me.
I need only to recognize His perpetual presence. Because He continually
surrounds me, I shall not lose my way.

Is it any wonder that I am happy?
Even my humanity, my tangible body, rests in the blessed realization of this
security.
He will keep even my human self from the destructive clutch of evil.

You do show me the paths I must take.
Within Your all-embracing presence there is genuine fulfillment.
In my relationship with You
I discover incomparable and eternal joy.

Give peace though us to all who live in the support and strength of our
Friendship, our love and our service.

Leader: O Lord hear our prayer.

All: And let our cry come to you.

Prayer: Make of us, O Lord, a people of home - a people attuned to the rhythm of your life. Grant that we may receive and deepen the gift of faith - that we may hear and speak your word - that we may receive and share a part of the reverence and the need, a part of the fear and the pain and the wonder of your mysteries. Grant that we may believe that "the light still shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out." And through this belief may we give you praise and thanks. Amen

PRAYER SERVICE THEME: Unity in Faith

Opening Hymn: *We are One in the Spirit or There is One Lord*

Reflection: "...The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows. For the goal of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in her sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper.

The liturgy in its turn inspires the faithful to become 'of one heart in love' when they have tasted to their full of the paschal mysteries; it prays that 'they may grasp by deed what they hold by creed'. The renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant between the Lord and man draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them afire. From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, as from a fountain, grace is channeled into us; and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the Church are directed as toward their goal, are most achieved."

*Documents of Vatican II
Liturgy -Article 10*

PSALM 40: *A Song of Praise*

I waited and waited for the Lord's help
then he listened to me and heard my cry.

He pulled me out of a dangerous pit, out of a muddy hole!
he set me safely on a rock and made me secure.

He taught me to sing a new song, a song of praise to our God. Many who
see this will be afraid and will put their trust in the Lord.

Happy is the person who trusts the Lord,
who does not turn to idols, or join those who worship false
gods.

You have done many things for us, Lord my God; there is no one like you!
You have made many wonderful plans for us.

If I tried to speak of all of them,
there could be more than I could tell.

You do not want sacrifices and offerings;
you do not ask for animals burned whole on the
altar, or sacrifices to take away sins.

Instead, you have given me ears to hear you, and so
I answered, "Here I am; your instructions for me are in the
book of the Law.
How I love to do your will, my God! I keep your teaching in my heart."

In the meeting of all your people, Lord,
I told the good news that you save.
You know that I will never stop telling it.

I have not kept the news of salvation to myself;
I have always spoken of your faithfulness and help. In the meeting
of all your people I have not been silent about your constant love
and loyalty.

Lord, I know you will never stop being merciful to me. Your love and
loyalty will always keep me safe.

QUIET REFLECTION (two-three minutes)

Period of shared prayer - Individual are asked to pray from their hearts
in thanksgiving, in praise and in petition for the work of the Commissions
in the parish; for the personal needs of the group gathered here; and for
the priests, staff and members of the parish.

Pray together the *Our Father* and then:

Deliver us, O Lord, from our selfishness, our indifferences and our
isolation, from our attachment to petty sins and laziness;
Deliver us from the fear of being unloved and being unwanted, from the
weariness of working without faith or hope.
Deliver us from our unloveableness and our incapacity to love. Deliver us
from all evil, past, present, and to come.

Deliver us, O Lord, unto our brothers and sisters in a genuine openness
one to another.
Deliver us unto the experience of creation in a community of hope. Deliver
us unto our work with imagination and courage.
Deliver us unto the strength of loving one another exactly as we are.

And give us your peace, and through our peace, give peace to all who
meet us.

READING: I John 3:19

If we live like this, we shall know that we are children of the truth and can reassure ourselves in the sight of God, even if our own hearts make us feel guilty. For God is infinitely greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. And if, dear friends of mine, when we realize this our hearts no longer accuse us, we may have the utmost confidence in God's presence. We receive whatever we ask for, because we are obeying his order and following his plans. His orders are that we should put our trust in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another.

The man who does obey God's commands lives in God and God lives in him, and the guarantee of his presence within us is the Spirit he has given us.

PERIOD OF QUIET REFLECTION

At this time members of the group may offer short personal prayers for an increase in faith, for those who have given up their faith, for the parish that it may be a strong Community of Faith, for the conversion of dear ones, etc. Prayers of thanksgiving may also be offered.

PRAYER TOGETHER:

I believe in one God who is for us eternal discovery, ever communicating himself to us, yet ever eluding any static adherence to him.

And I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the full revelation of the Father to us
and himself our full response to the love of the Father for us.

The one who is fully man, like us in all except sin, yet who is himself the living Word of God to us and the final, personal presence of God among us.

This same Lord Jesus has totally embraced our suffering in his crucifixion and death and has made of our suffering and death the occasions which open us to the transforming power of God and make us receptive to the new risen life of glory.

He is himself in our world today every present as the risen Lord who permeates all and who is dynamically drawing all into unity with himself.

The work of ever deepening unification he will continue until that final day of triumph when all are one in him.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit whom Christ our Lord has sent to stand with us, to be our teacher, to bring to mind all that he has taught us.

It is the same Holy Spirit who is now operative in the Church, granting gifts of faith and wisdom, of preaching and healing, of performing great deeds and of living with great love.

And I believe that people, filled with the Holy Spirit and centered upon the risen Christ, can and will grow in unity and in love, and that each one can so live as to further the growth of unity within the family of humankind.

And because of these beliefs, I look to the future, both by the immediate future in this life and my ultimate future in eternal life, with joy and hope and say with confidence, "Amen, come, Lord Jesus".

CLOSING HYMN: *My Shepherd is the Lord*

PRAYER SERVICE THEME: God's Presence Remains With Us

OPENING:

Leader: Let us open our hearts in prayer.

All: We praise you, O Lord, for your presence with us.

Leader: We come with words of praise.

All: Hear us as we offer prayers of thanksgiving and ask for your favor to be upon us.

Leader: We will continue to trust in your ever-present love,

All: And we will discover our joy in proclaiming your praise.

PSALM 21:

O God,
in the grace and strength that You daily grant,
Your servant finds reason for celebration.
You have truly fulfilled our innermost longings.
You have responded to our deepest needs.

We asked for security,
and You encompassed us with love.
We looked to You for life,
and You granted us life eternal.

We sought for identity,
and You adopted us as Your own.
Whatever is of value and worth in our life
has come by way of Your rich blessings.
Our heart is glad in the realization of Your eternal presence.
We know that we will never lose Your love.

I raise my voice in praise, O God,
because no one can separate me from You.
Though circumstances threaten me
and my own obsessions entangle me, You
will never let me go.

Your great power is sufficient to set me free from these
things that hurt my soul.
If I put my trust in You,
You will not allow them to destroy me.
I find so many reasons for praising You, O God.

REFLECTION: Think of the many personal reasons you have for praising God. Reflect on the times in the past few days you have been aware of His presence in your life.

PSALM 96

God is here: God is now! It is time for celebration!
Our praises need not be confined to old songs.
Nor need we great organs or massive choirs to honor God's name.

Let us create new songs of praise to our God.
Let us discover new ways of proclaiming God's greatness and glory.

The elements about us reflect God's majesty.
The roaring sea and all that inhabits it,
the wind that bends the trees,
the creatures that fill the air and land, the mountains
that probe our skies,
the rivers and lakes that slake our thirst,
the great planets and stars that light up our night; all these reveal
the beauty and splendor of God.

And out of this comes that fashioned by our mind and hand; rockets and
computers, art and architecture, music and literature.

Wherever one turns, God's power is manifested, God's pres-
ence is made apparent.
Let us celebrate God's presence in our world today.

PRAYERS OF PETITION: Time for sharing personal needs in prayer. Ask for special and personal ways you would like God's presence and favor to be made known in your own life and the life of your parish.

CLOSING PRAYER: You have made your dwelling among us, O God, and You are present wherever we live - we cling to this grace. Make us honor your presence and make us wise and strong enough to build each other up into Your city on earth, the body of Christ, a world fit to live in, today and forever. Amen.

APPENDIX K

COUNCIL RESOURCES

**The following resources are available to the parishes
through the Rose Resource Center**

VIDEO TAPES:

Parish Pastoral Councils, 1989 ACTA Publications, Chicago, ILL. A video tape training program for councils. It consists of four sessions. Each session covers a major area which is critical to the successful formation and operation of a parish pastoral council. It provides for a question and answer period, as well as providing a discussion guide. **This is an excellent resource for ongoing council formation, and training of new members.**

- Session 1: Principles of Organization
- Session 2: Understanding Church & Meaning of Parish
- Session 3: Purpose & Functions of Pastoral Councils
- Session 4: Skills for Collaborative Decision Making

The Parish Council & Pastoral Leadership, Tabor

This tape contains five 20 minute presentations exploring areas of pastoral council development. **This resource could be used for ongoing council enrichment and discussion.**

- Segment 1: Vision: What Does it Mean to be Church
- Segment 2: Mission Statement: Who Is Church
- Segment 3: The Initial Elements of Planning
- Segment 4: The Specific Elements of Planning
- Segment 5: Sustaining the Vision: What is the Spirituality of the Parish Council

The Dynamic Parish, Institute for Pastoral & Social Ministry

A 30 minute tape for parish leadership, designed to stimulate awareness, analysis, reflection and action. Pictures a variety of parish styles and helps to:

1. Identify what makes a dynamic parish
2. Recognize the elements of differences in parishes
3. Identify our parish strengths and weaknesses
4. Initiate planning for the parish

A good resource for ongoing enrichment and discussion.

Gifted by God, Paulist Press

The purpose of this film is to help members of the parish reflect on their own baptismal call to ministry. The film calls one to identify their gifts and reflect on how we use them. **This resource could be used in calling members of the parish to share their gifts in various ministries. It could be used in council selection process.**

The following audio tapes from the Annual Conference for Pastoral Planning and Council Development, are available in the Rose Resource Center:

1. Promoting Shared Responsibility: Building On the Past - Anticipating the Future, Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen
2. Who? Me? Selection of Parish Pastoral Council Members, Sr. Mary Kay Bailey, O.P.
3. Building a Constituency and Trust for Diocesan Offices, Monsignor John Murphy
4. Pastoral Councils: Keep It Simple, Dr. Mark F. Fisher
5. Development with Regard to Planning, Mr. Bob Burke
6. Making a Holy Difference: Nourishing the Spiritual Growth of Pastoral Councils, Mary Edlund

Following are books and other resources available in the Resource Center:

1. Building Better Parish Councils, Rev. Joseph M. Champlin
2. Sharing Treasure, Time and Talent, Rev. Joseph M. Champlin
3. How to Make Meetings Work, Michael Doyle and David Straus
4. Successful Parish Leadership, Robert G. Duch
5. Dealing with Diversity: A Guide for Parish Leaders, Greg Dues
6. Empowering the Laity, Gerald Foley
7. Future of Catholic Leadership, Dean Hoge
8. Sharing Wisdom: A Process for Group Decision Making, Mary Benet McKinney, OSB
9. Stewardship of Time and Talent, Rev. Francis A. Novak
10. Reform & Renewal: Essays on Authority, Ministry and Social Justice in the American Church, Dr. Anthony T Radovano
11. Answers for Parish Councilors, Rev. William J. Rademacher
12. The New Practical Guide for Parish Councils, Rev. Wm. J. Rademacher
13. New Life for Parish Councils, Rev. William J. Rademacher
14. Empowering Leaders, David A. Ramey

15. Inside Christian Community, Loghlan Sofield, ST Rosine Hammett, CSC
16. Developing the Parish As a Community of Service, Loguhlan Sofield, ST Brenda Hermann, MSBT
17. Social Action Organizational Manual
18. Christ Calls Us Together: Pastoral Council Policy
19. Parish Finance Council Policy
20. Backgrounds & Guidelines to Parish Renewal
21. Your Parish Council
22. Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council: A Workbook, Mary Ann Gubish and Susan Jenny, SC with Arlene McGannon, Published by Paulist Press, 2001
23. New Wine, New Wineskins: Revisioning the Parish Through the Ministry of the Parish Pastoral Council, Diocese of Greensburg, PA 1996
24. “ Gospel Pastoring: finding common ground in ministry” Presentation given at Overnight Session with Pastors and Associates

The following are not in Rose Resource Center but are found in:

“ Five Essential Lessons about Pastoral Planning by Mark F Fischer found in “ Today’s Parish”, October, 2004

“A Finance Council Basics: 10 Tips” Andrew & Marie Hirsch (This four-page handout may be purchased from National Pastoral Life Center, 18 Bleecker Street, NY, NY 10012. Phone 212-431-7825, Web: www.nplc.org)

