

# EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

**PLEASE NOTE:** The pages contained in this document are extracted from *One Who Serves*, a larger document published by the Diocese of Harrisburg.

**These pages are intended as a reference for individuals considering serving on Parish Pastoral Council.**

## ONE WHO SERVES

Diocese of Harrisburg

NORMS AND GUIDELINES FOR PARISH PASTORAL  
COUNCILS

## The Parish Pastoral Council

*We are the Church: clergy, those in consecrated life and laity. Because we have been baptized into the one Body of Christ and confirmed by the Holy Spirit, we share the responsibility to carry on the work of Christ both as individuals and as part of a community of believers.*

The Parish Pastoral Council provides an essential framework through which this responsibility can be shared. Parish Pastoral Councils are potentially the most effective means of joining together the People of God to fulfill the mission of the Church.

The Parish Pastoral Council is a community of service.

## The Pastor

“In each local assembly of the faithful, they (the pastors) represent the bishop with whom they are associated in all trust and generosity; in part they take upon themselves his duties and solicitude and in their daily toils discharge them.” (*Lumen Gentium* 28,2)

While the role of the Bishop is to be the chief shepherd of a portion of the Body of Christ called a diocese, it is the Pastor’s role to accept his appointment to shepherd an even smaller segment within a defined community of the faithful called a parish. This appointment carries with it the responsibility of the sacramental life of that parish assigned to him, the pastoral care of the parishioners, and the administration of its facilities.

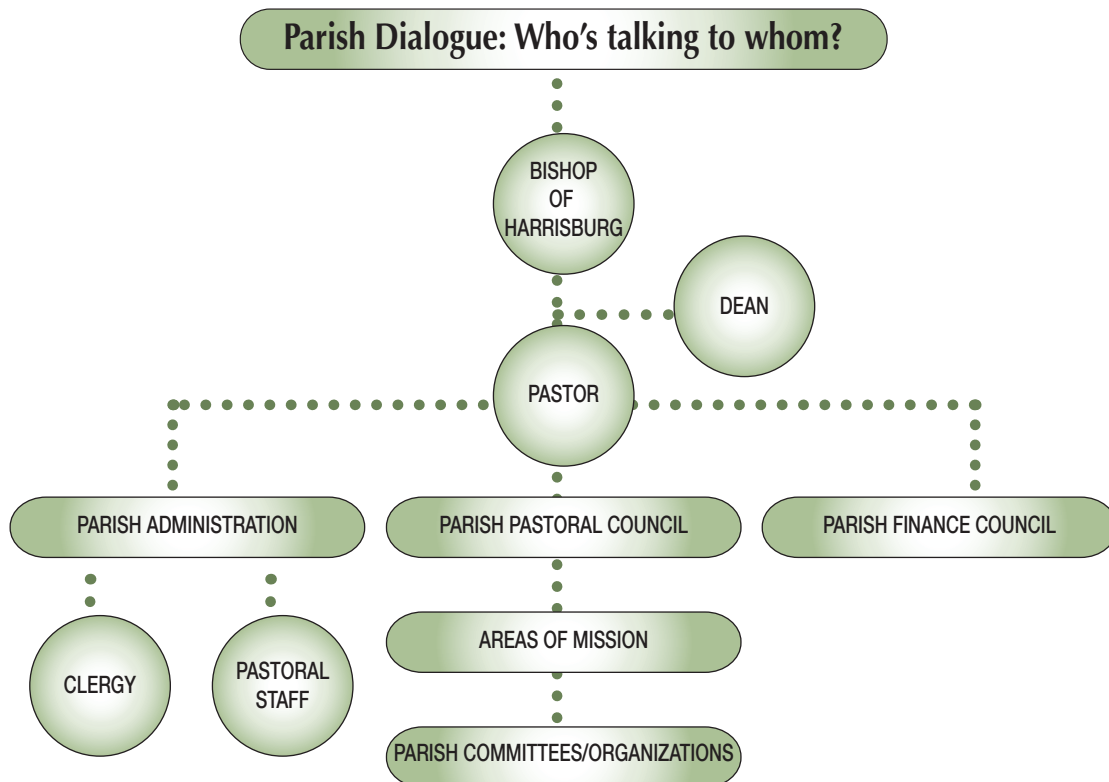
*“I have come among  
You as one who serves”.*

(Matthew 20:28)

## The Parish Pastoral Staff

To assist the pastor to carry out his responsibilities, he relies on salaried or volunteer staff to assist him with the day-to-day administration of the parish. This staff may include parochial vicars, deacons, women religious, business managers, pastoral

associates, secretaries, maintenance personnel and directors of liturgy, music and religious education, to name a few. The pastor is the administrator of the parish and is the ultimate supervisor of all the pastoral staff.



### System of Dialogue

- Effective Meetings.
- Good use of meeting time.
- Clear and organized agendas.
- Inviting all groups into the discussion.

## DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG

### The Parish Pastoral Council

### Diocesan Norms

The Diocese of Harrisburg has issued the following Norms for each Parish to establish and maintain a Parish Pastoral Council. Council members should be familiar with these at the onset of their Council responsibilities.

#### I. EVERY PARISH IS TO HAVE A PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL THAT UNITES CLERGY, THOSE IN CONSECRATED LIFE AND LAITY IN A COMMUNITY OF LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE.

The clergy, those in consecrated life and laity, together, are the Church. A Parish Pastoral Council provides an essential framework through which all share the responsibility of joining together the People of God to fulfill the mission of the Church. According to the **Code of Canon Law #536**, *“If the diocesan bishop judges it opportune, a parish pastoral council is to be established in each parish, over which the pastor presides and in which the Christian Faithful, together with those who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish, assist in fostering pastoral activity... A pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by the norms established by the diocesan bishop.”* Since 1972, all Bishops of the Diocese of Harrisburg have mandated Parish Pastoral Councils.

In the **“Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priest”**, Article 5, #2: *“Parochial Pastoral Councils and Parochial Finance Councils, of which non-ordained faithful are members, enjoy a consultative vote only and cannot in any way become deliberative structures.”* #3: *“It is for the Parish Priest to preside at*

*parochial councils. They are to be considered invalid, and hence null and void, any deliberation entered into, (or decisions taken), by a parochial council which has not been presided over by the Parish Priest or which has assembled contrary to his wishes.”*

#### II: THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL IS TO HAVE A FORMAL AND VISIBLE STRUCTURE WITH ESTABLISHED BY-LAWS, REGULAR MEETINGS WITH AN ESTABLISHED AGENDA AND AT LEAST 50% OF ITS MEMBERSHIP ELECTED BY THE PARISH AT LARGE. ONLY CATHOLICS IN GOOD STANDING ARE ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP.

It is essential that the framework of the Parish Pastoral Council be established.

The Constitution and By-laws will contain all the components that explain specifically how the Council will function. In addition to the Parish Mission Statement, the By-laws identify representation, frequency of meetings, nominations, elections, operating rules, officers and job descriptions. Detailed guidelines have been provided to assist a Parish Pastoral Council with this requirement. Review and update of the Constitution and By-laws is to be completed every three years.

#### III. THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MUST BE CONCERNED WITH THE FULLNESS OF THE CHURCH’S MISSION, PARTICULARLY THE EVANGELIZATION AND SPIRITUAL RENEWAL OF THE COMMUNITIES OF WHICH THEY ARE A PART.

Parish renewal, through evangelization, must be the first and main goal of the Parish Pastoral Council. In his 1975 exhortation, **Evangelization in the Modern World**, Pope Paul VI writes, *“We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church.”*(#36) How this

is accomplished in each Parish is expressed through the Parish Mission Statement. Before the members of the Council can begin to establish priorities for the parish, they must take the time to gain insights into the needs of the parish and articulate such a statement.

#### IV. THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MUST UNDERSTAND AND SUPPORT THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE PARISH TO THE DIOCESAN CHURCH.

“A parish is a certain community of the Christian faithful stably constituted in a particular church whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor as its proper pastor under the authority of the diocesan bishop”. (Canon #515) All parishioners belong to their diocesan church, as well as their parish. This essential relationship must be appreciated and understood by those who are part of the parish leadership. The Parish Pastoral Council is to serve as a connecting link between the diocese and the parish, communicating and supporting the policies and programs of the bishop and the pastor to the people.

Because of its resources, the diocese can be of service to the parish, offering expertise and guidance in every area of mission. Parish Pastoral Councils are encouraged to utilize fully these services and programs by direct communication with the diocesan offices. The Parish Pastoral Council is also expected to cooperate fully with these offices in achieving diocesan goals. No parish may set norms that are in contradiction to the norms of the diocese.

#### V. THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MUST PROVIDE INITIAL INFORMATION AND CONTINUOUS TRAINING TO COUNCIL MEMBERS.

Each member of the Parish Pastoral Council should have a clear understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Council.

Listed below are some resources that may be helpful:

- *One Who Serves*, Diocese of Harrisburg – Diocesan Norms and Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils, 2005 & 2013
- *Guidelines and Procedures for Parish Financial Management* – Diocese of Harrisburg, 2013
- *Fostering Stewardship in Sacred Places and Spaces*, Diocese of Harrisburg, Project Planning and Construction Procedures Manual, 2010
- *Go and Make Disciples*, A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1992 & 2002
- *Disciples Called to Witness, The New Evangelization* – United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, 2012
- *The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful People* (Christifideles Laici) Pope John Paul II
- *On the Coming of the Third Millennium* (Tertio Millennio Adveniente) Pope John Paul II
- *The Church in America* (Ecclesia in America) Pope John Paul II
- *The Apostolic Letter to the Lay Faithful at the Close of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000* (Novo Millennia Ineunte) Pope John Paul II, 2001
- *On Evangelization in the Modern World* (Evangelii Nuntiandi) Pope Paul VI
- *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* (Documents of Vatican II)

Knowing the mind and heart of the Church will help Parish Pastoral Council members in responding to the needs of the parish. There should also be a continuous program of spiritual formation that may include days of prayer, shared prayer at meetings and periodic celebration of the Eucharist. All

these elements contribute to building a community of faith within the Parish Pastoral Council that will enable the members to better serve the parish. It is recommended that these opportunities for formation be scheduled on an annual basis.

**VI: IN UNION WITH THE PASTOR, THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL SHARES RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE LIFE AND WELFARE OF THE PARISH.**

“The laity should accustom themselves to working in the parish in close union with their priests, bringing to the Church community their own and the world’s problems as well as questions concerning human salvation, all of which should be examined and resolved by common deliberation.”

(The Decree On The Apostolate Of The Laity)

The *Decree On The Apostolate Of The Laity*, states, “*The laity, too, share in the priestly, prophetic and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own role to play in the mission of the whole People of God in the Church and in the world.*”

The pastor and the Council should strive to work together for consensus in the Council’s advice to the pastor. The pastor and Council members should recognize their shared responsibility and their distinct, yet mutual roles in fulfilling the mission of the parish community. As a faith community, they will work together to discern the Spirit. The Parish Pastoral Council will not act independent of the pastor, nor conduct a Council meeting without the pastor being present, since their role is not decision-making but advisory to the pastor.

The process of consensus ensures that all members of the Council have the opportunity to have their voices heard and opinions

stated so that they feel they have had ample opportunity to influence the final decision of the pastor. Having accomplished this, they will agree to support the implementation of the decision that rests solely with the pastor.

**VII: THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL IS PREEMINENTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE PASTORAL MISSION OF THE PARISH.**

Parish organizations and committees provide the impetus for the parish to achieve its mission and for parishioners to become involved in every aspect of parish life. However, they must communicate and cooperate with the Parish Pastoral Council, which is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of each organization and supporting each one as it carries out the parish mission statement.

The Parish Pastoral Council is to schedule regular opportunities to meet and dialogue with officers and members of parish organizations and committees identifying the ways to better serve the parish with their particular ministry or program. This ongoing communication strengthens each ministry and gives the parishioners an opportunity to clarify the mission of the parish that they all share.

**VIII: THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MUST RESPECT THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATION OF THE PARISH WHICH IS CLEARLY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PASTOR AND STAFF.**

The role of the Parish Pastoral Council is to set priorities in order to assist the Parish in carrying out its Mission Statement. The administrative staff may include the parochial vicar, deacon, women religious, business manager, pastoral associate, director of

religious education, school principal, music director and youth ministry coordinator, to name a few. They may be resource persons to the Council offering information and opinions for sound discussion, as needed. They may attend Council meetings and participate fully in the discussions but have a non-voting status.

**IX: THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL REACHES ITS CONCLUSIONS BY A PROCESS OF PRAYERFUL DISCERNMENT AND CONSENSUS SHARING WHILE RESPECTING THE CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE PASTOR.**

The Parish Pastoral Council is not a democratic institution where majority rules. It is a Christian community where members discern through prayer, study, and the insights of all, the best course of action that should be taken. This process of consensus allows each member to provide input and, as a result, the final outcome may not be exactly what any one member wants but a compromise that expresses the thoughts of many. Because the pastor shares fully in this process, all Council priorities, therefore, are the result of a true sharing of responsibility by both the pastor and Council members. The Parish Pastoral Council may never meet independently of the pastor. If, by chance, the Council is unable to reach a consensus, then a vote can be taken. If, with the support of the pastor, a two-thirds majority passes the resolution, then it is implemented.

Because the pastor is canonically responsible for the parish, all Council conclusions must be understood as offering advice and consent to the pastor, who retains decision-making authority in all matters. If he cannot accept or implement an action or policy recommended by the Council, the pastor may seek the assistance of the Vicar General for consultation or mediation in this matter.

**X: AS THE CHIEF COORDINATING AND UNIFYING STRUCTURE, THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MUST SEEK CONSTANTLY TO DRAW FORTH THE TALENTS, ENERGIES AND INSIGHTS OF THE PARISHIONERS AND CHANNEL THIS “VARIETY OF GIFTS” FOR THE BUILDING UP OF THE WHOLE BODY OF CHRIST.**

The Second Vatican Council emphasized that the Church is an organized expression of the mission of Jesus Christ and not simply a large number of believers. Therefore, the Parish must be a coordinated and unified witness to the total mission of Jesus Christ.

The basis for all ministries is the gift of the Holy Spirit.

A person’s call to ministry is a direct response to the gifts God has bestowed on that person and ministry should flow from those gifts. Collaborative ministry brings together various gifts to accomplish the mission of Jesus Christ. A certain ministerial perspective must develop. This sense of ministry must be integrated and woven into every activity or action that occurs in the parish community.

It is essential that, in developing and coordinating new ministries and outreach in a parish, a system of calling forth and discerning the gifts of the parishioners be developed. This initiative can be assigned to a member of the parish staff or a volunteer. Understanding the importance of ministry based on giftedness is essential and ensures a more effective experience.

## Diocese of Harrisburg Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines

- Parish Vision
- Parish Mission Statement
- The Parish Pastoral Plan
- Steering Committee
- Membership Requirements
- Structure

### XI: THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MUST COMMUNICATE REGULARLY WITH THE PARISH AT LARGE AND THE CIVIC COMMUNITY OF WHICH IT IS A PART.

A Parish Pastoral Council cannot be effective if it is isolated from the rest of the parish. To communicate effectively, a Parish Pastoral Council must learn both to speak and to listen. Therefore, it is recommended that a system for dialogue be established, perhaps through a communications committee of the Council. Creating regular gatherings of parish committees and organizations to engage in a dialogue ensures effective parish ministry and outreach. This may include special town hall meetings; surveys; personal contact at parish functions or by telephone; use of the parish newsletter or bulletin insert; a Parish Pastoral Council bulletin board; the local newspaper and other media.

### XII: THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MUST DISCERN THE NEEDS OF THE PARISH AND COMMUNITY AND ADVISE THE PASTOR ON PARISH DIRECTION BY PRAYERFUL REFLECTION AND A CONTINUOUS PROCESS OF PASTORAL PLANNING.

“The program of the Gospel must continue to take root, as it has always done, in the life of the Church everywhere. It is in the local churches that the specific features of a detailed pastoral plan can be identified – goals and methods, formation and enrichment of the people involved, the search for the necessary resources – which will enable the proclamation of Christ to reach people, mold communities, and have a deep and incisive influence in bringing Gospel values to bear in society and culture.”

Pope John Paul II, *Novo Millennia Ineunte* #29, January 6, 2001

It is difficult to articulate a Mission Statement without making an effort to uncover parish needs. The goal is to become a strong vibrant faith community with inspiring liturgies and a center of service to those within the parish and community.

In order to determine what the future will be, a parish needs to plan. This planning needs to involve discerning the mission of the parish and its vision of the future, assessing its internal strengths and weaknesses and exploring the opportunities that exist. This requires a commitment of resources including the time and skills of the parish community. The planning process should result in a plan that is clear and defines specific actions.

Although a parish’s plan for the future may remain relatively stable, the means for making it a reality may have to be changed given new sets of circumstances that could not be foreseen. The plan may need to be reviewed periodically to determine if it is still valid.



## FIFTEEN COUNTIES OF THE DIOCESE WITH PARISHES

### ADAMS COUNTY

Abbottstown, Immaculate Heart of Mary  
 Bonneauville, Saint Joseph the Worker  
 Buchanan Valley, Saint Ignatius  
 Fairfield, Immaculate Conception of  
 the Blessed Virgin Mary  
 Gettysburg, Saint Francis Xavier  
 Littlestown, Saint Aloysius  
 McSherrystown, Annunciation of the  
 Blessed Virgin Mary  
 New Oxford, Immaculate Conception  
 of the Blessed Virgin Mary

### COLUMBIA COUNTY

Berwick, Immaculate Conception  
 of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
 Berwick, Saint Joseph  
 Bloomsburg, Saint Columba  
 Benton, Christ the King Mission  
 Roaring Creek (Catawissa), Our Lady  
 of Mercy

### CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Camp Hill, Good Shepherd  
 Carlisle, Saint Patrick  
 Enola, Our Lady of Lourdes  
 Mechanicsburg, Saint Katharine Drexel  
 Mechanicsburg, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton  
 Mechanicsburg, Saint Joseph  
 New Cumberland, Saint Theresa of the  
 Infant Jesus  
 Shippensburg, Our Lady of the Visitation

### DAUPHIN COUNTY

Dauphin, Saint Matthew the Apostle  
 and Evangelist  
 Harrisburg, Holy Family  
 Harrisburg, Holy Name of Jesus  
 Harrisburg, Our Lady of the Blessed  
 Sacrament  
 Harrisburg, Saint Catherine Labouré  
 Harrisburg, Saint Francis of Assisi  
 Harrisburg, Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque  
 Harrisburg, Saint Patrick Cathedral  
 Hershey, Saint Joan of Arc  
 Lykens, Our Lady, Help of Christians  
 Middletown, Seven Sorrows of the  
 Blessed Virgin Mary  
 Millersburg, Queen of Peace  
 Steelton, Prince of Peace  
 Williamstown, Sacred Heart of Jesus  
 Mission

### FRANKLIN COUNTY

Blue Ridge Summit, Saint Rita  
 Chambersburg, Corpus Christi  
 Doylesburg, Our Lady of Refuge Mission  
 Greencastle, Saint Mark the Evangelist  
 Mercersburg, Saint Luke the Evangelist  
 Mission  
 Waynesboro, Saint Andrew

### JUNIATA COUNTY

Mifflintown, Saint Jude Thaddeus

### LANCASTER COUNTY

Columbia, Holy Trinity  
 Columbia, Saint Peter  
 Elizabethtown, Saint Peter  
 Ephrata, Our Mother of Perpetual Help  
 Lancaster, Assumption of the Blessed  
 Virgin Mary  
 Lancaster, Sacred Heart of Jesus  
 Lancaster, Saint Anne  
 Lancaster, Saint Anthony of Padua  
 Lancaster, Saint John Neumann  
 Lancaster, Saint Joseph  
 Lancaster (Rohrerstown), Saint Leo  
 the Great  
 Lancaster, Saint Philip the Apostle  
 Lancaster, San Juan Bautista  
 Lititz, Saint James  
 Manheim, Saint Richard  
 Mount Joy, Mary, Mother of the  
 Church  
 New Holland, Our Lady of Lourdes  
 Quarryville, Saint Catherine of Siena

### LEBANON COUNTY

Annville, Saint Paul the Apostle  
 Cornwall, Sacred Heart of Jesus  
 Jonestown, Our Lady of Fatima  
 Mission  
 Lebanon, Assumption of the Blessed  
 Virgin Mary  
 Lebanon, Saint Benedict the Abbot  
 Lebanon, Saint Cecilia  
 Myerstown, Mary, Gate of Heaven  
 Palmyra, Holy Spirit

### MIFFLIN COUNTY

Lewistown, Sacred Heart of Jesus

### MONTOUR COUNTY

Danville, Saint Joseph

*Established in 1868, the  
 Diocese of Harrisburg  
 encompasses 15  
 counties and 7,700  
 square miles. The  
 diocese serves  
 more than 235,000  
 parishioners in 89  
 parishes and 7 missions,  
 5 high schools, 2  
 K-12 schools and 32  
 elementary schools  
 as well as many  
 other agencies and  
 institutions.*

### NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY

Coal Township, Our Lady of Hope  
 Elysburg, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary  
 Kulpmont, Holy Angels  
 Milton, Saint Joseph  
 Mount Carmel, Divine Redeemer  
 Mount Carmel, Our Lady of Mount  
 Carmel  
 Shamokin, Mother Cabrini  
 Sunbury, Saint Monica  
 Trevorton, Saint Patrick

### PERRY COUNTY

Duncannon, Saint Bernadette Mission  
 Marysville, Our Lady of Good Counsel  
 New Bloomfield, Saint Bernard

### SNYDER COUNTY

Selingsgrove, Saint Pius X

### UNION COUNTY

Lewisburg, Sacred Heart of Jesus  
 Mifflinburg, Saint George Mission

### YORK COUNTY

Dallastown, Saint Joseph  
 Hanover (Conewago), Basilica of the  
 Sacred Heart of Jesus  
 Hanover, Saint Joseph  
 Hanover, Saint Vincent de Paul  
 New Freedom, Saint John the Baptist  
 Spring Grove, Sacred Heart of Jesus  
 York, Immaculate Conception of the  
 Blessed Virgin Mary  
 York, Saint Joseph  
 York, Saint Patrick  
 York, Saint Rose of Lima  
 York Haven, Holy Infant

