
DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS



**GUIDELINES FOR
PARISH PASTORAL
COUNCILS**

Office of Pastoral Services

DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS GUIDELINES FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction..... | 2 |
| History of Pastoral Councils..... | 3 |
| Purpose of Parish Pastoral Council..... | 5 |
| Functions of Parish Pastoral Council..... | 5 |
| Composition of Parish Pastoral Council..... | 5 |
| Relationships of Parish Pastoral Council..... | 6 |
| Member Selection for Parish Pastoral Council..... | 7 |
| Parish Pastoral Council Characteristics..... | 8 |
| Models of Parish Pastoral Council..... | 9 |
| Council of Ministries Model..... | 9 |
| Visionary Council..... | 10 |
| Further Clarification and Explanation..... | 11 |
| Pastoring More than One Parish..... | 11 |
| Membership..... | 11 |
| Council Leadership..... | 12 |
| Meetings..... | 12 |
| Decision Making..... | 13 |
| Pastoral Planning..... | 14 |
| Frequently Asked Questions..... | 15 |
| Resources..... | 17 |

GUIDELINES FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS

INTRODUCTION

In 1977 the Diocese of Columbus published a booklet titled Parish Council Guidelines that was to be a resource for parishes as they developed, refined or maintained parish councils. The chairman of the Diocesan Pastoral Council at that time was Jerry Finn. In the introduction to the booklet, he states, “The *Guidelines* are not inflexible rules. They are intended as helps to pastors and parishes in this area of need. Undoubtedly, they will need revision, and probably there shall never exist a definitive set of *Guidelines* for Diocesan parish councils because of the diversity of parish situations.”

Twenty-five years later this revised set of Guidelines, once again keeps in mind that each parish has its own unique situation. Over these years many things have changed. Parishes have been affected by population growth, shifts and immigration. The number of priests and religious has declined. The number of deacons and lay ministers has risen. It is a constant challenge to fulfill the mission of the church in changing times. Parish pastoral councils have an important role in meeting that challenge. It is hoped that these guidelines will assist parishes as they form, revise and strengthen pastoral councils. May the Holy Spirit continue to reveal his presence and guide parishes as they strive to answer the call to build the Kingdom of God.

HISTORY OF PASTORAL COUNCILS

1962 Vatican II was convened in 1962 and it provided the impetus for establishing councils in the Church. During the past forty years councils at all levels, and particularly the parish level, have evolved into several forms. All forms and levels of pastoral council seek to echo the Vatican II call to serve and fulfill the mission of the Church. Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) speaks of the Church as the "People of God." It is through Baptism that we all become members of the People of God and are called to holiness and ministry. Clergy, religious and lay people together, as members of the Body of Christ, work to build the kingdom of God.

- "The faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity." (*Lumen Gentium* #40)
- "From the reception of these charisms or gifts there arise for each believer the right and duty to use them in the Church and in the upbuilding of the Church." (*Apostolicam Actuositatem* #3)
- "It is highly desirable that in every diocese a special pastoral council be established, presided over by the diocesan bishop himself, in which clergy, religious, and laity specially chosen for the purpose will participate. It will be the function of this council to investigate and consider matters relating to pastoral activity and to formulate practical conclusions concerning them." (*Christus Dominus* #36)

1966 – 1973 Vatican II documents referred to pastoral councils of bishops. Likewise, Pope Paul VI's apostolic letter in 1966 on implementation of the document *Christus Dominus* developed norms for diocesan pastoral councils. These documents provided guides for the councils that started to be formed at the parish level. In 1973 the Sacred Congregation for Bishops published a directory and a letter that offered even more clarification on the nature of pastoral council.

- "To make the council's work more effective, the bishop can order, if the good of the faithful requires it, that in every parish, among the other offices of the apostolate, parish pastoral councils be set up and that these be aligned with the diocesan council. These councils, grouped together according to areas, could choose their representatives to serve on the diocesan council, so that the whole diocesan community may feel that it is offering its cooperation to its bishop through the diocesan council."
- "The pastoral council can give the bishop great help by presenting him with proposals and suggestions regarding missionary, catechetical and apostolic undertakings within the diocese; concerning the promotion of doctrinal formation and the sacramental life of the faithful; concerning pastoral activities to help the priests in the various social and territorial areas of the diocese; concerning public opinion on matters pertaining to the Church as it is more likely to be fostered in the present time. The pastoral council can also be extremely useful for mutual communication of experiences and for proposed undertakings of various types by which the concrete needs of the people of the diocese may become clearer to the bishop and a more opportune means of pastoral action may be suggested to him."

1983 The revised Code of Canon Law of 1983 also addressed the role of the laity and councils. Councils were becoming a common part of parish life.

- “The Christian faithful are those who, in as much as they have been incorporated into Christ through baptism, have been constituted as the people of God; for this reason since they have become sharers in Christ’s priestly, prophetic and royal office in their own manner, they are called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world, in accord with the condition proper to each.”(Canon 204)
- “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.” (Canon 536)

1987 The Synod of Bishops addressed the importance of consultation and collaboration in pastoral councils.

- “It is in the parish that most Catholics learn that they have been constituted as church and that, at the same time, they experience how to form church. The collaboration of clergy and men and women religious as well as laity is needed to achieve this. This collaboration requires the consultation of the laity to determine the pastoral needs and aspirations of the community. A fitting way to reach this goal is the establishment of a pastoral council.” (Synod 1987: The Synod Propositions)

2001 One of the most recent references to councils comes from Pope John Paul II’s Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio Inuente* published in January of 2001 at the beginning of the new millennium.

- “Communion must be cultivated and extended day by day and at every level in the structures of each church’s life. The relations between bishops, priests and deacons, between pastors and the entire people of God, between clergy and religious, between associations and ecclesial movements must all be clearly characterized by communion. To this end the structures of participation envisaged by canon law, such as the council of priests and the pastoral council must be ever more highly valued. The theology and spirituality of communion encourage a fruitful dialogue between pastors and faithful: on the one hand uniting them a priori in all that is essential and on the other leading them to pondered agreement in matters open to discussion.”

PURPOSE OF PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

A parish is a community of Christian faithful whose care is entrusted to a pastor by the bishop of the Diocese. The parish pastoral council is a group of leaders of the parish who assist the pastor in fulfilling the mission of the Church. The council investigates, studies, and discusses matters of concern to the parish. It then forms practical responses to these matters. These practical responses are recommendations to the pastor. After the pastor responds to the recommendations, the council may assist the pastor with implementation. However, the responsibility of implementation lies with the pastor. Since it is the purpose of the parish pastoral council to advise the pastor on matters of concern to the parish, the scope of matters can be quite large. Matters of faith, morals and laws of the Universal Church, however, are not within the bounds of parish pastoral councils.

FUNCTIONS OF PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Parish pastoral council's purposes of offering consultation to the pastor regarding pastoral matters and of being a voice of the parishioners regarding the life of the parish are fulfilled through these functions:

- To discern and articulate the parish mission
- To study and discuss concerns of the entire parish in light of its mission
- To participate in pastoral planning
- To communicate to the entire parish the work of the council
- To promote collaboration, cooperation, trust and understanding among all groups in the parish

COMPOSITION OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The documents regarding councils all emphasize that as church we are in communion and that all members whatever the role or gifts of the individual, are united as the Body of Christ. In order to promote unity and collaboration the council needs to reflect the parish community. The members of the councils are primarily parishioners. Members of the parish pastoral staff may also serve on council and participate in the work of council. The pastoral staff, however is not to overshadow the numbers or voice of the parishioners. The staff does not participate in the decision making process that renders recommendations of policy or action to the pastor. The pastor presides over the council.

RELATIONSHIPS OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

As directed by Canon 536, the pastoral council helps “foster pastoral activity.” The council has relationships within the parish community to the pastor, to the staff, to the lay leadership, and to all members.

- By its nature, the primary relationship of the pastoral council is with the pastor. The Parish Pastoral Council is a consultative group that helps the pastor in his responsibility to lead the parish. The council is formed to fulfill this purpose. A pastor may, on occasion, delegate someone such as an associate pastor to preside at a council meeting in his place. However, the council exists to assist the pastor. Therefore, a working relationship of trust and collaboration needs to develop between the pastor and the council. It may be necessary at times for the bishop to entrust the spiritual care of a parish to a deacon, or a religious or lay person rather than a priest. Such a person is called a pastoral administrator. Since a pastoral administrator is responsible to the bishop for the pastoral ministries and administration of the parish, the pastoral administrator’s relationship to the parish pastoral council is the same as that of a pastor. This relationship is one that is consultative and also builds collaboration and trust.
- The parish staff is responsible to the pastor. The parish staff is a resource for the parish pastoral council as it studies and researches matters. The staff contributes and supports the efforts of the council. The staff also assists in the implementation of the recommendations of the council that are accepted by the pastor.
- The leaders and members of commissions, committees, and organizations within the parish also support the council and its efforts to fulfill the parish mission. Those who share their talents and gifts on commissions, in committees, in organizations and in activities contribute greatly to parish life. These contributions need to be recognized and appreciated. Likewise all groups within the parish need to acknowledge that they are only part of the parish and attempt always to respect and consider the total parish mission in their pursuits.
- The parish pastoral council is comprised mainly of members of the parish. The council serves as a voice of the faithful and reflects the vision, concerns, and wisdom of the faithful. Members of the parish are to have access to council members and have opportunities to communicate concerns and information to them. Members of the parish are entitled to be kept informed of council deliberations and activities. It is important that council members seek input from parishioners in order to be truly representative.

-
- Canon 537 addresses parish finance councils. *“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.”* The finance council is concerned with the stewardship of the parish’s financial resources. The relationship of the finance council and pastoral council to each other is one of support to the pastor in fulfilling the mission of the parish. The finance council, like the parish pastoral council, is not involved in day-to-day administration but rather recommends financial plans and policies.

MEMBER SELECTION FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Members may be chosen to serve on a parish pastoral council through various methods such as election, discernment, lottery or appointment. Whichever method or combination is chosen, it is important that consideration be given to the qualities a member needs to be an effective councilor. “Parishioners with skill in deliberation, not outside experts, are the most reliable sources of practical wisdom. Parishioners know one another and know the actual situation of the parish. They are more able than outsiders to judge, from among all the things that a parish might do, those particular actions that the parish ought to do. Not all parishioners have this gift. But even those who do not have it can recognize the gift. By their participation they can contribute to the selection of councilors.”¹ Equally important is the education of the parishioners, as well as the potential members, about the work of parish pastoral council.

RECOMMENDED MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS AND QUALITIES

- A fully initiated member in good standing of the Catholic church
- An active participant in parish life
- A prayerful person
- A willingness and ability to consider the needs of the entire parish
- A willingness and ability to listen and respect the ideas and opinions of others
- A willingness and ability to study and reflect
- A willingness and ability to formulate and communicate ideas

¹ Fischer, Mark F. *Pastoral Councils in Today’s Catholic Parish*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2001, p. 148

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL CHARACTERISTICS

In a parish, the followers of Jesus come together to worship God and to support each other as members of the Body of Christ. Members are nourished at the table of the Lord. The parish is a visible sign of the Church. Each parish and each of its members is called to participate in the building of the kingdom of God. Each parish is unique and has its own gifts and characteristics that enable it to fulfill the mission of the Church. A clearly defined parish mission is an asset to a parish. The particular mission of a parish is important for several reasons:

- It gives direction to all ministries in the parish.
- It unifies the parish community.
- It gives purpose to programs and activities.

Since a parish is a Christian community gathered together to worship God and give witness to the Gospel of the Lord, the parish pastoral council needs to reflect this image. The parish pastoral council gathers together to pray and seek the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The work of the parish pastoral council is not the same work as that of a government, a corporation, or even of a nonprofit organization. The work of the parish pastoral council is leadership in the work that God has asked of the whole parish. In the parish community it is important to strive for collaboration, cooperation, openness, genuineness and unity.

Prayer is central to the work of the parish pastoral council. It is fitting that in the tasks of studying, deliberating, discussing and recommending that council seeks the Lord through prayer. *“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them”* (Mt 18:20). At the beginning, at the end, and even in the middle of meetings it is important for the council to pray together. These prayers remind the participants that Christ is in their midst, that the work of the council is His work, and that the Holy Spirit was sent to guide them.

After council members have studied an issue and discussed solutions or possible courses of action, recommendations need to be made. Voting on proposals is a possible method, but searching and praying and discussing openly and thoroughly usually leads to a recommendation that can be supported by all of the members with the pastor. This process of consensus supports the effort being made to seek the guidance of God and fulfill the mission of the Church.

MODELS OF PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS

Each parish needs to develop a structure and set of procedures for its council. Establishing such a framework will help the pastor, staff, volunteers, and all members understand their place within the structure. It is important that the structure and procedures be clearly defined in written form.

Parish pastoral councils have taken on many duties and forms over the years. Some have taken on administrative duties, some listen to reports, some organize ministries and committees, and some do pastoral planning. Following are two models, each with a different emphasis, but both which fulfill the purpose of council. They both are consultative bodies to the pastor and both assist the pastor in leading the parish in its efforts to live the mission of the church.

COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES MODEL

A parish pastoral council, which uses the ministries model, is structured so that the members of the council are representative of all the ministries and committees that exist in the parish. These ministries support the mission of the parish. The number and nature of the ministries and committees in a parish is reflective of the demographics and the needs of the parish.

Members of the council, whether appointed, elected or discerned, have a relationship with the standing committees of the parish. This is a relationship of cooperation, trust, communication and shared commitment to the mission of the whole parish. The committees each have a defined purpose and scope. Each committee is supportive of the overall mission of the parish and assists the council and the pastor in building the parish community.

The council serves as a means for representatives of all the ministries of the parish to collaborate with the pastor. With the pastor, the needs of the parish are assessed; a pastoral plan is formed and implemented through the coordination of the various parish activities and committees.

In this model it is important that all ministries are represented. The pastor and council determine which groups are represented and how their representatives are chosen.

VISIONARY COUNCIL MODEL

A parish pastoral council, which uses the visionary model, is not dependent on the ministries and committees. This type of council views the parish as a whole with an eye to the future. It assists the pastor with pastoral planning.

Members of the council, along with the pastor, identify and study the pastoral needs of the parish. The council calls upon many resources to provide information and insights regarding pastoral concerns. These resources can come from within the parish or from the outside. The council makes recommendations to the pastor. If the pastor accepts the recommendations, parish staff, organizations, commissions and committees implement them. The parish pastoral council is responsible for evaluating the implementation of the recommendations. It also is responsible for communicating with the various parish committees, groups and organizations, along with the parish staff, about the vision and plans of the whole parish. The council builds mutual trust and understanding as it reminds each part of the parish how it relates to the overall good of the parish, the diocese, and the Universal Church.

In this model the parish pastoral council members are not directly connected to a specific ministry, committee, organization or commission. In this model council members are leaders who seek a broad overview of the parish and assist the pastor in planning for the entire parish faithful. These members seek to know, understand and represent all areas of the parish.

These are merely two models. Each parish council is as unique as its parish. The council that functions best in a given parish could be one of these two models or a combination of them. In the model of Council of Ministries the finance council is a subgroup of the parish pastoral council and advises the council on the financial aspects of the matters under consideration. In the model of Visionary Council the finance council and the parish pastoral council function independently. However, both advise the pastor and it is his responsibility to link them. It is essential that both councils cooperate and support the parish mission.

FURTHER CLARIFICATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

PASTORING MORE THAN ONE PARISH

Currently there are priests in the Columbus diocese who are pastors for more than one parish. Each parish has its own identity but shares the same priest as pastor. It is not unusual in these circumstances for the parishes to share other things such as staff, ministries, and facilities. A pastor may choose to have a pastoral council in each of the parishes. Or he may find it beneficial to have one pastoral council that assists him with all the parishes. This council would benefit each parish by planning together and calling forth the gifts present in the whole community.

MEMBERSHIP

RECOMMENDED STEPS FOR SELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

- A selection committee of the parish pastoral council is formed and oversees the process. The pastor is a member of this committee.
- Education of parishioners about the purpose and work of the parish pastoral council is important. All parishioners need to understand the purpose of council and how the parish pastoral council fulfills that purpose. Education can take place through articles in bulletins, newsletters, pamphlets and web sites. Gatherings such as parish assemblies and group meetings can serve as educational tools. The ministry of serving on parish pastoral council and the qualities of the members need to be explained.
- Nomination of candidates as potential members of council takes place after the education on council ministry. Council members, committee members and all parishioners are responsible for calling forth those in the parish who have the gifts that are important for council ministry. Persons should be able to nominate themselves. The selection committee seeks willing nominees that reflect all aspects of the parish community.

-
- Time for the nominees to study, pray and reflect on council ministry is provided. Opportunities for the nominees to learn about and discuss the responsibilities involved in council ministry is provided. The selection committee also studies, prays and reflects on the nominees' abilities and gifts.
 - A final group of candidates is determined after nominees have a chance to withdraw and the committee has assessed the nominees' abilities to serve.
 - There are several methods of selection of the members.
 1. The most common is election. Parishioners are given an opportunity to know the candidates and a ballot is used to cast votes.
 2. Another method is discernment. Candidates, along with the council, its selection committee, and any interested parishioners meet and come to agreement on which of the candidates is best suited to serve on council. This agreement is reached through prayer and discussion.
 3. Another method is a lottery. From the final group of candidates the names are drawn by lot during a Sunday Liturgy.
 4. Lastly, the pastor appoints members from the candidate group.

It is important that parishioners be part of the selection process. Regardless of the selection method, the final group of candidates needs to satisfy the attributes and requirements of membership on council.

The number of members on a council will depend on the parish size and number of ministries and activities in a parish. The range in numbers should be large enough that there are enough people to have good insights and discussion and small enough that the work and interaction of council is manageable.

The members of council represent the parishioners. This does not mean that every organization, every age, every ethnic group and so forth must have a representative, although this may sometimes happen. It does mean, however, that the members of council serve to represent parishioners and therefore must seek to know and voice the views of the parishioners.

A parishioner serving on council can contribute best if the length of service is at least two years. It takes some time to develop trust and understanding in the group. Some parishes choose to select a third of the council members every year. The new members replace those members selected three years earlier. In this way members serve for at least three years and the council always has some experienced members.

COUNCIL LEADERSHIP

Some leadership roles of the council itself need to be established. The pastor is the presider. He attends meetings, participates in prayer, discussion and activities of council. The pastor is not passive and only called upon to “ratify” or “endorse” a recommendation. As the presider the pastor is an active participant and contributes to all aspects of the council’s work. One of the members of the council serves as chairperson. This person’s responsibility is to facilitate meetings in such a way that all members are provided with the opportunity to participate and contribute. As facilitator the chairperson is the person who leads the council in collaboration and consensus. The chairperson also seeks to encourage the prayerful and spiritual nature of council’s work. A second chairperson can be chosen to assist the chairperson and fulfill the duties of the chairperson in his or her absence. These three leaders are responsible for planning meeting agendas.

A secretary for the parish pastoral council is responsible for providing materials for meetings and keeping records for the council. The secretary can be a member of the council or can be appointed or hired.

DECISION MAKING

Voting is a common way for councils to decide on the recommendations. Consensus with regard to decision making is another method of coming to an agreement. Consensus is an agreement to a course of action that the participants can accept and support. This usually takes more time and effort than voting. However, since a sincere effort is made to explore openly and honestly the ideas, understandings, views and positions of all members of the group, common possibilities and directions often emerge. Prayerful reflection is another important element of consensus. Efforts to seek a common understanding help to develop parish unity and create plans that serve to fulfill the mission of the parish.

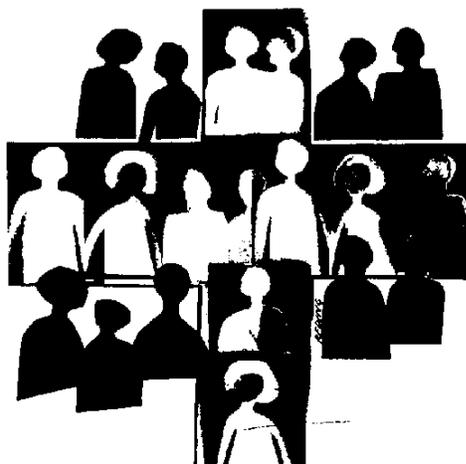
MEETINGS

Meetings are a very important part of council. Preparation by all the members for the meetings allows for a meaningful time together. Reading and analyzing material ahead of time permits productive discussion by all members at the meeting itself. Reports from parish organizations, committees, commissions, staff, etc. also can be provided to members in written form prior to or during the meetings.

The leaders of the council prepare agendas. Concerns for consideration by the council can be brought to the leadership by the pastor, council members, staff and parishioners. Prioritizing the agenda items allows for the matters of greatest importance to the parish be given consideration. A focused and well planned agenda contributes to a meaningful and fruitful meeting.

Parishioners become aware of council and its work when the information regarding council meetings is communicated to the parish. Meetings that are open to parishioners and announced in advance foster interest and participation in parish life.

Discussion at the meetings is facilitated by the chairperson. All members participate and contribute their knowledge and experience. It is through active listening and the exchange of ideas that the diverse views of the parish community become refined to reflect the parish as a whole.



PASTORAL PLANNING

“Pastoral Planning is a process that engages and empowers members of a faith community to express their baptismal call in prayer, discernment, and actions that address the pastoral needs of the community and those served by it.”²

There are three components in parish pastoral planning.

- Parish mission is the first component. This is the core and guide for all the planning.
- Goals are the second component. These are changes in behavior that will fulfill the mission.
- Objectives are the last component. These are action steps required to achieve the identified goals.

Planning is an important function of parish pastoral council. Council performs this function with the pastor. Council relies on staff, volunteers, committees and others to provide the information and input necessary to engage in planning that fulfills the parish mission.

A pastoral planning cycle:

1. Gather information to assess current situation
2. Identify concerns and issues
3. Engage the parish
4. Develop goals
5. Develop objectives to achieve goals
6. Engage the parish
7. Implement and assess the actions
8. Evaluate the mission

After the last step, the process returns to the first step and the cycle begins again. Also it may sometimes be necessary to return to a previous step to reassess the progress before moving forward.

² Pickett, William , Director of Pastoral Planning, Diocese of Rochester NY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Does the Parish Pastoral Council have control over the School Board?

Council has no administrative control over any segment of a parish. The responsibility of parish pastoral council is to unite the parish in all its efforts to fulfill its mission of being church. Elementary schools in the diocese are parts of parishes. The pastor has responsibility for the school and administers it through the principal. However, the school board looks to the pastor and the parish pastoral council for articulating mission and guidance. The school board forms policy for the school in light of the parish mission.

How do parishioners have input into policy and decisions?

Council members are chosen to represent the parishioners. Therefore, to be truly representative council members must seek input from parishioners. Parishioners have a responsibility to express their knowledge and views to members of council. This can be done privately, through written surveys, at parish assemblies, at committee meetings and various other ways. Parishioners should always be able to bring concerns and ideas to the council. Council meetings should be open to all parishioners although the agenda and procedures may not allow for discussion by everyone at large on all topics.

Is a council necessary in a very small parish?

Each parish, no matter what the size, is a community of faithful. A council is a help to the pastor in planning and dealing with concerns in a parish. A pastor can consult the parishioners at parish assemblies and through surveys. And in a small parish a pastor may be able to listen and discuss issues with a large portion of the parishioners. However, a council allows for a pastor to share those responsibilities. And parishioners who may not find it comfortable to approach a pastor have another recourse if there are council members to approach.

What if council and the pastor disagree? What if the pastor doesn't take the advice of the council?

Disagreement is part of most discussion. Discussion takes place in order to bring all the views and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to the table. Ordinarily, when the council, including the pastor, prayerfully deliberates and openly searches for consensus, the result is a recommendation that the pastor can approve. A pastor must not approve proposals that are contrary to universal church law, diocesan policies, or civil law. The pastor is responsible for the final decision and may reject a proposal of the council.

Is the finance council accountable to the pastoral council?

The finance council is consultative body to the pastor just as the pastoral council is. It is concerned with the stewardship of the financial resources of the parish. Therefore as a pastoral council studies pastoral concerns and participates in planning the expertise and reports of the finance council are important. The finance council and pastoral council are partners in making recommendations and cooperation between the two councils strengthens the work accomplished by both. A representative from one council serving on the other council can maintain the connection between the two councils. It is important for the pastor to bring together the knowledge and gifts of both councils in order to fulfill the mission of the parish.

Can a parish staff person serve as a council member if that person is also a parishioner?

Sometimes a parishioner is also a paid staff member. These persons can serve the parish best by being a resource to council and assisting the pastor with implementation of decisions and plans. These persons participate in pastoral planning by sharing their ideas and wisdom with the council. Their insights and expertise are important to developing policy and plans that are relevant to the parish. It is not recommended that they serve as council members.

RESOURCES

Books

- Deegan, Arthur X. Editor. Developing a Vibrant Parish Pastoral Council. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1995
- Fischer, Mark F. and Mary Margaret Raley Editors. Four Ways to Build More Effective Parish Councils A Pastoral Approach. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2002
- Fischer, Mark F. Pastoral Councils in Today's Catholic Parish. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2001
- Gubish, Mary Ann and Susan Jenny, S.C. Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council; A Workbook. New York NY: Paulist Press, 2001
- Howes, Robert G. Parish Planning; A Practical Guide to Shared Responsibility. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994
- Rademacher, William and Marlis Rogers. The New Practical Guide for Parish Councils. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1988
- Sofield, Loughlan, and Donald Kuhn. The Collaborative Leader: Listening to the Wisdom of God's People. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1995.
- Sweetser, Thomas, S.J. and Carol M. Holden. Leadership in a Successful Parish. Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1992

Booklet

- Fischer, Mark F. I Like Being in Parish Ministry Series; Parish Council. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2002

Periodicals

- "Church" The National Pastoral Life Center, 18 Bleecker Street, New York NY, a quarterly magazine
- "Today's Parish" Twenty-Third Publications, PO Box 180, 185 Willow St., Mystic, CT a monthly magazine

Web Sites

- Parish Life www.parishlife.com
- Parish Pastoral Council www.west.net/~fischer/index.html
- Council for Pastoral Planning and Council Development www.cppcd.org